

CASE STUDY

THE PUNTLAND WOMEN WRITER ASSOCIATION

Institutional capacity for women leadership and knowledge management for sustained participation in Puntland



BRIEF SUMMARY



SECTOR: Education and Gender



TIME FRAME: 2013-2016



BENEFICIARIES: 42,570 women and girls (to benefit from intergenerational dialogue, gender networks, radio and television programs)



LOCATION: Puntland (Sool, Sanag, Nugal, Mudug)



GOAL: Contribute to inclusive development by empowering women with capacity to enjoy their rights in Somalia



OUTCOME: Increase participation of women in social, economic and political activities in Puntland

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

Women and men may benefit differently and unevenly from development processes, policies and investments that are intended to enhance opportunities and country performance. Redressing gender inequality and ensuring balanced capabilities, access to services, productive assets and resources, participation in decision-making, and enjoyment of civil, legal and political rights are objectives of development in themselves. They are also critical to the pursuit of sustainable economic growth and the reduction of poverty.

Incorporating a gender perspective into development policies can lead to social and economic changes that create more equal gender relationships and help both women and men move away from unjust practices and toward cooperation and mutual respect for women and men within the family, community, and society in overall. This can be done without undercutting the strengths and integrity of the local culture, particularly if carried out in a culturally sensitive and fully participatory way.

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5: to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls is not only as a goal in itself but also an essential step for achieving all other goals. Considerable gaps between men and women in education attainment, economic opportunities, voices and decision-making and wellbeing are persistent in many parts of Africa including Somalia owing to its precarious state of governance. Gender roles are affected by several factors such as age, class, race, ethnicity, religion and ideologies, in addition to the geographical, economic and political environment. Roles may be flexible, rigid, similar or different

and may be complimentary or conflicting. Policies and social structures are instrumental in institutionalising the maintenance and replication of the social construction of gender. Despite the effort of various actors in promoting gender equality both directly and indirectly in Puntland, inequality between women and men still features in social, economic and political life.

These marked differences are in part, associated with the need to reconcile family and work life, social attitudes and prejudices about appropriate gender roles, and difficulties of mobility and access. These inequalities also arise from the failure of development strategies to adequately address women's specific needs, to build on women's experiences and skills, and to facilitate their full participation in development initiatives. It is against this background that ADRA Somalia received European Union (EU) funding to intervene through the support to enhance participation of women in Somalia (STEP-WINS) Project.

SUPPORT TO ENHANCED PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN SOMALIA (STEP-WINS)

Gender roles of women in Puntland have gradually stretched beyond the traditional limits to meet the new domestic, social and economic needs of the family and local community. Many women are now determined to participate in key decision-making processes and are striving in various platforms to affirm their capabilities in strategic decision-making processes and therefore the need to be given an opportunity.

ADRA Somalia was awarded a grant by the European Union (EU) to implement the action, Support to Enhanced Participation of Women in Somalia (STEP-WINS). The action sought to promote gender equality and was implemented for a period of 28 months from 2013-2016. The overall objective of the action was: to contribute to inclusive development by empowering women with capacity to enjoy their rights in Somalia. The specific objective was to increase participation of women in social, economic and political activities in Puntland. This was to be achieved through affirmative measures that promote women's participation in governance and economic development in Puntland State of Somalia.

The expected project results in relation to specific objectives were:

1. Institutional capacity for women leadership and knowledge management for sustained participation in the political process is strengthened
2. Women have increased awareness on social protection and cross-cutting issues
3. Women have improved access to economic opportunities that enhance gender roles

The main activities included:

- Establishment of regional gender networks
- Support interactive media programs on gender issues
- Stakeholder forums for country strategy on gender and national development
- Technical cooperation programs on gender with non-state actors
- Publications on gender best practices
- Development of IEC materials on cross-cutting issues
- Grassroots campaigns on cross-cutting issues
- Dialogue sessions and school debates on gender relations
- Vocational training programs for women
- Women entrepreneurship
- ICT and literacy programs for women and girls

Innovating Inclusive Women Empowerment

The STEP-WINS project did not only deliver on the targets but also pioneered innovations that contributes to transformative changes in Puntland. For instance, the inauguration of Puntland Women Writers Association (PWWA) as a cultural and technological platform for women to articulate issues affecting Somalia has a beautiful story to tell and it is not always about the stereotyped narrations of conflict. Members of PWWA have written innumerable articles and poems that need to be published. ADRA deemed it fit to invest in this form of human capital to not only give women a voice in a networked platform but also give them an edge in the present state of technological evolutions, knowledge-based economies and a globalized society. PWWA members have so far kept pace with the social media to communicate within their networks to realize distributive outcomes

Inauguration of Puntland Women Writers Association (PWWA)

ADRA through STEP-WINS inaugurated the Puntland Women Writers Association (PWWA) on 29th May 2014 in Garowe, Puntland. PWWA is a set-up that structurally provides Somali women the opportunity to express and empower themselves through writings on various themes. PWWA is a key platform through which women directly participate to advocate and influence decision-making on issues affecting them. Networking, mentorship and publishing of articles is central to the objectives of the PWWA.

PWWA seeks to play a critical and pivotal role both as an art, cultural organization and women's platform to mobilize and advocate for gender equity and social equality. The Association aims to achieve these through activities such as publishing literary materials on relevant thematic content; networking with other organizations in order to lobby for change and generally influence change of attitude through literature.

ABOUT PUNTLAND WOMEN WRITERS ASSOCIATION

The Puntland Women Writer Association (PWWA) is a Somalia-wide network of women writers and women artists whose program focuses on developing and publishing women writers in Puntland and more recently in the Somalia regions.

PWWA brings together over 140 grassroots women groups and pride itself in having a team of dedicated and highly skilled women who have a wealth of practical experience and skills in community mobilization, peacebuilding initiatives, policy advocacy for inclusion of more women in governance roles and the management of cultural and literal peace activities in Puntland State and nationally.

Grounded on the historical Somali customs of poetry and art as forms of communication and cultural engagement, PWWA has promoted women's participation in cultural, social, economic and political activities by creating a platform where women express their opinions on peace and governance issues using poetry, drama, writing, publishing and consultative stakeholder meetings. Working with the community throughout Puntland, PWWA has facilitated key training and capacity building for its members on creative writing, leadership skills and digital journalism

OUR VISION

PWWA's vision is to bring together women writers with a vast variety of realms of experiences and expertise into a Somali conversation that is dynamic, ambitious, honest, and homey.

OUR MISSION

The mission of PWWA is to promote Somali women's cultural participation through writing and providing a platform where women can express themselves through writing, publishing, financial support to attend literary event abroad. PWWA will play a critical and pivotal role both as an art and cultural organization, as well as a platform advocating for gender equity and social equality for both men and women.

OUR STRATEGY

To engage in several activities which include publishing materials with relevant thematic content, networking with other literary organizations to lobby for change, and influencing the change of attitude through literature.

Women's empowerment through writing

Writing skills development remains the core business for PWWA to provide a point of public discussion on several issues affecting Somali women. These activities are geared towards lobbying to relevant authorities and the society to effect changes to legislation and social policies which oppress women.

To achieve this, PWWA engages in several activities which include publishing materials with relevant thematic content, networking with other organizations to lobby for change, and generally influence change of attitude through literature. This has a considerable impact in giving visibility to the Somali women writers as they are hardly recognised in the male dominated arts.

Women are both the primary target and beneficiaries of PWWA. Other target groups include social and cultural institutions, policy makers, and young girls in schools and the line ministries

PWWA Objectives

- To publish at least one book per year with over 30 stories on "Somali women's Voices and Vision" for Somalia
- To provide mentorship opportunities to women writers
- To encourage regional and Somali-wide activities by enabling women from other parts of Somalia
- To organize and disseminate information on a series of regular literary functions, providing a unique platform for other writers and literary creators encouraging them to express themselves and share experiences.
- To promote women's writings by means of providing writing skills, creative writing, drawing, painting for self-expression, writing personal journals
- To publish women's writings
- To disseminate information on literary activities to its members
- To promote networking with gender related and other literacy organisations
- To provide mentorship to women writers
- Promote women's writing skills, advocacy for policy change through networking, internal capacity building
- To encourage regional and Somali-wide activities by enabling women from other parts of Somalia (Djibouti, Somaliland, Galmudug, Jubbaland, South Central, Ogadenia and North-eastern Kenya) to participate in our events.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

PWWA launching ceremony in May 2014

PWWA Inaugural ceremony May 2014



Development of 3-monthly newsletter in both soft and hard copy
Establishment of board members of Puntland Female Writers Association
Organized four creative writing activities

PWWA 3-monthly creative writing course



Conducted 2 literary galas

2nd annual Somali women literary gala
in Garowe attend by 100s



Invitation to and participation in the Somali Cultural Week in London
Participation in the Mogadishu International Book fair
Membership in African Women Writers Network which is a network that brings together dozens of African Women Writers Associations
Organised book signing and reading workshops for its member

5 PWWA authors presented their books in 2015

Bandhigga Buuggaagta Gabdhaha Qalinleyda Puntland
Puntland Women Writers Association (PWWA)

Asha Gelle Dirie
1. *Hoggaaminta Fican-Good Leadership*
2. *Waaya Aragnimadeydi 15 Sano Iyo Siyaasada Puntland 1998-2012*

Faduma-Shukri Abdi Hersi
Dhaqankii Suubanaa Ee Gabdhaha Somaaliyeed Iyo Waxbarashadda Maanta

Sahro Ahmed Koshin
1. *Alfihbaratille: The biography of my father, the late Ahmed H. Koshin- AUN*
2. *Sounds of Laughter: An Anthology of Poems from the Soul of the Somali Woman*
3. *Isniino, the little girl with big dreams and other short stories (children's story book about internally displaced children)*

Asli Ahmed Mohamoud
1. *Godobtir*
2. *Dhalinta iyo Dhibkii Dhacay 1991-2015*

Fatima Mahamed Abi
Yaa Nolosha Fahma? (20 yrs old. The youngest author in the PWWA Network)

Golis
www.pwwa.so
Puntlandwomenwriters@gmail.com

6:00pm to 9:00pm
31 Dec 2015
New Reys Hotel, Garowe

NORVALLET

PWWA has a Google mailing list of more than 140 members who share resources related to writing and literature.

Following the launch of PWWA, Hargeysa Book Fair organizers sent an invitation for two representatives of PWWA to give a presentation. Another invitation was received from the Somali Cultural Week in London for an event that took place in October, 2014.

PWWA participates in the African Writers annual book writing training in Uganda organised by FEMrite Ugandan Women Writers Association



African Writers annual book writing training in Uganda in October of 2015

Before PWWA launch, members had already sent in 56 articles for compilation. This shows an amazing interest in publishing written work since women seem to have a silent platform to voice their concerns with boldness.

PWWA collects poems from its members and prints them on posters

PWWA has an interactive social sites where its members can conveniently connect, share information and resources regardless of their geographical locations



<https://puntlandwomenwriters.org/>



@PuntlandW



@PuntlandWomenWriter



puntlandwomenwriters



Puntland Women Writers Association

**PUNTLAND WOMEN WRITERS
ASSOCIATION
POETRY POSTER PROJECT**

Poem: Liberation songs
Sahro Amed Koshin

From the book Sounds of Laughter: An anthology of poems from the soul

Impeded
by the lengthy stretch
of an arms' reach

I regressed
to the exploits of a
dominant minds' preaching

Hindered
by the limits of
A watchful eyes' sight

I employed
the guidance of visionary's
perception and insight

Splintered
free of the chains contrived
by the influences of a culture's con
I surrendered
to the ceremonious calling
of liberation's song..


**PUNTLAND WOMEN WRITERS ASSOCIATION
POETRY POSTER PROJECT**

Poem: Haweenka (Women)
By Farhiyo Jama

**Witasha Soomaliyeedow
 Hablihil Waad Halayseen
 Dhaqankii Waad Xumayseen
 Diintii Waa Ka Baydheen
 Diirnax Miyadaan Aqoon
 Damiir Kiinnu Miyusan Shaayn
 Haweenku Waa Hormuudkiin
 Hooyadii Kugu Silbiido
 Halbawlihii Noloshay Yihiin
 Xumaan Ma Istaahilaan
 Xaqoodoo Laxaqrana
 Hubaashii Ma Istaahilaan
 Kufsiigu Waa Balaayee
 Hableheen Ka Daaya
 Sharafthii Hablihii Ka Guurtee
 Sharafthii Usoo Cesha
 Oo Ka Daaya Hagardaamada
 Oo ka daaya xumaatada**

Facilitated by ADRA Somalia through EU funding for STEP-WINS Project. Organized by the Puntland Women Writers Association (PWWA). Email: yahara@pwwa.so, Website: www.pwwa.so
Find us also on Facebook and other Social Media!







Mr Kaibe Moses with the Desk Officers of Sanaag, Nugaal and Mudug regions. L-R: Amal Yusuf *(Sanaag), Shukri Suleyman (Mudug) and Idil Ahmed (Nugaal)

CONCLUSION

Mainstreaming innovation within the project life has also been apparent and the inauguration of Puntland Women Writers Association (PWWA) is a clear testimony of the resourcefulness of STEP-WINS and the Gender Unit of the Puntland Ministry of Education (MOE). Somalia has a beautiful story to tell. It is not always about the stereotyped narrations of conflict. Besides giving women a voice to articulate issues affecting them through writing, PWWA provides a platform for advocacy on women rights, mentorship and visibility of Somali women through the power of the pen and technological platforms like the interactive social media and the regional portals in the website. It is interesting that prior to the launch of PWWA, 56 articles and poems had been received for publication from women all over Puntland. In the wake of knowledge-based economies, globalization and technological evolutions, ADRA is investing in a form of human capital that is networked to realize distributive outcomes the core aspects of the action like the regional gender networks and the entrepreneurship network through the online regional portals in the PWWA website.



FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION
UNDER THE STEP- WINS PROJECT
(2013-2016)