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PROTECTION AND CONFLICT SENSITIVE ANALYSIS IN SOMALIA

SUBMITTED BY



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>FGDS</i>	Focus Group Discussions
<i>KIIS</i>	Key Informant Interviews
<i>IDPs</i>	Internally Displaced Persons
<i>PLWDs</i>	Persons Living with Disabilities
<i>PPS</i>	Probability to Proportion to size
<i>GBV</i>	Gender Based Violence
<i>SGBV</i>	Sexual-Gender Based Violence
<i>NRC</i>	Norwegian Refugee Council
<i>OCHA</i>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<i>FGS</i>	Federal Government of Somalia
<i>JSS</i>	Jubbaland State of Somalia
<i>GSS</i>	Galmudug State of Somalia
<i>GSS</i>	National Development Plan
<i>NDP</i>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<i>UNHCR</i>	

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Study Background

The report presents a comprehensive conflict and protection-sensitive analysis conducted across three districts: Bossaso, Luuq, and South Galkacyo. The study aimed to assess the level of protection needed, identify existing strategies and resources for mitigating risks, analyze access to essential services, and evaluate conflict dynamics and their impact on vulnerable groups in conflict-affected areas. A mixed-method approach was employed, integrating quantitative surveys, qualitative Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), alongside a desk review of relevant literature and reports.

A probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling method was used to ensure that the sample size for each district reflected its relative population size. The averaged population size 56435¹ across the three districts was determined to estimate the ideal quantitative data threshold at 95% confidence level at 5% margin of error leading to 386 sampled respondents (43.8% from Bossaso, 36.3% from South Galkacyo, and 19.9% from Luuq). Qualitative data was gathered through eighteen (18) Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and nine (9) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), with participants drawn from internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities, including various vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities.

Demographics and Displacement Patterns

The study paints a picture of the humanitarian landscape in Bosasso, Luuq, and South Galkacyo, akin to a tapestry of displacement and resilience. In Bosasso, a striking 93.5% of respondents were female, highlighting the gendered nature of displacement. Displacement is a common thread, with 68% of respondents in Bosasso, 42.9% in South Galkacyo, and 24.7% in Luuq identifying as internally displaced persons (IDPs). The cyclical nature of displacement is particularly pronounced in Luuq and South Galkacyo, where 94.8% and 97.1% of respondents, respectively, reported multiple displacements. This mirrors findings from other conflict zones, where recurrent displacement is a hallmark of prolonged instability.

Protection Risks

Protection risks loom large over the affected populations, characterized by forced eviction, child labor, theft, extortion, and gender-based violence (GBV) as prevalent threats. In Bosasso, 44.4% of respondents cited forced eviction as a major concern, while physical violence was a significant issue in Luuq (15.1%) and South Galkacyo (3.6%). Vulnerable groups, including women, children, persons with disabilities, and female-headed households, face the highest risks.

¹ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/cities/somalia>

Rights Violations

Rights violations are rampant, with IDPs bearing the brunt of forced evictions, GBV, and lack of access to essential services. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation. Human rights violations are pervasive and disproportionately affect marginalized groups.

Access to Essential Services

Access to essential services is visible largely by humanitarian actors but often out of reach for disenfranchised groups. While water and sanitation services are relatively accessible in Bosasso (98.8%), they are less so in Luuq (89.6%) and South Galkacyo (89.3%). Health services are available, but specialized services like GBV response and psychosocial support are underutilized, with rates below 10% across all districts. Barriers include high costs, long distances, and insecurity, echoing challenges reported in other humanitarian contexts.

Conflict Dynamics

Conflict dynamics vary across districts, driven by tribal rivalries, resource competition, and historical grievances. In Luuq, 75.2% of respondents identified tribal rivalries as a primary conflict driver, while resource competition was significant in Bosasso (31.4%) and South Galkacyo (10.1%). Armed groups, clan elders, and local political actors are key players in these conflicts. These dynamics of local disputes and resource scarcity fuel ongoing tensions.

Impact of Conflict on Humanitarian Services

Conflict significantly disrupts humanitarian services. In Luuq, 64.9% of respondents reported service unavailability during conflicts, while delays in aid distribution were common in Bosasso (29%) and South Galkacyo (12.9%). Perceived bias in aid allocation and exclusion from aid are significant issues, with 50.7% of respondents in South Galkacyo linking local tensions to unequal aid distribution and aid delivery is often hampered by insecurity and local dynamics.

Perceptions of Humanitarian Interventions

While most respondents acknowledged the positive impact of humanitarian interventions, they emphasized the need for greater transparency and community involvement. Concerns about favoritism and lack of accountability in aid distribution were raised, particularly in Bosasso (18.6%). These perceptions underscore the importance of adopting conflict-sensitive approaches to ensure aid delivery "does no harm" and contributes positively to peace and stability, a sentiment echoed in other humanitarian reports.

Emergent Protection Risks

- Forced evictions were reported as a significant threat, especially in Bosasso, where 44.4% of respondents reported it as a major concern. Forced evictions often lead to further displacement and exacerbate the vulnerability of affected populations.
- GBV was found to be a pervasive issue across all districts. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, exploitation, and abuse. In Luuq, 92.2% of respondents identified women as the most at-risk group, highlighting the severe impact of GBV on this population.
- Child Labor and Early/Forced Marriages were cross-cutting common risks, with 24.9% of respondents in Bossaso citing child labor as a prevalent issue. Early and forced marriages are also reported, further endangering the well-being and prospects of young girls.
- Physical violence was a prominent concern in Luuq (15.1%) and South Galkacyo (3.6%). This included assaults, beatings, and other forms of physical harm, often linked to ongoing conflicts and instability.
- Theft and extortion were predominant in all districts, contributing to the insecurity and economic hardship faced by displaced and vulnerable populations. Theft and extortion undermine the safety and livelihoods of affected individuals.
- Persons with disabilities, female-headed households, and minority clans were reported to be facing heightened risks of exploitation and abuse. These groups often lacked adequate protection and support, making them more susceptible to various forms of exploitation.

Vulnerable Groups

- Women and girls were said to face the highest risks of GBV, exploitation, and abuse. The study highlights that women are particularly vulnerable in Luuq and South Galkacyo.
- Child labor and early/forced marriages were significant concerns, affecting the safety and development of children.
- Persons with disabilities, had increased risk of exploitation and often lacked access to essential services and protection mechanisms.
- Female-Headed Households, representatively faced multiple challenges, including economic hardship, social exclusion, and heightened protection risks.
- Members of minority clans are often marginalized and face discrimination, increasing their vulnerability to protection risks.

STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Comprehensive findings from KIIs, FGDs and quantitative data analysis across Bosasso, Luuq, and South Galkacyo inform the recommendations presented in this section. These recommendations address the critical protection risks, barriers to essential services, and conflict dynamics identified during the study. They emphasize the need for conflict-sensitive, inclusive, and sustainable humanitarian and development programming approaches.

a. Strengthening Community-Based Protection Mechanisms

Stakeholders: FGS, State Governments, Local Community Leaders, International Organizations

- Train community-based protection committees in early warning systems and rights-based approaches to proactively address emerging protection risks.
- Support local peacebuilding initiatives by providing mediation and negotiation training to traditional leaders, prioritizing their significant role in resolving disputes, as evidenced in Luuq.
- Establish community safety hubs in high-risk areas such as Bossaso, focusing on locations with heightened risks of GBV and theft.

b. Improving Access to Essential Services for Vulnerable Groups

Stakeholders: Humanitarian Actors, Local Authorities, NGOs, Private Sector

- Expand mobile service units in underserved areas like Luuq, addressing barriers such as long distances to service points.
- Introduce voucher-based systems or subsidized services, particularly in Bossaso, to alleviate high service costs for vulnerable populations.
- Ensure all new health, education, and water infrastructure is accessible to persons with disabilities, addressing long-standing physical barriers in communities.

c. Ensuring Transparency and Equity in Aid Distribution

Stakeholders: Donors, Humanitarian Organizations, Local Authorities, Civil Society

- Develop a transparent aid distribution framework involving representatives from different clans, genders, and vulnerable groups to foster inclusivity and fairness.
- Use community notice boards, radio programs, and digital platforms to share aid distribution schedules and criteria, ensuring that processes are transparent and accessible.

- Establish anonymous reporting mechanisms for communities to raise concerns about aid delivery, improving trust and accountability.

d. Promoting Conflict-Sensitive Programming

Stakeholders: Humanitarian Organizations, Donors, Local Governments

- Conduct conflict analyses to identify potential risks and ensure that programs do not exacerbate tensions.
- Engage diverse stakeholders, including marginalized groups and traditional leaders, to inform inclusive program design and implementation.
- Integrate peacebuilding elements into service delivery programs, such as youth engagement and conflict resolution training, especially in areas like Bossaso with recurring tensions.

e. Addressing Youth-Related Conflicts Through Livelihood Support

Stakeholders: NGOs, Donors, Private Sector

- Provide market-relevant vocational training programs targeting youth, particularly in Bossaso, where unemployment drives tensions.
- Offer start-up capital for youth-led businesses and cooperatives to create economic opportunities.
- Establish youth dialogue platforms to involve them in peacebuilding efforts and foster positive roles within communities.

f. Strengthening Coordination Between Humanitarian Actors and Local Authorities

Stakeholders: Humanitarian Agencies, Local Governments, Regional Coordination Bodies

- Create district-level coordination platforms for joint planning and implementation of interventions.
- Organize regular review meetings to assess ongoing programs and address challenges collaboratively.
- Develop shared information systems for stakeholders to streamline interventions and improve efficiency.

g. Increasing Awareness and Reporting of Aid Diversion

Stakeholders: Donors, Humanitarian Organizations, Local Media

- Conduct community awareness campaigns using local languages to inform the public about available services and their eligibility criteria.
- Establish safe, anonymous complaint mechanisms to encourage reporting of aid misuse or exclusion.
- Regularly share audit results and corrective actions with communities to build trust and demonstrate accountability.

h. Integrating Political Economy Analysis (PEA) into Future Programming

Stakeholders: Donors, Humanitarian Actors, Policy Makers

- Use PEA selectively in high-conflict areas or where governance challenges are significant to understand power dynamics and resource allocation issues better.
- Apply PEA findings to enhance stakeholder mapping and identify actors influencing service delivery and conflict dynamics.
- Embed PEA insights in strategic planning to address structural barriers without overcomplicating implementation.

i. Fostering Continuous Stakeholder Dialogue and Liaison Mechanisms

Stakeholders: Humanitarian Organizations, Local Authorities, Donors, Community Leaders

- Establish regular dialogue forums involving diverse stakeholders, including service providers, local authorities, community leaders, and humanitarian actors, to enhance coordination and address emerging challenges.
- Create a liaison structure in each district to serve as a communication bridge between communities and service providers, ensuring real-time feedback and issue resolution.
- Continuously monitor community perceptions and attitudes toward programming through periodic surveys and focus group discussions, adapting interventions to meet evolving needs.
- Support inclusive community consultations to ensure vulnerable groups, such as minorities, marginalized groups, women, youth, and persons with disabilities, are actively engaged in decision-making processes.

- Use the forums to promote shared learning by documenting and disseminating best practices and lessons learned across locations to inform and improve future programming.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Somalia has faced complex humanitarian challenges for decades due to conflict, political instability, and recurring climatic shocks. These factors have led to widespread displacement, heightened protection risks, and limited access to essential services, particularly in conflict-affected districts like Bosasso, Luuq, and South Galkacyo. Vulnerable groups, including women, children, persons with disabilities, and minority clans, are disproportionately affected. In Luuq, clan-based conflicts significantly contribute to instability, frequently displacing populations and exposing them to various protection risks. According to a 2024 report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), over 30,000 individuals have been displaced due to ongoing tribal clashes in the Gedo region. These displaced populations face heightened risks of gender-based violence (GBV), forced evictions, and child exploitation, with limited access to basic services such as healthcare, shelter, and education. Similarly, Bosasso and South Galkacyo have experienced recurrent clan disputes and resource-based conflicts, exacerbating protection concerns and reducing the availability of critical services.

Access to essential services, including healthcare, water, education, and protection, remains a significant challenge in these districts. High costs, long distances, and insecurity prevent many displaced and vulnerable populations from utilizing available services. As noted in OCHA's 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, less than 30% of displaced households in Bosasso and South Galkacyo have consistent access to health services. Furthermore, GBV response services and psychosocial support remain under-resourced, with utilization rates reported below 10% across all districts. The broader conflict dynamics in the region further compound protection risks and barriers to accessing services. Strained relations between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and Jubaland State (JSS) and recurring border tensions with Ethiopia have contributed to a fragile security environment that hinders effective humanitarian aid delivery. Local disputes and political rivalries have disrupted humanitarian efforts in key areas, leaving many vulnerable groups without necessary support.

Given this context, addressing protection risks, and improving access to services require well-coordinated, conflict-sensitive, and inclusive approaches. This report aims to analyze the current protection risks, access to essential services, and conflict dynamics in Bosasso, Luuq, and South Galkacyo. By leveraging a mixed-method approach—combining quantitative surveys, qualitative Key Informant Interviews (KIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and desk review—the study

seeks to offer evidence-based recommendations for targeted interventions that enhance community safety, dignity, and resilience.

1.2 Assessment Objectives

This Conflict and Protection Sensitivity assessment aims to map protection risks, vulnerabilities, and threats affecting various population groups, including women, men, boys, girls, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities. Specifically, the assessment aims to:

a. Assess the level of protection required by displaced populations and communities at risk, focusing on the various protection risks that expose civilians to rights violations and threats to their safety. b. Identify existing strategies and resources for recognizing, mitigating, and addressing the protection risks and issues faced by vulnerable groups. c. Evaluate the availability of essential services and protection mechanisms, assess their accessibility for people at heightened risk, and identify key barriers preventing access to these services. d. Develop approaches to improve service delivery for the most vulnerable groups by applying protection risk and vulnerability criteria to ensure targeted and effective interventions. e. Analyze conflict dynamics that may influence or hinder access to humanitarian services and pose additional risks to vulnerable communities. f. Determine whether existing or planned interventions have the potential to exacerbate conflict and assess opportunities for improving conflict-sensitive programming to mitigate such risks. g. Provide actionable recommendations for integrating conflict sensitivity into protection programming to ensure a “do no harm” approach and contribute to peacebuilding efforts. h. Understand the causes, actors, and dynamics of conflict in the targeted districts, including identifying key drivers of tension and their impact on local communities and service access.

These objectives form the foundation of the data collection and analysis processes, ensuring that the findings are relevant, actionable, and aligned with NRC’s overarching goals of improving protection outcomes and fostering stability in conflict-affected areas.

2. Methodological Approach

This section outlines the methodological approach employed for the Conflict and Protection Sensitivity Analysis conducted in Bosasso, Luuq, and South Galkacyo districts. The methodology was designed to comprehensively address the study’s objectives by adopting a mixed-method approach, integrating quantitative surveys, qualitative data collection, and a desk review of secondary data sources. This triangulated approach captured diverse perspectives, enabling a holistic understanding of protection risks, service accessibility, and conflict dynamics.

2.1 Study Design

The study utilized a participatory and inclusive research design, combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The quantitative component involved structured household surveys to generate measurable data on key indicators of displacement, protection risks, and access to services. The qualitative component, which included Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), provided in-depth insights into the lived experiences of affected populations and key stakeholders. A desk review was also conducted to contextualize findings and align the analysis with existing literature, national policies, and regional frameworks on conflict sensitivity and protection.

2.2 Sampling Strategy

The Cochran Sample Size Calculation formula was used at a confidence level of 95% and margin of error of 5% to arrive at a minimum sample of 385 households across all districts. The Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) sampling method was employed to ensure that the sample size reflected the relative population of each district. The total sample size consisted of 385 households, distributed across the districts as follows:

State	Districts	Estimated Population	PPS (%)	Sample Size
Galmudug	South Galkacyo	61,200	36.1%	139
Jubbaland	Luuq	33,820	20.0%	77
Puntland	Bosasso	74,287	43.9%	169
Total Population		169,307	100%	385

This sample ensured adequate representation of key demographic groups, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), host communities, and vulnerable populations such as women, children, and persons with disabilities.

Data Collection Methods

Quantitative Data Collection

Quantitative data was collected through a structured household questionnaire to capture critical information on protection risks, access to essential services, and local conflict dynamics. The questionnaire covered various indicators, including the prevalence of protection risks and violations, availability and utilization of essential services such as healthcare, education, water, and sanitation, and the impact of conflict on humanitarian service delivery. Trained enumerators

conducted face-to-face interviews with selected households, ensuring that the data collected was consistent, accurate, and reflective of the diverse experiences of the respondents across Bosasso, Luuq, and South Galkacyo.

Qualitative Data Collection

The qualitative data collection process involved Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to gather detailed perspectives on community experiences, service accessibility, and protection mechanisms. A total of 18 KIIs were conducted with key stakeholders, including local leaders, government officials, humanitarian actors, and service providers. These interviews focused on understanding protection challenges, the dynamics of local conflicts, existing response mechanisms, and the effectiveness of service delivery in the targeted districts.

Additionally, nine FGDs were facilitated with diverse community groups, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), host communities, and persons with disabilities. Each FGD comprised 8 to 12 participants and explored various themes, such as perceptions of safety, barriers to accessing essential services, and community coping mechanisms. The FGDs provided rich qualitative insights that complemented the quantitative data, offering a deeper understanding of the socio-political and economic context in which protection and conflict issues arise.

Table 1: KIIs and FGDs involved in the study.

State	Districts	Proposed Stakeholders	Method	Sample Size
Galmudug, Puntland and Jubbaland	South Galkacyo, Bosasso & Luuq	Persons Living with Disabilities (PLWDs)	FGD	3
		Host Community	FGDs	3
		IDPs	FGDs	3
		District Authorities & Officials.	KIIs	6
		Traditional & Religious Leaders	KIIs	6
		State Government Actors i.e.	KIIs	3
		Private Sector Actors or Service Providers i.e. Health care providers	KIIs	3

Desk Review

A comprehensive desk review for conflict sensitivity analysis in humanitarian protection assistance, with the aim to provide a response contextual background for a study, specifically focusing on the three study districts. The review synthesizes secondary data from various sources, including reports from humanitarian organizations, government policy documents, and peer-reviewed academic literature. This review also serves as a cross-reference and validation for

fieldwork findings, ensuring a robust analysis of protection risks, access to services, and conflict-sensitive programming.

Socio-Economic and Political Context

The study target districts of Bosaaso, Luuq and Galkayo south, has distinct socio-economic and political landscapes. Unique to the study was Galkayo city, which has historically been a point of contention between the Darod and Hawiye clans, with the Darod dominating the north and the Hawiye the south². This division is mirrored in the political affiliations, with North Galkayo aligned with Puntland and South Galkayo with Galmudug³. Somalia's complex clan-based social networks and coping strategies significantly influence the protection of vulnerable and displaced community members. The desk reviews advised the political economy analysis comparing the divides in Galkayo North and South with the contexts in Luuq and Bosaaso districts:

Clanist Social Networks and Coping Strategies

Somalia's social structure is deeply rooted in clan affiliations, which play a crucial role in social, economic, and political life. The major clans, such as the Darod, Hawiye, Dir, and Rahanweyn, are further divided into sub-clans, creating a complex web of relationships⁴. These networks provide social support, conflict resolution, and resource sharing, but they can also lead to exclusion and marginalization of minority groups⁵.

In response to ongoing conflicts, droughts, and economic hardships, Somali communities have developed various coping strategies. These include reliance on remittances from the diaspora, community-based support systems, and informal savings groups⁶. However, these strategies are often strained by the scale of displacement and the limited resources available⁷.

Galkayo North and South

Galkayo is a city divided between the Puntland-administered north and the Galmudug-administered south, reflecting the broader clan divide between the Darod (Majerteen) in the north

² <https://www.nrc.no/countries/africa/somalia/>

³ <https://www.nrc.no/resources/reports/brcjs-iii-baseline-report/>

⁴ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a089fce5274a31e000036c/hdq949.pdf>

⁵ <https://gsdrc.org/publications/somali-networks-structures-of-clan-and-society/>

⁶ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/101890>

⁷ <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/addressing-silent-mental-health-epidemic-somalia>

and the Hawiye (Habar Gidir) in the south⁸. This division has led to frequent clashes and a lack of cohesive governance, exacerbating the vulnerability of displaced persons and limiting access to basic services. Consequently, the clan-based protection mechanisms are strong within each respective area but weak across the divide. The lack of cooperation between the two administrations hampers efforts to provide consistent protection and support to vulnerable populations. This results in fragmented aid delivery and increased insecurity for those living near the dividing line⁹.

Luuq and Bosaaso

To the far south of Somalia in the Gedo region, is the study district of Luuq, that faces challenges from ongoing conflicts and recurrent droughts. The local population relies heavily on traditional coping mechanisms, such as clan support networks and remittances. However, the presence of multiple armed groups and the lack of a strong central authority make it difficult to ensure consistent protection for vulnerable groups¹⁰.

Bosaaso on the other hand to the far North of Somalia, is a major port city in the Bari region, Bosaaso has a more diverse population and better access to resources compared to Luuq and Galkayo at the centre. The city's strategic importance has attracted significant investment and international aid, which has helped improve infrastructure and services. However, clan dynamics still play a crucial role in determining access to resources and protection. The presence of Puntland's administration provides a more stable environment for implementing protection measures, but challenges remain in addressing the needs of marginalized groups¹¹.

Comparative Analysis

In terms of governances to which protection is attributable, Galkayo's divided governance leads to fragmented protection efforts, while Bosaaso benefits from a more stable administration. Luuq, with its weaker governance structures, struggles to provide consistent protection. Notably clear through the literature and reports across all study areas, clan networks are vital for social support and protection. However, in Galkayo, the clan divide exacerbates vulnerabilities, whereas in Bosaaso, the more diverse population and stronger administration mitigate some of these issues. This dynamics determine access to resources – whence the greater affluence observable in Bosaaso's strategic location and investments that tend to attract more resources, improving

8 https://hiiraan.com/news4/2015/Dec/102991/galkayo_and_somalia_s_dangerous_faultlines.aspx

9 <https://pdrcsomalia.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Galkayo-Re-assessment-Report.pdf>

10 a.org/publications/report/somalia/somalia-joint-multi-cluster-needs-assessment-luuq-district-profile-gedo-region-august

11 <https://www.robertk.space/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Bosaso-Area-Brief-Dec-2015.pdf>

protection mechanisms. In contrast, Galkayo and Luuq face significant challenges due to limited resources and ongoing conflicts. Overall, while clanist social networks and coping strategies are essential for protection in Somalia, the effectiveness of these mechanisms varies significantly based on local governance, resource availability, and the extent of clan divisions.

Humanitarian Protection and Assistance

The reviews also determined the humanitarian situation in Somalia as being dire, with nearly 7 million people requiring assistance due to conflict, drought, and other shocks. The NRC has been actively involved in providing protection and assistance, focusing on those most at risk¹². OCHA's Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) for 2024 highlights the need for \$1.6 billion to assist 5.2 million people¹³.

It was also understood that protection risks in Somalia largely stem from violence, exploitation, abuse, and deprivation, particularly in conflict and displacement situations¹⁴. The UNHCR's Protection and Solutions Monitoring reports highlight the urgent need for assistance for displaced populations, emphasizing the vulnerabilities of women, children, and persons with disabilities¹⁵.

This reaffirms the principle desire to assess, survey and deploy data and evidence to inform conflict-sensitive programming that is essential to address the root causes of displacement and ensure sustainable solutions. The National Durable Solutions Strategy (NDSS) 2020-2024 outlines a collective vision for implementing durable solutions programming in Somalia¹⁶. This strategy emphasizes the need for integrated and systematic approaches to address displacement and its consequences¹⁷.

An equally important lens of consideration was on matters of Housing, land, and property (HLP) rights are deemed by the response as critical issues in Somalia, particularly for displaced populations. The Global Protection Cluster's Joint Advocacy Paper on HLP rights highlights the challenges of tenure insecurity, forced evictions, and land grabbing¹⁸. Addressing these issues is crucial for ensuring the protection and rights of displaced persons and they are strongly linked to

¹² <https://www.nrc.no/countries/africa/somalia/>

¹³ https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/migrated/2019-08/iasc_framework_on_durable_solutions_for_idps_april_2010.pdf

¹⁴ https://globalprotectioncluster.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/som_pau_somalia-protection-analysis_feb2022.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/somalia/somalia-humanitarian-dashboard-january-november-2024>

¹⁶ <https://www.unocha.org/publications/map/somalia/somalia-access-working-group-severity-access-overview-14-january-2025>

¹⁷ <https://reliefweb.int/map/somalia/somalia-access-working-group-severity-access-overview-14-january-2025>

¹⁸ <https://www.ftlsomalia.com/chf2024-presents-report-on-prevention-of-aid-diversion-in-somalia/>

post-distribution aid diversion concerns, which currently remains a significant challenge in Somalia – reflected from reports from UNICEF and other organizations emphasize the need for enhanced post-distribution monitoring and accountability measures to prevent aid from falling into the wrong hands¹⁹.

Other notable parametric areas were on access to protection assistances and resources and consideration from the Somalia Access Working Group reports on the severity of access constraints, highlighting the challenges faced by humanitarian actors in delivering assistance²⁰. These constraints are exacerbated by ongoing conflict and insecurity, particularly in regions like Mudug²¹. This are also reflected through the Inter-Agency Coordination calling on better and effective inter-agency coordination is vital for a coherent humanitarian response. The Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) and the Joint Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (JMCNA) provide valuable insights into the needs and priorities of affected populations²². These assessments inform strategic planning and response efforts.

The study findings and commendations thereto are equally informed by the iasc framework for IDP situation management and guidances thereto on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons to establish and find pathways to achieving their durable solutions, with an emphasis on the importance of long-term safety, security, and access to essential services for displaced populations²³. ^[24].

Data Analysis

The data analysis process involved several steps to ensure accuracy and reliability:

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative data analysis involved a systematic process to ensure accuracy and reliability. Data collected from the household surveys was cleaned and validated to remove errors and

¹⁹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/national-durable-solutions-strategy-2020-2024>

²⁰ <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/somalia/somalia-inter-cluster-coordination-group-iccg-compendium-meeting-minutes-2019>

²¹ <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/somalia/somalia-joint-multi-cluster-needs-assessment-november-2019-round-iii>

²² <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/som>

²³ <https://arablandinitiative.gltm.net/library/publications/joint-advocacy-paper-housing-land-and-property-rights-in-somalia>

²⁴ <https://land.igad.int/index.php/documents-1/countries/somalia/urbanization-4/953-housing-land-and-property-rights-in-the-south-central-somalia-preliminary-assessment-proposed-strategies-2008/file>

inconsistencies. The cleaned dataset was then analyzed using statistical software to generate key insights. Descriptive analysis was performed to produce statistical summaries of demographic characteristics, protection risks, and access to essential services across the districts. Comparative analysis was conducted to identify variations in protection needs and service availability among Bosasso, Luuq, and South Galkacyo. Additionally, trend analysis was employed to examine patterns in displacement and protection risks over time, providing insights into temporal changes affecting vulnerable populations.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) underwent a rigorous analysis process. The data was transcribed, coded, and thematically analyzed to identify recurring themes related to protection risks, conflict dynamics, and barriers to accessing services. Thematic coding allowed for the categorization of responses, which highlighted critical issues faced by different population groups, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), host communities, and persons with disabilities. This analysis provided in-depth contextual information that enriched the quantitative findings, offering a more nuanced understanding of the protection and conflict landscape in the study areas.

Triangulation

Triangulation was employed to ensure a comprehensive and balanced analysis by cross-referencing data from quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, and the desk review. This approach enhanced the study's validity by corroborating findings from different sources, thereby reducing biases and ensuring the robustness of the results. Triangulation also allowed for a holistic interpretation of the key issues, ensuring that statistical trends and lived experiences were adequately captured and integrated into the final analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Given the sensitive nature of the information collected, strict ethical protocols were followed throughout the study:

- **Informed Consent:** All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and verbal consent was obtained before data collection.
- **Confidentiality:** Personal information was anonymized, and data was stored securely to protect participants' identities.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Data collection tools and processes were designed to be culturally appropriate, ensuring respect for local norms and values.

- Do No Harm Principle: Enumerators and facilitators were trained to conduct interviews to minimize potential distress to participants.

Challenges Encountered During Data Collection

Several challenges were encountered during data collection in Bosasso, Galkacyo, and Luuq, impacting the quality and reach of the assessments for protection risks and mitigation measures. Respondents preferred tangible assistance and experienced survey fatigue due to repeated assessments, leading to disengagement. The failure to observe improvements post-survey exacerbated this issue.

Low literacy levels among respondents led to difficulties in gathering detailed information on complex topics, potentially resulting in biased responses. Additionally, there was reluctance to engage with key government departments due to discomfort in discussing sensitive matters.

Suspicion towards humanitarian organizations and concerns about the use of culturally sensitive data further hindered participation. Local facilitators and extended time were necessary to build trust and mitigate response biases. Simplifying survey instruments and localizing questionnaires to match literacy levels were essential to improving data quality and encouraging cooperation from government officials.

Bosasso

- Reluctance to participate: Many respondents, particularly from IDP and host communities, were hesitant to engage in interviews, preferring to receive tangible assistance rather than answer survey questions.
- Frustration with repeated assessments: Community members expressed dissatisfaction with frequent interviews from humanitarian organizations without corresponding improvements in their living conditions.
- Limited education levels: Low literacy levels among respondents made it difficult to gather in-depth responses, particularly on technical or complex topics.
- Difficulty accessing government officials: Securing appointments with government officials proved challenging due to their heavy workloads and limited availability, causing delays in data collection.

South Galkacyo

- Cultural sensitivities: Discussions on sensitive issues, particularly gender-based violence (GBV), were hindered by cultural norms, leading to reluctance among respondents to share detailed information.
- Suspicion towards humanitarian organizations: Some respondents were reluctant to participate due to mistrust, questioning the motives of the assessment.
- Reluctance without direct support: Several individuals refused to provide information unless they received immediate support or services.
- Difficulty in engaging government officials: Similar to Bosasso, accessing local government officials was difficult due to their competing priorities and time constraints.

Luuq

- Poor infrastructure: Inaccessible or poorly maintained roads made it challenging to reach remote communities, particularly in rural areas.
- Lack of reliable transportation: The absence of dependable transportation options further hindered the movement of the data collection team.
- Low literacy levels: Many respondents struggled to understand and respond to survey questions due to limited education, affecting the quality of responses.
- Political and security instability: Periodic clan clashes and political tensions created unsafe conditions for data collectors, limiting access to some locations.

ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

The findings of this report provide a detailed analysis of protection risks, access to essential services, and conflict dynamics across Bosasso, Luuq, and South Galkacyo districts. Drawing on quantitative data, qualitative insights from KII and FGDs, and a comprehensive desk review, the findings highlight key challenges faced by vulnerable populations and offer a basis for evidence-based recommendations to improve service delivery and protection outcomes.

Demographics Characteristics

The table below provides an overview of the demographics characteristics of respondents by district and their gender, based on a 100% response rate. The sample size for each district was determined using the probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling method, ensuring that the number of respondents in each district reflects its relative population size. 43.8% (169) of respondents were from Bosasso, making it the largest sample size. This was followed by 36.3%

(140) from South Galkacyo and 19.9% (77) from Luuq. This proportional representation ensures that the data captures a balanced perspective from each district relative to their populations.

In terms of gender distribution, the majority of respondents across all districts were female. In Bosasso, 93.5% (158) of respondents were female, while 6.5% (11) were male. In Luuq, the gender distribution was more balanced, with 55.8% (43) of respondents being female and 44.2% (34) being male. South Galkacyo reported 77.1% (108) female respondents, while 22.9% (32) were male.

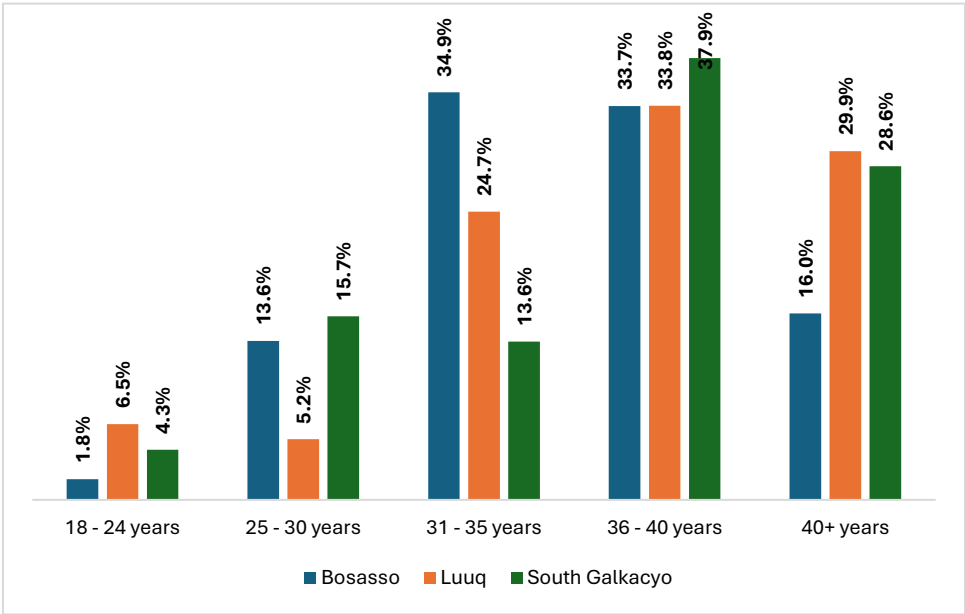
Table 2: Demographic Characteristics

			Count	Percent
District	Bosasso		169	43.8%
	Luuq		77	19.9%
	South Galkacyo		140	36.3%
Gender of Respondent	Bosasso	Female	158	93.5%
		Male	11	6.5%
	Luuq	Female	43	55.8%
		Male	34	44.2%
	South Galkacyo	Female	108	77.1%
		Male	32	22.9%
Household Head	Bosasso	Yes	162	95.9%
		No	7	4.1%
	Luuq	Yes	72	93.5%
		No	5	6.5%
	South Galkacyo	Yes	119	85%
		No	21	15%

Age of the Respondents

The chart below provides an age distribution analysis of respondents across the districts of Bosasso, Luuq, and South Galkacyo, segmented into five age groups: 18–24 years, 25–30 years, 31–35 years, 36–40 years, and 40+ years. In Bosasso, 1.8% of respondents fall into the 18–24 age group, and 13.6% are within the 25–30 age group. The 31–35 age group accounts for the largest proportion of respondents at 34.9%. Additionally, 33.7% of respondents are in the 36–40 age group, while 16.0% are aged 40+ years.

In Luuq, the 18–24 years age group represents 6.5% of respondents, and 5.2% fall within the 25–30 years category. Respondents aged 31–35 make up 24.7%, while those in the 36–40 age group

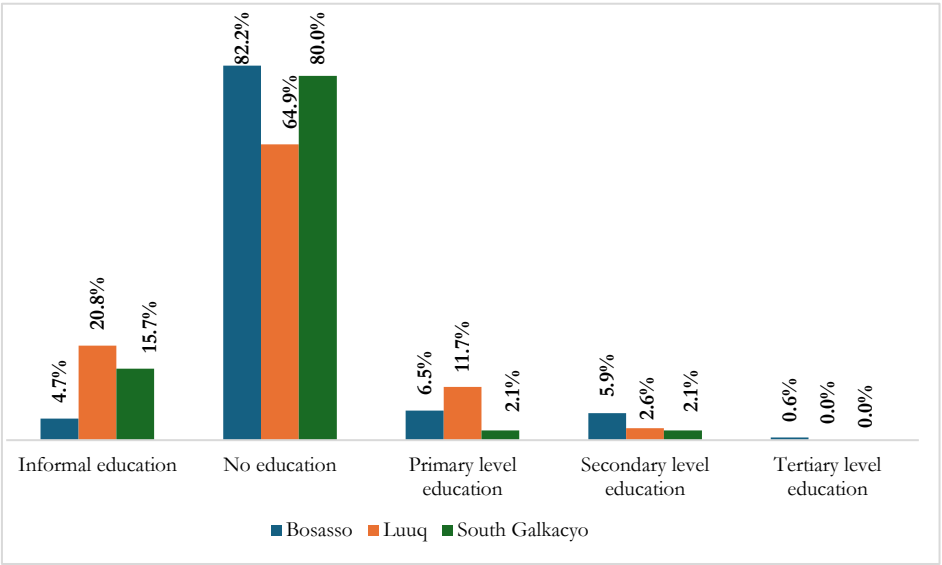


account for 33.8%, the largest proportion. The 40+ years age group constitutes 29.9% of respondents. In South Galkacyo, 4.3% of respondents are aged 18–24 years, and 15.7% are in the 25–30 years category. The 31–35 years age group represents 13.6% of respondents. The largest proportion is in the 36–40 years age group,

accounting for 37.9%, while 28.6% of respondents are in the 40+ years category.

Education Levels of Respondents

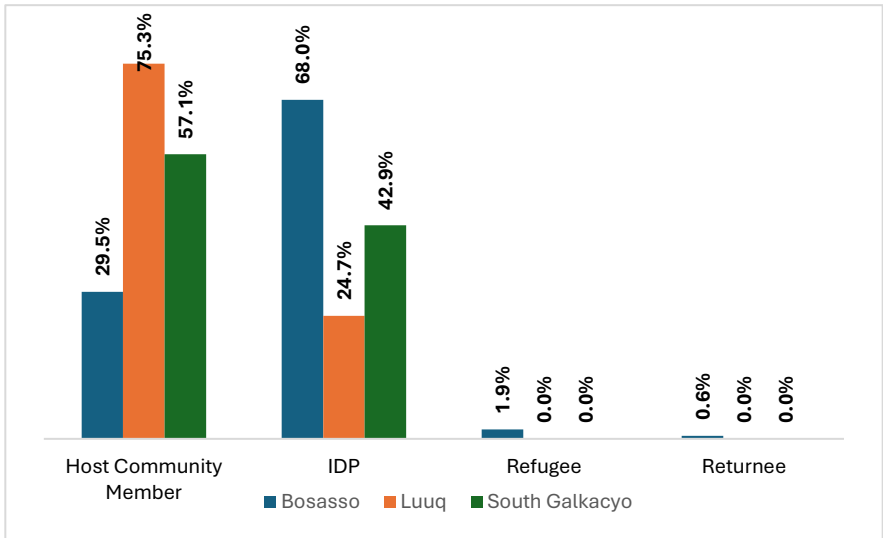
In Bosasso, 4.7% of respondents have informal education, while 82.2% reported having no formal education. 6.5% of respondents attained primary-level education, and 5.9% completed secondary-level education. Only 0.6% of respondents reported having tertiary-level education. In Luuq, 20.8% of respondents reported having informal education, and 64.9% stated they have no formal education. 11.7% of respondents attained primary-level education, and 2.6% completed secondary-level education. None of the respondents in Luuq reported having tertiary-level education (0.0%).



In South Galkacyo, 15.7% of respondents have informal education, while 80.0% indicated having no formal education. 2.1% attained primary-level education, and 2.1% completed secondary-level education. None of the respondents reported having tertiary-level education (0.0%).

Displacement History

Residence Status of the Respondents

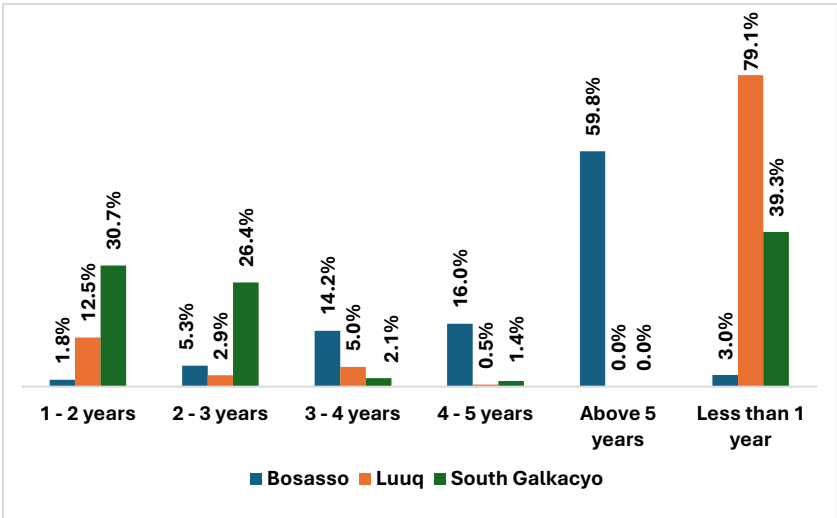


The residency status of respondents disaggregated by district into four categories: host community members, internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and returnees. In Bosasso, 29.5% of respondents identified as host community members, while 68.0% were IDPs. A small proportion, 1.9%, were refugees, and 0.6% identified as returnees.

In Luuq, 75.3% of respondents were host community members, and 24.7% were IDPs. No respondents in Luuq identified as refugees (0.0%) or returnees (0.0%). In South Galkacyo, 57.1% of respondents were host community members, and 42.9% were IDPs. Like Luuq, no respondents identified as refugees (0.0%) or returnees (0.0%).

Length of Displacement

Among those displaced respondents, as shown in the figure above, in Bosasso, the majority (59.8%) reported being displaced for more than 5 years, indicating a long-term displacement trend in this district.



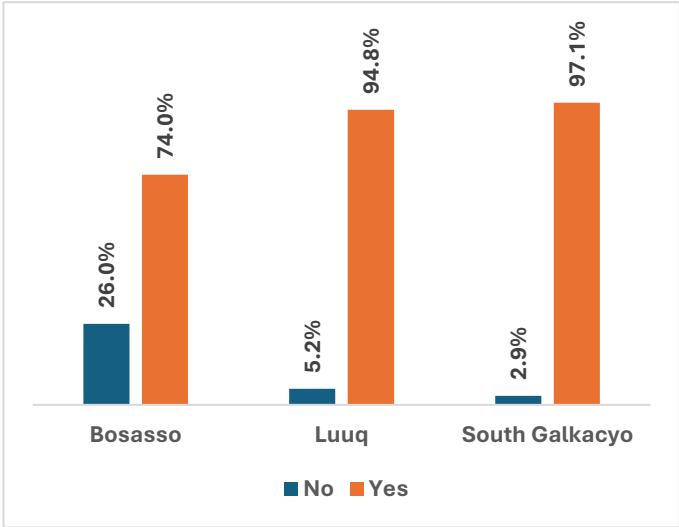
Smaller proportions of respondents reported being displaced for 4–5 years (16.0%), 3–4 years (5.0%), 2–3 years (5.3%), and 1–2 years (1.8%). Only 3.0% of displaced respondents in Bosasso indicated being displaced for less than 1 year.

In Luuq, a significant majority of displaced respondents (79.1%) reported being displaced for less

than 1 year, indicating recent displacement. Other displacement durations were less common, with 12.5% displaced for 1–2 years, 2.9% for 2–3 years, 2.1% for 3–4 years, and 1.4% for 4–5 years. None of the displaced respondents in Luuq reported displacement for more than 5 years (0.0%). In South Galkacyo, displacement patterns were more varied. The largest proportion of displaced respondents (39.3%) reported being displaced for less than 1 year, followed by 30.7% displaced for 1–2 years, and 26.4% displaced for 2–3 years. Smaller proportions reported being displaced for 3–4 years (14.2%) and 4–5 years (2.1%), with no respondents indicating displacement for more than 5 years (0.0%).

Displacement Frequency

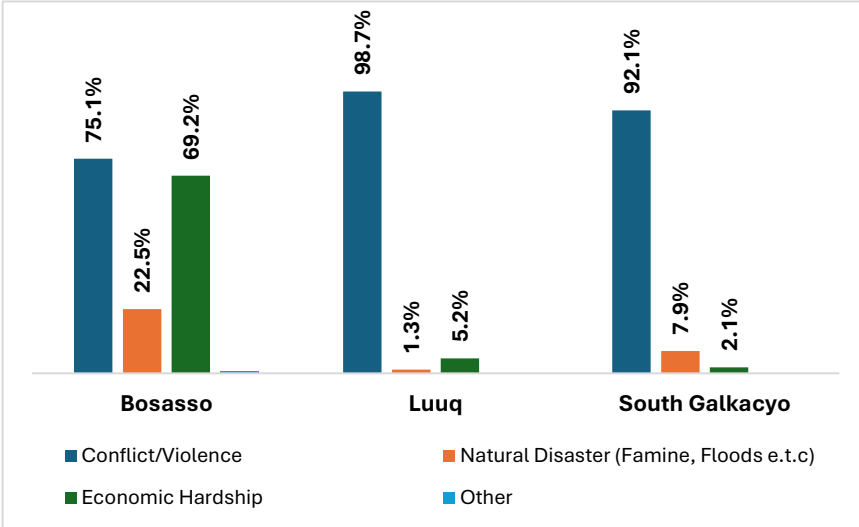
When asked whether they had been displaced multiple times, the majority of internally displaced persons (IDPs) across all districts reported experiencing repeated displacements. In Bosasso, 74% of respondents indicated they had been displaced multiple times, while 26% stated they had not. This reflects a notable degree of instability in the area, although the proportion of those not



experiencing repeated displacement is relatively higher compared to other districts. In Luuq, an overwhelming 94.8% of respondents reported multiple displacements, leaving only 5.2% who had not faced this challenge. Similarly, South Galkacyo showed the highest percentage of individuals experiencing repeated displacement, with 97.1% affirming multiple displacements and only 2.9% reporting otherwise. These findings highlight displacement's severe and widespread nature

in Luuq and South Galkacyo, underscoring the urgent need for interventions to address recurring displacement and promote stability. While Bosasso’s situation is relatively less critical, the high percentage of those affected still points to significant challenges requiring attention.

Reasons for Displacement



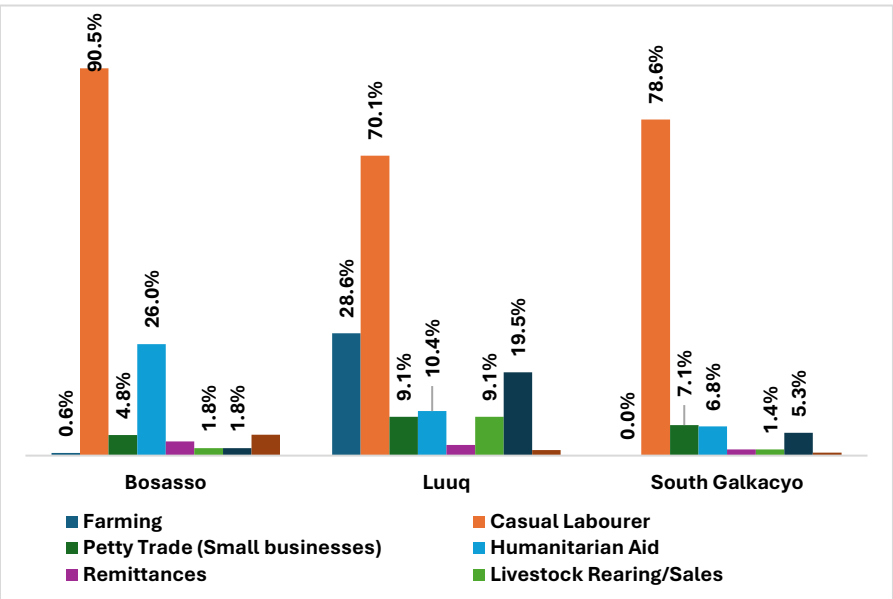
The Figure shows the primary reasons for displacement based on IDP responses in Bosasso, Luuq, and South Galkacyo districts. In Bosasso, 75.1% of respondents identified conflict/violence as the primary reason for their displacement, while 69.2% cited economic hardship. Additionally, 22.5% of respondents attributed their displacement to natural disasters

such as famine or floods. A small proportion of respondents mentioned other reasons, collectively contributing less than 2%. These responses suggest that the displacement in Bosasso is largely influenced by a combination of conflict, economic challenges, and natural disasters.

In Luuq, the responses indicate that 98.7% of the displaced individuals identified conflict/violence as the primary driver of their displacement, making it overwhelmingly the dominant factor. Only 1.3% of respondents cited natural disasters, while 5.2% reported economic hardship as the reason for their displacement. These findings reflect that displacement in Luuq is almost exclusively conflict-driven, with minimal contributions from other factors. In South Galkacyo, 92.1% of respondents indicated that conflict/violence was the primary reason for their displacement. 7.9% of respondents pointed to natural disasters, while 2.1% cited economic hardship.

Main Sources of Livelihoods

According to respondents, the chart highlights the primary sources of livelihood in Bosasso, Luuq, and South Galkacyo, revealing



distinct socioeconomic patterns and variations across the districts. In Bosasso, casual labor emerges as the primary livelihood source, accounting for 90.5% of respondents. Petty trade, involving small businesses, represents 26.0%, making it the second most common source of income. Other sources, including farming (0.6%), remittances (1.8%),

humanitarian aid (1.8%), livestock rearing/sales (0.8%), and self-employment/bush product sales (0.8%), contribute minimally, indicating limited diversification in livelihood options.

In Luuq, casual labor remains the main source of livelihood for 70.1% of respondents. Petty trade follows at 28.6%, reflecting a relatively active informal economy. Humanitarian aid accounts for 10.4%, while livestock rearing/sales and self-employment/bush product sales each contribute 9.1%. Farming is absent as a reported livelihood source in this district (0.0%). This combination suggests that Luuq has a more diverse set of income-generating activities compared to the other districts.

In South Galkacyo, casual labor is the dominant source of livelihood, reported by 78.6% of respondents. Petty trade such as milk sales, vegetable vendors contribute to 7.1% of the respondent's income sources. Humanitarian aid contributes 6.8%, indicating the role of external support in sustaining livelihoods. Other sources, such as remittances (1.4%), livestock rearing/sales (1.4%), and self-employment/bush product sales (5.3%), play an important role. Other sources of income (0.7%) play a negligible role reflecting limited economic activities beyond casual Laborer, petty trade, self-employment, and aid.

Protection Risks & Violations

Risks Faced by respondents in Current Locations

The chart below highlights the findings from the question posed to all respondents regarding the main risks they or their households face in their current location. The analysis reveals significant

variations across South Galkacyo, Luuq, and Bosasso districts. In Bosasso, the most significant risks reported were forced eviction (44.4%), child labor (24.9%), child, early, or forced marriage (23.7%), and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) (23.1%). Additionally, theft, extortion, or destruction was reported by 34.9% of respondents, while physical violence was noted by 9.5%. Discrimination (4.1%) and abduction, kidnappings, or unlawful arrests (0.0%) were less prevalent, with 17.8% of respondents indicating no risk.

In Luuq, forced eviction (20.3%) and physical violence (15.1%) emerged as the primary risks, followed by theft, extortion, or destruction (13.5%) and child labor (9.8%). SGBV was reported by 4.3% of respondents, while child, early, or forced marriage (5.7%) and discrimination (2.5%) were less significant. Only 0.3% reported forced recruitment, and 35.1% indicated they faced no risks.

In South Galkacyo, nearly half of the respondents (47.9%) reported facing no risks, reflecting a comparatively safer environment. However, theft, extortion, or destruction was identified by 38.6%, followed by child, early, or forced marriage (11.6%) and physical violence (3.6%). Other risks, such as SGBV (2.9%) and child labor (4.3%), were less frequently reported. Forced eviction, forced recruitment, and abduction were not reported at all.

Table 3: Risks Faced in the current location.

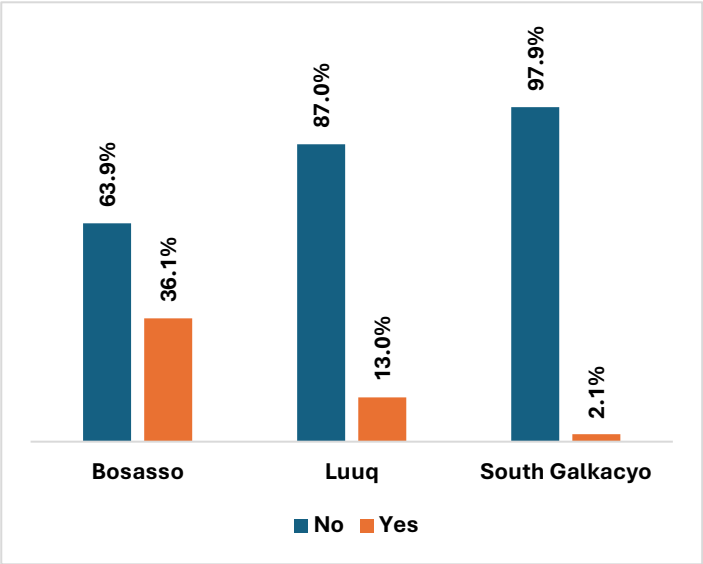
	Bosasso	Luuq	South Galkacyo
Physical Violence	9.5%	5.2%	3.6%
Sexual & Gender Based Violence (SGBV)	23.1%	0.0%	2.9%
Forced Eviction	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Discrimination	4.1%	0.0%	0.7%
Child labour	24.9%	0.0%	4.3%
Child, Early, or Forced Marriage	23.7%	0.0%	3.6%
Theft, Extortion, or Destruction	34.9%	3.9%	38.6%
Abduction, Kidnappings, or unlawful arrests	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Forced recruitment (including children)	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	4.7%	35.1%	3.6%
No risk	17.8%	59.7%	47.9%

The FGDs across Bosasso, Luuq, and South Galkacyo consistently highlighted significant protection risks resulting from displacement. Participants identified key risks, including gender-based violence (GBV), forced evictions, child labor, early or forced marriages, and theft. In Bosasso, IDPs emphasized the high risk of theft and forced evictions, exacerbated by poor lighting and a lack of security presence. Women, in particular, reported experiencing harassment and feeling unsafe

while performing daily tasks such as collecting water. In Luuq, participants raised concerns about the heightened vulnerability of women-headed households, particularly those lacking male family members for protection. Persons with disabilities also reported being disproportionately affected by displacement-related risks, especially in accessing essential services. In South Galkacyo, while the general security situation was perceived as relatively stable, respondents noted that displaced persons and marginalized groups, such as minority clans, face continued risks, particularly related to exclusion from aid and protection services.

Prevalence of Rights Violations Among Households

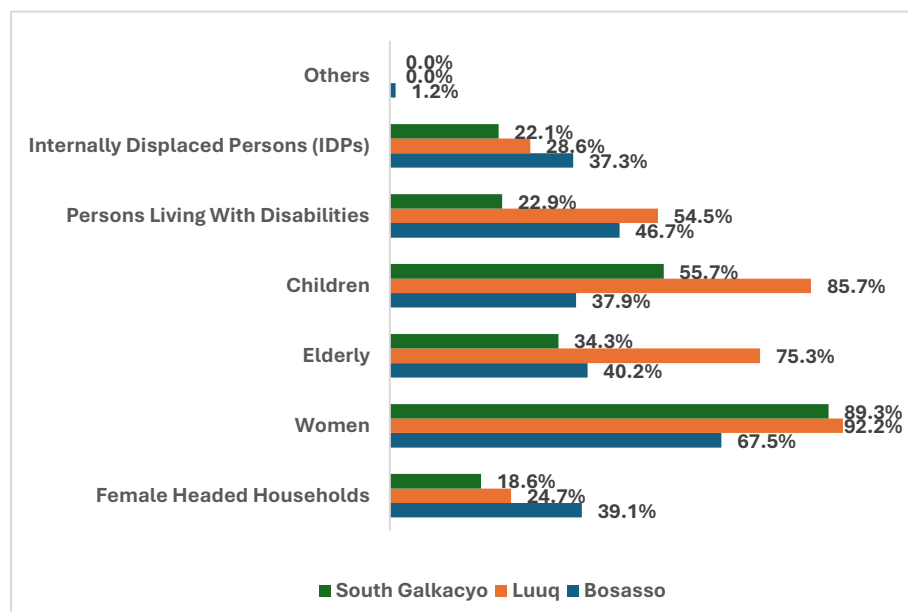
On whether respondents or their household members have experienced violations of rights in the past six months, in Bosasso, 36.1% of respondents indicated that they or someone in their household had experienced rights violations, while 63.9% reported no such incidents. This indicates that over one-third of households in Bosasso have been affected by rights violations, suggesting a moderate level of concern regarding human rights protection in the area. In Luuq, only 13% of respondents reported experiencing rights violations in their households, with a significant majority of 87% indicating no such experiences. This suggests a relatively lower prevalence of rights violations in Luuq compared to Bosasso, potentially reflecting a safer or more stable environment in this district. South Galkacyo demonstrates the lowest proportion of households reporting rights violations, with only 2.1% of respondents indicating they had experienced such incidents. A vast majority of 97.9% reported no rights violations, highlighting South Galkacyo as the district with the least reported cases of rights abuses among the three.



Vulnerable Groups at Risk of Harm or Violations

When asked which groups are most at risk of harm or violations, the responses reveal significant variations across Bosasso, Luuq, and South Galkacyo, highlighting key vulnerabilities within each community. In Bosasso, the group identified as most at risk are women, with 89.3% of respondents highlighting their heightened vulnerability. This is followed by children, with 55.7% indicating significant risks, and persons living with disabilities (PLWD), identified by 46.7% of respondents. Additionally, internally displaced persons (IDPs) (37.3%) and female-headed households (39.1%) were also noted as vulnerable groups. The elderly, at 34.3%, were perceived as facing risks, though to a lesser extent.

In Luuq, the most at-risk group is women, with 92.2% of respondents identifying them as highly



vulnerable. Children closely follow this, with 85.7% indicating they face significant risks. The elderly (75.3%) and persons living with disabilities (54.5%) are also seen as particularly vulnerable. IDPs (28.6%) and female-headed households (24.7%) were highlighted as groups facing moderate risks. In South Galkacyo, while the overall perception of risk is lower, women are still identified as

the most vulnerable group, with 67.5% of respondents pointing to their heightened risk. Children (37.9%), IDPs (22.1%), and PLWD (22.9%) were also identified as at-risk groups, though at significantly lower levels compared to Luuq and Bosasso. The elderly (40.2%) and female-headed households (18.6%) were also noted, albeit with comparatively lower percentages. Across all three districts, women and children are consistently identified as the most at-risk groups, with Luuq showing the highest overall levels of perceived vulnerability. The findings emphasize the need for targeted protective measures, particularly for women, children, and persons living with disabilities, to address the distinct risks faced in these districts.

According to FGDs and KIIs, delivering services effectively to vulnerable groups requires addressing key barriers such as accessibility, affordability, and social exclusion. Participants across all districts consistently emphasized that women and children, especially those from displaced households, face the greatest challenges in accessing services.

A participant from Luuq stated, “The cost of healthcare is too high for many families, and they simply cannot afford it.”

To improve service delivery, participants suggested a range of approaches, including:

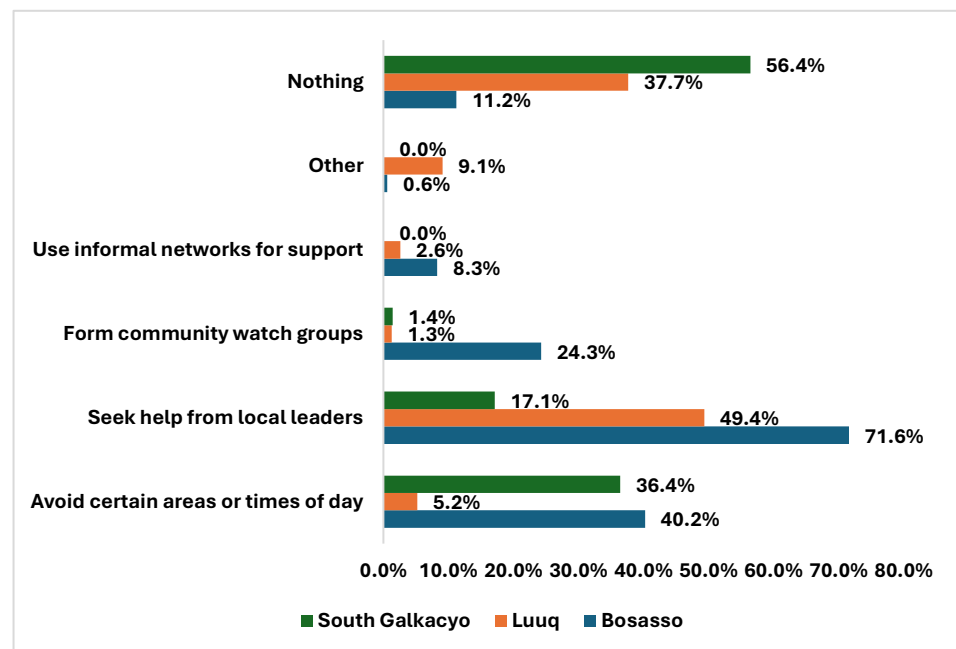
- Participants in South Galkacyo proposed involving local committees in identifying vulnerable individuals, ensuring that aid reaches those most in need without bias.
- Respondents highlighted the success of mobile health clinics in remote areas, suggesting the expansion of such models to include education and protection services.

- Women participants in Bosasso stressed the need for more safe spaces where they can access multiple services, including psychosocial support and legal aid, in a secure environment.
- Participants across all districts emphasized that high costs associated with accessing critical services are a major barrier. Most of the costs are associated with movements and transportation to the service points. They recommended increasing mobile clinics and mobile legal aid services or vouchers for essential services to ease the financial burden on vulnerable households.

Strategies for Staying Safe

The responses to the question of what individuals or communities do to stay safe reveal varying strategies across the districts. In Bosasso, the most common strategy for staying safe is seeking help from local leaders, with 71.6% of respondents indicating this approach. Avoiding certain areas or times of day is another prominent strategy, reported by 40.2%. Forming community watch groups is also practiced, with 24.3% of respondents highlighting this approach. Other strategies, such as using informal networks for support (8.3%) and doing nothing (11.2%), were less commonly reported.

In Luuq, 49.4% of respondents reported seeking help from local leaders as their primary safety strategy. Avoiding certain areas or times of day was mentioned by 36.4% of respondents, indicating its significance in this district as well. Other approaches were less frequently employed, such as forming community watch groups (1.3%) and using informal networks for support (2.6%). Interestingly, 37.7% of Luuq respondents said they do



nothing to stay safe. In South Galkacyo, most respondents (56.4%) reported doing nothing to stay safe, which is notably higher than in the other districts. Avoiding certain areas or times of day was the second most common strategy, with 5.2% of respondents adopting this approach. Seeking help

from local leaders (17.1%) and forming community watch groups (1.4%) were less frequently mentioned. Using informal networks for support was not reported in South Galkacyo.

Insights from KIIs and FGDs indicate that while informal strategies like community watch groups and assistance from local leaders are common, formal mechanisms for mitigating and responding to protection risks are limited. Local authorities, despite their involvement in addressing protection issues, often face significant resource and capacity constraints. Participants highlighted that humanitarian organizations provide critical support, particularly in health and education services, but noted gaps in coordination with local institutions. KIIs further revealed that without sustained capacity-building efforts and improved community outreach, the effectiveness of existing resources remains limited.

Many participants pointed out that while some protection services exist, such as GBV response units and child protection centers, they remain underutilized due to factors such as high costs, fear of stigma, and a lack of awareness among community members. For instance, a local leader in Bosasso mentioned,

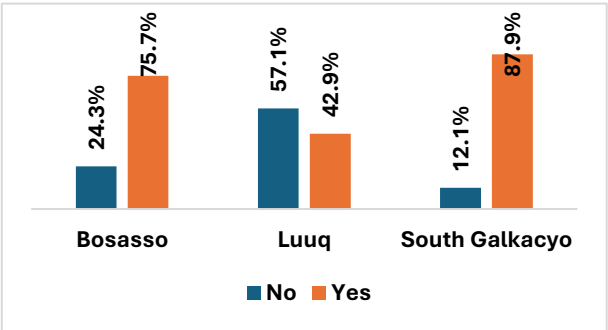
“People don’t use these services because they don’t know about them, they have no direct contacts or are afraid of being judged by others.” **FGD Participant said.**

The FGDs revealed that, in the absence of formal protection mechanisms, communities rely heavily on informal strategies to mitigate risks. Across all three districts, community cohesion, self-organized watch groups, and support from local leaders were cited as key protective measures. In Bosasso, participants noted the formation of informal committees aimed at advocating for protection and reporting issues to humanitarian actors. However, they also highlighted the limited capacity of these committees to address complex protection risks.

In Luuq, participants underscored the role of traditional leaders in conflict resolution and community protection. Respondents emphasized the importance of involving elders and religious leaders in any future programming aimed at mitigating protection risks. In South Galkacyo, respondents mentioned occasional collaborations between local authorities and humanitarian actors. However, they noted that these efforts were sporadic and lacked consistent coordination.

Existence of Community Support Networks by District

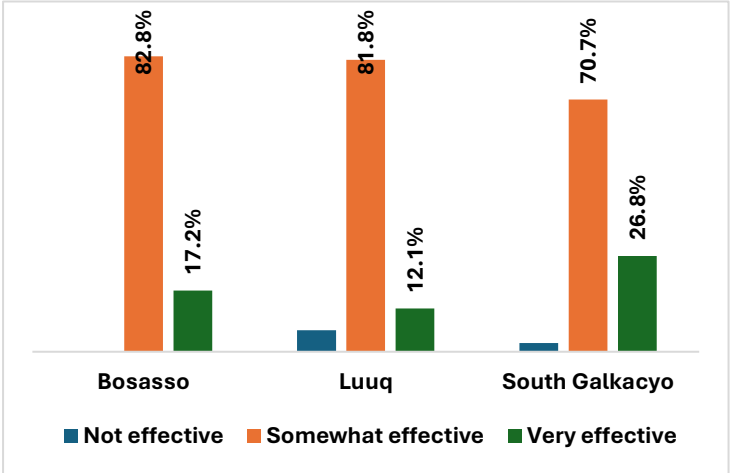
Respondents highlighted varying levels of reliance across the districts when asked whether there are community leaders, groups, or organizations they turn to for help. In Bosasso, 75.7% of respondents indicated they turn to community leaders, groups, or organizations for help, demonstrating a strong reliance on local support networks. However, 24.3% of respondents reported not seeking help from such sources, suggesting that a portion of the population either lacks access to or trust in these support mechanisms.



In Luuq, 42.9% of respondents stated they seek help from community leaders, groups, or organizations, showing a lower reliance on support systems compared to the other districts. A majority of 57.1% reported not turning to these networks for assistance, indicating potential gaps in the availability, accessibility, or effectiveness of community-based support in the district. In South Galkacyo, 87.9% of respondents confirmed they rely on community leaders, groups, or organizations for help, the highest proportion among the three districts. Only 12.1% of respondents indicated they do not seek such support, reflecting a well-established and trusted community support network in this district.

Effectiveness of Community Leaders and Organizations in Addressing Protection Concern

Respondents provided varied feedback across the districts when asked a follow-up question on



how effective community leaders, groups, or organizations are in addressing protection concerns. In Bosasso, 82.8% of respondents rated these entities as "somewhat effective" in addressing protection concerns, indicating that while they are helpful, there is room for improvement. A smaller proportion, 17.2%, considered them "very effective," reflecting confidence in their ability to provide meaningful support. No respondents indicated that these groups were "not

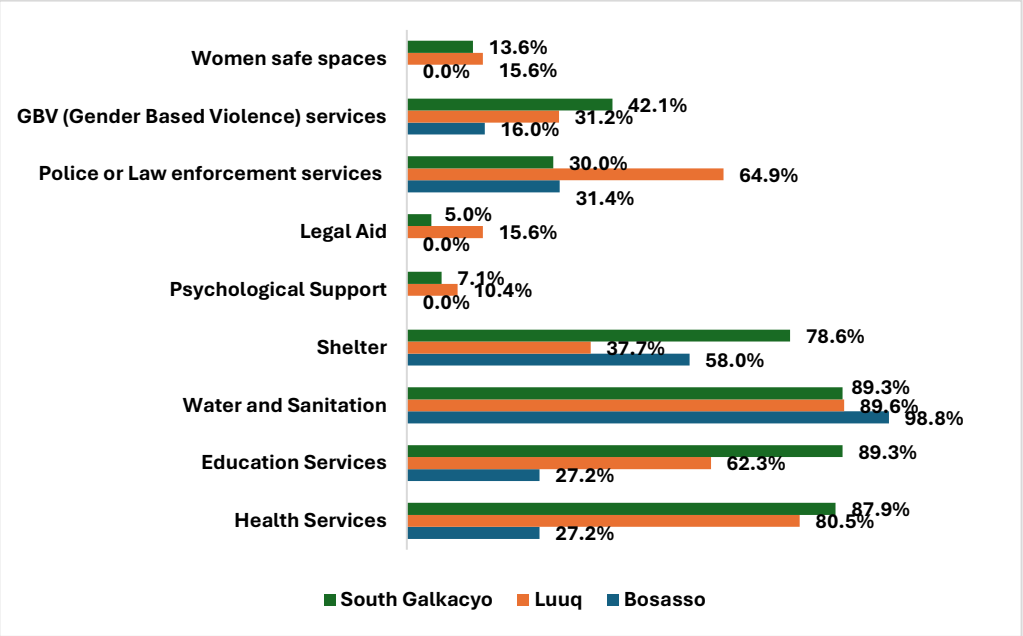
effective."

In Luuq, the majority (81.8%) also rated the effectiveness of these groups as "somewhat effective," similar to Bosasso. However, only 12.1% of respondents found them "very effective," suggesting comparatively less satisfaction with their performance. Again, no respondents categorized them as "not effective." In South Galkacyo, 70.7% of respondents deemed these groups "somewhat effective," slightly lower than in Bosasso and Luuq. A notable 26.8% rated them as "very effective," the highest among the three districts, indicating stronger confidence in the protection efforts in this area. Like the other districts, no respondents found these groups "not effective."

Access to Services and availability of Services

The availability of essential services varies significantly across the districts according to respondents. In South Galkacyo, 78.6% of respondents reported access to shelter services, indicating a relatively high level of availability, though some gaps remain. Water and sanitation services are widely accessible, with 89.3% of respondents confirming availability, strongly emphasizing this critical need. Health services are also broadly available, reported by 87.9% of respondents, highlighting significant healthcare access. However, education services are less prevalent, with only 27.2% of respondents noting their availability. Police or law enforcement services are accessible to 30% of respondents, while gender-based violence (GBV) services are reported by 16%. Women safe spaces, legal aid, and psychological support services are particularly limited, with availability reported by 13.6%, 5%, and 7.1% of respondents, respectively.

In Luuq, water and sanitation services are accessible to 89.6% of respondents, reflecting a robust provision of these essential facilities. Shelter services are available to 58% of respondents, showcasing moderate access compared to other districts. Health



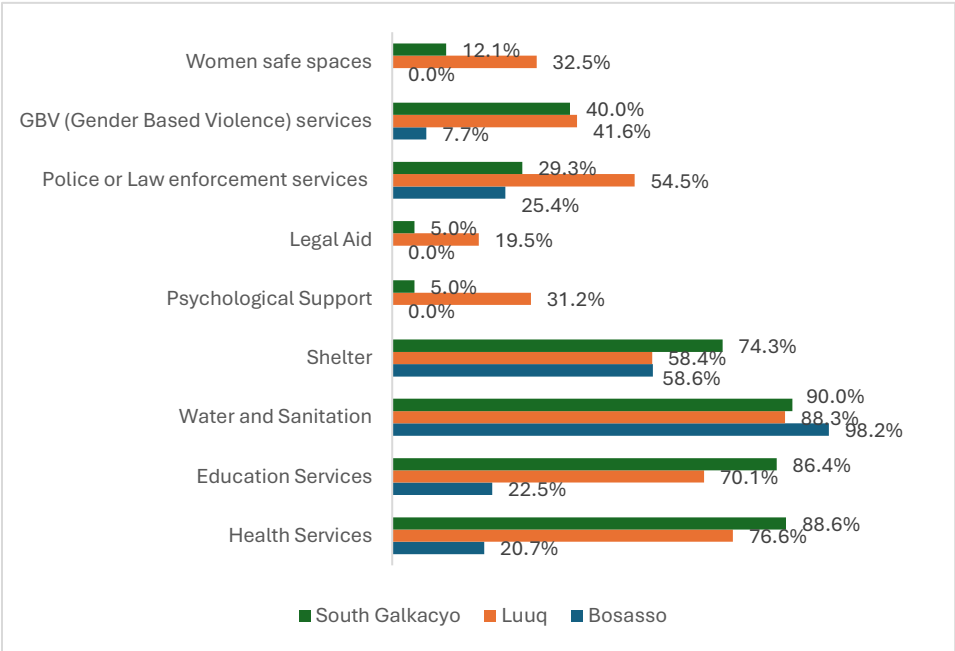
services are widely available, with 80.5% of respondents reporting access, while education services are accessible to 62.3%. Police or law enforcement services were noted by 64.9% of respondents, indicating significant availability. However, GBV services and women safe spaces are less

accessible, reported by 31.2% and 15.6% of respondents, respectively. Legal aid and psychological support services are even more limited, with access levels at 15.6% and 10.4%, respectively. In Bosasso, water and sanitation services are nearly universally available, with 98.8% of respondents reporting access, the highest among the three districts. Health services are also widely accessible, reported by 89.3% of respondents, and education services match this high level of availability at 89.3%. Shelter services, however, are significantly limited, with only 37.7% of respondents indicating access. Police or law enforcement services are available to 31.4% of respondents, while GBV services were reported by 42.1%. Women safe spaces and psychological support services are minimally available, with 15.6% and 10.4% of respondents reporting access. Legal aid services are also scarce, reported by 15.6% of respondents.

Utilization of Available Essential Services

When asked a follow-up question regarding whether they use the above-mentioned available services, the findings indicate that basic services such as water and sanitation, health services, and education services are the most widely used across all districts. Bosasso shows the highest utilization rates. However, protective and specialized services, such as GBV services, women safe spaces, legal aid, and psychological support, remain underutilized in all districts, particularly in South Galkacyo. More specifically, in South Galkacyo, the most utilized services were water and sanitation, with 90% of respondents indicating usage. This was followed by shelter services, used by 74.3% of respondents, highlighting a strong reliance on these basic needs. Health services were used by 76.6%, reflecting a moderate level of healthcare access and usage. However, utilization of other critical services was significantly lower. Only 22.5% of respondents reported that education services were used, and police or law enforcement services were accessed by 29.3%. Utilization of protection services like GBV services (7.7%), women safe spaces (0.0%), legal aid (5.0%), and psychological support (5.0%) was minimal, indicating a lack of access or perceived barriers to these services.

In Luuq, water and sanitation services were widely used, with 88.3% of respondents reporting usage. Health services were utilized by 86.4% of respondents, demonstrating strong access to healthcare. Education services were reported as used by 70.1%, showing significant engagement in educational activities. Shelter services were utilized by 58.6% of respondents, reflecting moderate reliance on housing support. Police or law enforcement services were accessed by 54.5%, indicating relatively high engagement with security services. However, usage of other protective services was considerably lower, with GBV services used by 40%, women safe spaces by 32.5%, psychological support by 31.2%, and legal aid by 19.5%.



In Bosasso, water and sanitation services were the most utilized, with 98.2% of respondents reporting access, the highest across the districts. Health services were also highly utilized, with 88.6% indicating usage, followed by education services at 70.1%. Shelter services were used by 58.4% of respondents, reflecting moderate reliance.

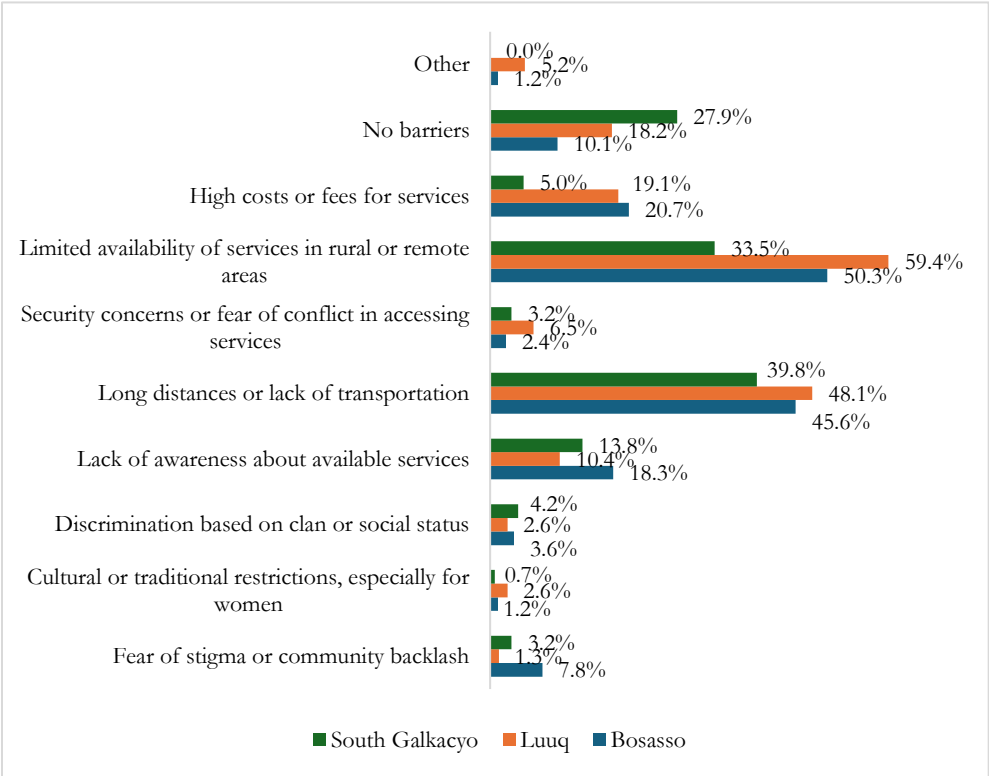
Engagement with police or law enforcement services was notable, with 54.5% reporting usage. Protection services like GBV services were accessed by 41.6% of respondents, women safe spaces by 32.5%, psychological support by 31.2%, and legal aid by 25.4%, showing slightly higher utilization compared to South Galkacyo and Luuq.

Barriers to Accessing Essential Services

The chart highlights the various barriers faced by respondents in accessing essential services across South Galkacyo, Luuq, and Bosasso. The findings, supplemented by insights from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), reveal significant challenges, including systemic issues like limited availability, high costs, and long waiting times. In South

Galkacyo, limited availability of services in rural or remote areas emerged as a major barrier, reported by 33.5% of respondents. Long distances or lack of transportation were also a significant challenge, affecting 39.8%. High costs or fees for services were reported by 19.1%, and lack of awareness about available services was noted by 10.4%. FGDs and KIs highlighted additional issues such as long waiting times and insufficient supplies in critical services like health and education. Cultural or traditional restrictions, especially for women, were reported by 0.7%, while 1.3% cited fear of stigma or community backlash. Interestingly, 27.9% of respondents reported no barriers.

In Luuq, the primary barrier was limited availability of services in rural or remote areas, reported by 59.4% of respondents. Long distances or lack of transportation were also notable, affecting 48.1%. High costs or fees for services were cited by 20.7%, while lack of awareness about available services was identified by 18.3%. FGDs and KIs revealed that long waiting times and staffing shortages compounded the challenges. Fear of stigma or community backlash was reported by 7.8%, significantly higher compared to the other districts. Cultural or traditional restrictions,



especially for women, were reported by 2.6%, and 2.6% highlighted discrimination based on clan or social status. Only 18.2% of respondents reported no barriers.

In Bosasso, the most significant barrier was limited availability of services in rural or remote areas, reported by 59.4% of respondents, the highest across all districts. Long distances or lack of transportation

affected 45.6% of respondents, while high costs or fees for services were reported by 20.7%. Lack of awareness about available services was noted by 10.4%, and fear of stigma or community backlash was reported by 3.2%. FGDs and KIs emphasized long waiting times and insufficient supplies as critical challenges, particularly in healthcare and education. Cultural or traditional

restrictions were reported by 1.2%, and discrimination based on clan or social status was cited by 3.6%. Despite these barriers, 18.2% of respondents reported experiencing no barriers.

Insights from KIIs and FGDs reveal that many community members are unaware of ongoing humanitarian and development interventions, which limits their ability to provide feedback or report issues such as aid diversion or exclusion. In Bosasso, several respondents noted that aid distribution is often perceived as opaque, leading to mistrust and perceptions of favoritism.

A participant in South Galkacyo remarked, “We don’t always know what aid is coming, who it’s for, or when it will be distributed.”

To address this gap, key informants and focus group participants suggested the need for enhanced community awareness campaigns. These campaigns should aim to inform community members about available services, their eligibility criteria, and how they can access them. Additionally, the establishment of transparent feedback and reporting mechanisms was identified as a critical step in preventing aid diversion and ensuring accountability.

Examples of effective practices shared during the discussions included the use of information boards at distribution sites, radio announcements in local languages, and community meetings led by trusted local leaders and aid workers. Respondents emphasized that such initiatives not only improve awareness but also foster trust between aid providers and recipients. Participants also stressed the importance of anonymous reporting channels for community members to safely report instances of aid diversion or exclusion without fear of reprisal. In Luuq, it was noted that some organizations had successfully piloted anonymous complaint boxes, which encouraged more people to report issues and provided valuable feedback for improving aid delivery.

Participants across the districts reported significant barriers to accessing essential services such as healthcare, water, education, and shelter. In Bosasso, water scarcity and inadequate sanitation were repeatedly cited as pressing concerns. Respondents highlighted that the lack of toilets and safe drinking water increased the risk of disease outbreaks. Additionally, high service costs were identified as a key barrier, particularly for IDPs and poor households. In Luuq, participants noted that schools were often far from IDP settlements, posing a safety risk for children, especially girls. High transportation costs and long travel distances further limited access to healthcare facilities. In South Galkacyo, persons with disabilities highlighted physical barriers, such as inaccessible infrastructure, that prevented them from fully utilizing available services. They also pointed out that many service providers lacked trained staff to address the needs of people with disabilities.

Background and Conflict Context

Somalia's conflict dynamics are deeply rooted in a complex interplay of local, national, and regional factors. Locally, land, water, and revenue-sharing disputes drive tensions, especially in areas like Luuq, where competition over scarce resources disrupts community cohesion and

access to services. These resource-based conflicts are further exacerbated by climate change, which intensifies competition among clans and communities reliant on agriculture and pastoralism for their livelihoods²⁵. In South Galkacyo, historical grievances and unresolved disputes between clans remain underlying triggers that threaten to reignite conflict²⁶.

At the national level, governance fragmentation and strained relations between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and member states, such as Jubbaland and Puntland, exacerbate localized tensions. In Puntland, the resurgence of Daesh and other armed groups has created additional layers of insecurity, destabilized the region and diverted resources from critical development and governance initiatives. The presence of extremist groups amplifies the fragility of the region, as they exploit governance gaps and fuel mistrust among communities and local authorities²⁷.

Regionally, border tensions with Ethiopia and the spillover of armed group activities further complicate Somalia's security landscape. Luuq, in particular, has experienced the impacts of cross-border conflicts, where disputes over territory and water rights intersect with local clan dynamics. The fragile relationship between FGS and Jubbaland State undermines collective efforts to address these cross-border challenges, leaving vulnerable populations exposed to displacement and insecurity²⁸.

Humanitarian and development interventions, while essential, often intersect with these conflict dynamics. In Bosasso, inequitable aid distribution and the exclusion of certain groups from decision-making have fueled perceptions of favoritism, leading to heightened local tensions. In South Galkacyo, delays in aid delivery and competition for limited resources have strained relations among displaced populations and host communities²⁹. This underscores the critical need for conflict-sensitive programming that delivers aid equitably and strengthens local capacity for conflict resolution.

The overlapping presence of armed groups, competition over critical resources, and governance challenges highlight the interconnected nature of Somalia's conflict dynamics. Addressing these issues requires an integrated approach considering the broader political, social, and environmental context. Community-driven initiatives and strengthened governance and regional collaboration are

²⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). (2021). Water scarcity and resource conflicts in the Horn of Africa. Rome: FAO.

²⁶ United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM). (2020). Protection in practice: Conflict dynamics and humanitarian challenges in Somalia.

²⁷ International Crisis Group (ICG). (2022). Addressing land-based conflicts in Somalia. Brussels: International Crisis Group.

²⁸ Menkhaus, K. (2018). Elite Bargains and Political Deals: Somalia Case Study. Stabilization Unit, UK Government.

²⁹ World Bank. (2022). Somalia Economic Update: Navigating Conflict and Fragility. Washington, DC: World Bank.

vital to fostering stability, mitigating resource-based conflicts, and countering the influence of extremist groups like Daesh³⁰.

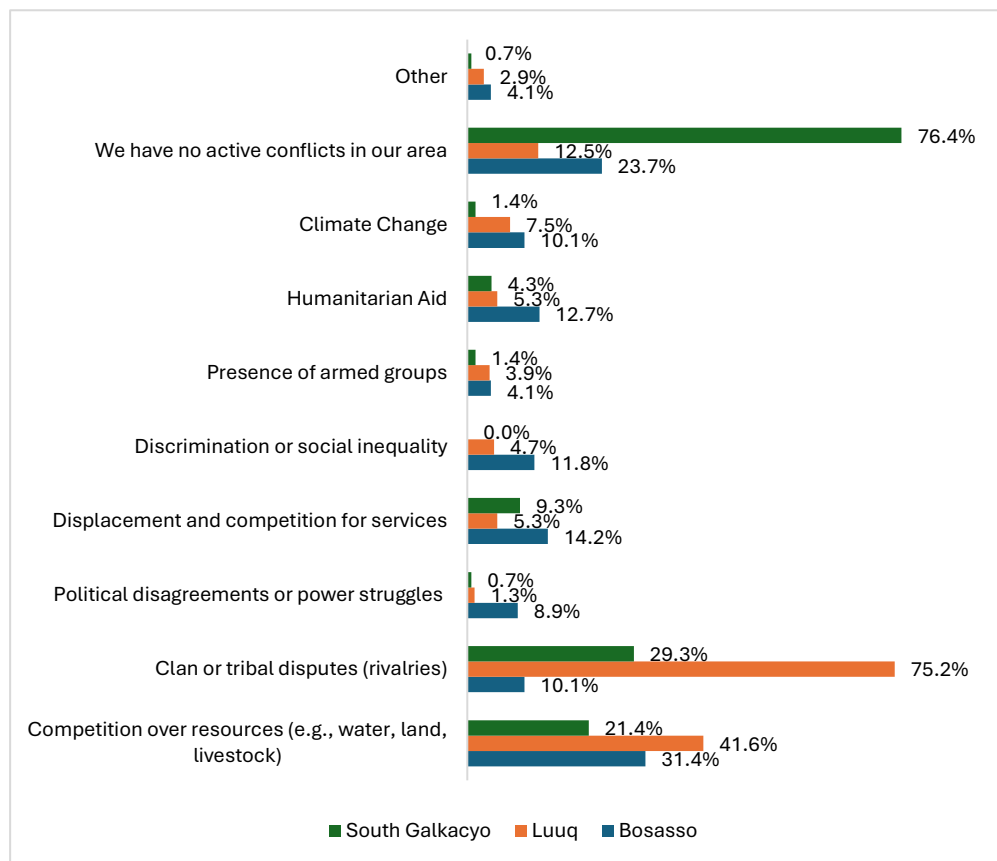
Conflict dynamics and main Causes of conflicts

The analysis finds that most respondents (76.4%) in South Galkacyo reported that there are no active conflicts in their area, indicating a predominantly stable environment. However, some drivers of conflict were still identified. Displacement and competition for services were reported by 5.3%, while climate change was noted by 1.4% of respondents. Competition over resources (10.1%) and clan or tribal disputes (10.1%) were cited as additional contributors, although at relatively low levels. Other factors, including political disagreements or power struggles (0.7%) and the presence of armed groups (1.4%), were minimally reported.

In Luuq, clan or tribal disputes (rivalries) emerged as the predominant cause of conflict, with 75.2% of respondents identifying this issue, underscoring its significant impact on community stability. Competition over water, land, and livestock resources was the second most frequently cited factor, affecting 41.6% of respondents. Other notable causes included displacement and competition for services (14.2%), discrimination or social inequality (11.8%), and humanitarian aid (12.7%). Climate change was identified by 7.5%, while political disagreements or power struggles and the presence of armed groups were reported by 8.9% and 3.9%, respectively. Only 12.5% of respondents reported no active conflicts in their area.

³⁰ Ahmed, I. I., & Green, R. H. (1999). The heritage of war and state collapse in Somalia and Somaliland: Local-level effects, external interventions, and reconstruction. *Third World Quarterly*, 20(1), 113-127.

In Bosasso, the most prominent causes of conflict were competition over resources, reported by 31.4% of respondents, and displacement and competition for services, noted by 14.2%. Clan or tribal disputes were cited by 29.3% of respondents, making them a significant contributor to local tensions. Other factors included discrimination or social inequality (11.8%), humanitarian aid (12.7%), and climate change (10.1%). Political disagreements or power struggles were reported by 8.9%, while the presence of armed groups was mentioned by 4.1%. A notable 23.7% of respondents indicated that there are no active conflicts in their area, reflecting a moderate level of stability compared to Luuq.



Political disagreements or power struggles were reported by 8.9%, while the presence of armed groups was mentioned by 4.1%. A notable 23.7% of respondents indicated that there are no active conflicts in their area, reflecting a moderate level of stability compared to Luuq.

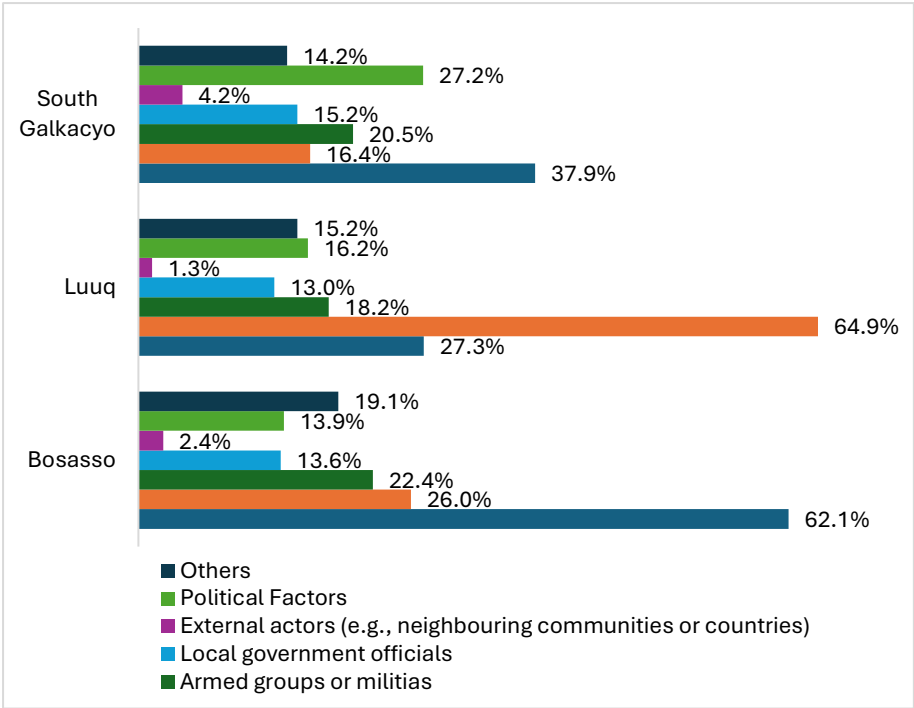
Insights from KIIs and FGDs across the districts revealed distinct and complex conflict dynamics affecting communities. In Luuq, respondents highlighted that recurring tribal conflicts—primarily driven by competition over scarce resources such as water and grazing land—continue to disrupt access to essential services and livelihoods. Participants also reported the involvement of armed groups and local militias in escalating tensions, with some noting that border-related conflicts between Somalia and Ethiopia have had a significant impact on vulnerable groups since 2017. The border tensions between FGS and Ethiopia, combined with the strained relations between FGS and JSS, have further contributed to a fragile environment, particularly for displaced and vulnerable populations. Respondents highlighted that these broader conflicts and tensions have been ongoing since 2017, leaving a lasting impact on community cohesion and access to humanitarian services.

In Bosasso, youth-related conflicts were identified as a major concern, with unemployment and idleness frequently driving young people toward violence. Additionally, respondents expressed alarm over the re-emergence of 'Daesh', recurrent political conflicts, and targeted assassinations,

all of which contribute to an increasingly volatile environment. Clan elders were reported to play a dual role as both instigators of conflict and key mediators in peacebuilding. Political tensions between the FGS and Puntland state were also cited as a critical factor exacerbating local instability, particularly in contested areas where governance is fragmented. In South Galkacyo, while some respondents described the current situation as relatively peaceful, they warned that unresolved historical grievances between clans, if left unaddressed, could reignite tensions. Additionally, local political rivalries and sporadic disputes over power-sharing were noted as persistent triggers of conflict.

Main Actors Involved in Conflicts

Findings reveal distinct conflict dynamics in each district, shaped by the roles of various actors. The findings indicate that armed groups or militias are the most frequently reported actors involved in conflicts in South Galkacyo, identified by 37.9% of respondents. Clan elders or leaders were also highlighted as significant actors, cited by 27.2% of respondents. Political factors were identified by 20.5%, while local government officials were mentioned by 16.4%. The involvement of external actors, such as neighboring communities or countries, was reported by 4.2% of respondents. Additionally, 14.2% of respondents indicated the presence of other actors contributing to conflicts.



In Luuq, clan elders or leaders were overwhelmingly identified as the primary actors in conflicts, with 64.9% of respondents highlighting their role. The second most reported actors were armed groups or militias, noted by 27.3% of respondents. Other contributing factors included political actors (16.2%) and local government officials (13.0%). The involvement of external actors was minimal, cited by 1.3%, while 15.2% of respondents mentioned other

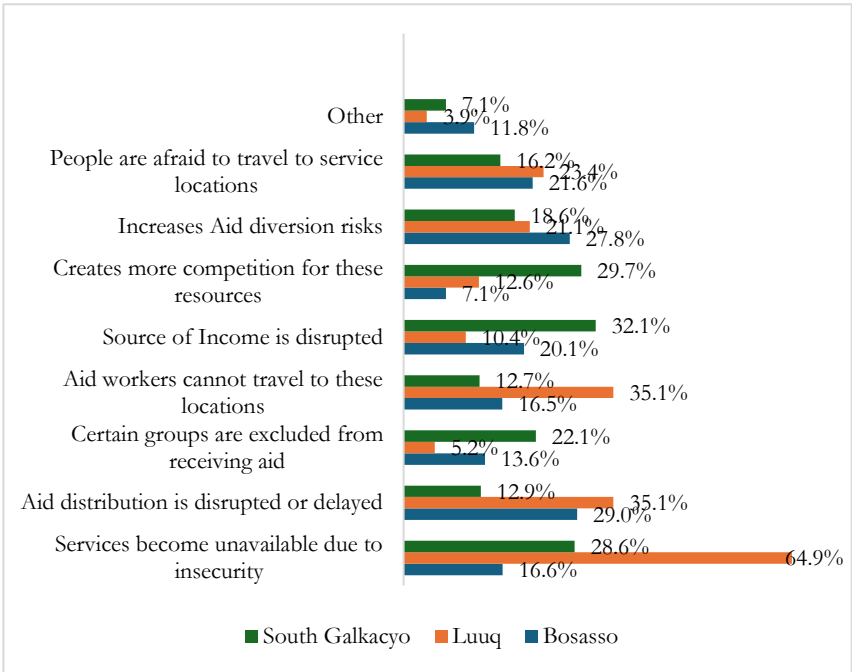
actors. In Bosasso, clan elders or leaders were reported as the predominant actors in conflicts, identified by 62.1% of respondents. Armed groups or militias were noted by 26.0%, while political factors were cited by 13.9%. 13.6% of respondents identified local government officials, and

external actors were mentioned by 2.4%. A notable proportion (19.1%) of respondents pointed to other actors involved in conflicts in the area.

Impact of Conflict on Access to Humanitarian Services

Respondents in South Galkacyo most frequently reported that sources of income are disrupted, with 32.1% highlighting this issue. Aid workers being unable to travel to these locations was identified by 12.7%, and services becoming unavailable due to insecurity was noted by 16.6% of respondents.

Other reported impacts include aid distribution disruption or delay (12.9%) and the exclusion of certain groups from receiving aid (5.2%). Additionally, competition for resources (12.6%) and increased aid diversion risks (18.6%) were mentioned. A smaller proportion of respondents (11.8%) reported that fear of traveling to service locations limits access, while 7.1% identified other effects.



In Luuq, respondents reported the most severe impacts. Services becoming unavailable

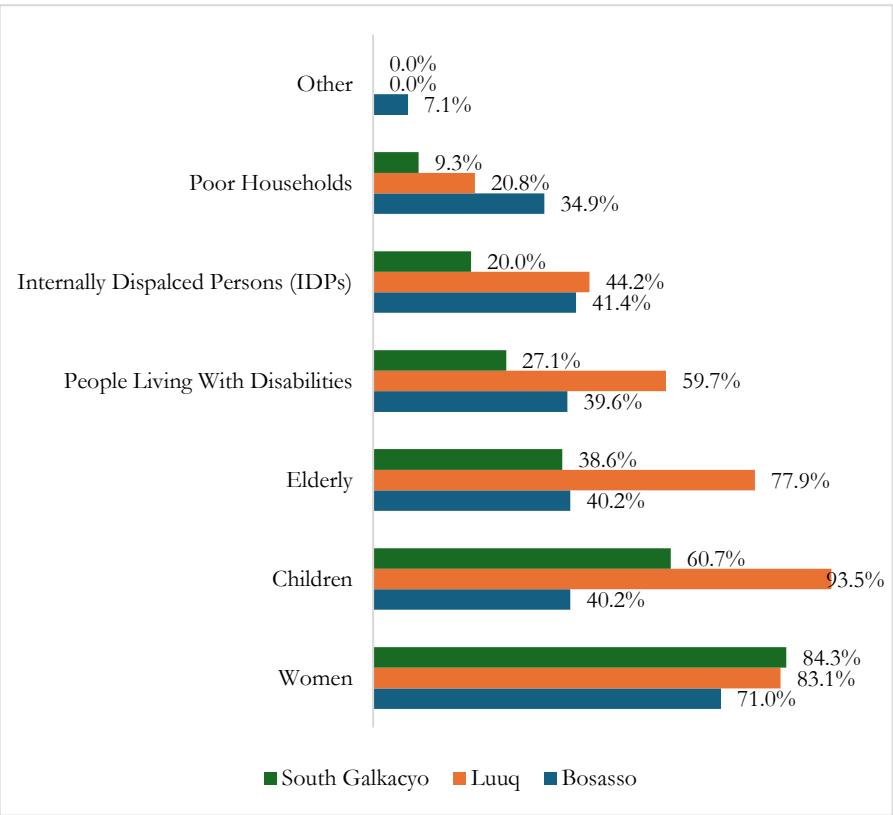
due to insecurity was the most cited challenge, identified by 64.9% of respondents. Aid workers being unable to travel to these locations and aid distribution disruption or delay were each reported by 35.1%. Exclusion of certain groups from receiving aid was highlighted by 22.1%, while source of income disruption was noted by 20.1%. Additional barriers included competition for resources (29.7%), increased aid diversion risks (27.8%), and fear of traveling to service locations (23.4%). These findings reflect the significant disruption of humanitarian services in this district.

Respondents in Bosasso reported moderate impacts of conflict on service access. Aid workers being unable to travel was cited by 16.5%, and aid distribution disruption or delay was reported by 29%. Services becoming unavailable due to insecurity affected 28.6% of respondents, while source of income disruption was highlighted by 20.1%. Other reported issues included competition for resources (12.6%), increased aid diversion risks (18.9%), and fear of traveling to service locations (16.2%). Exclusion of certain groups from receiving aid was mentioned by 13.6% of respondents.

Groups Most Affected by Reduced Access to Services During Conflicts

Respondents were asked which groups are most affected by reduced access to services during conflicts. The findings from South Galkacyo, Luuq, and Bosasso highlight the distinct vulnerabilities experienced by specific groups. In South Galkacyo, women were identified as the most affected group, with 84.3% of respondents highlighting their vulnerability. Children followed closely, with 40.2% reporting them as significantly impacted. Elderly individuals were mentioned by 38.6% of respondents, reflecting their challenges in accessing essential services during conflicts. Other groups, such as people living with disabilities (27.1%) and internally displaced persons (IDPs) (20.0%), were also noted, though at lower rates. Poor households were identified by 9.3% of respondents, and no other groups were reported as affected.

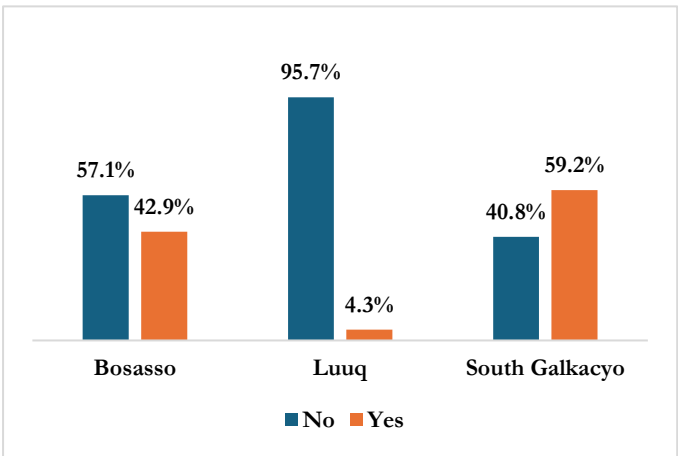
In Luuq, children were overwhelmingly identified as the most affected group, with 93.5% of respondents highlighting their vulnerability. Women were the second most affected, reported by 71.0% of respondents. Elderly individuals were also significantly impacted, with 77.9% identifying them as vulnerable. People living with disabilities were noted by 59.7%, reflecting challenges faced by this group. IDPs were mentioned by 44.2%, while poor households were identified by 20.8%. A small proportion of respondents (7.1%) mentioned other groups.



In Bosasso, women were reported as the most affected group, with 83.1% of respondents identifying their challenges in accessing services. Children were the second most mentioned group, with 60.7% of respondents highlighting their vulnerability. Elderly individuals were noted by 40.2%, while people living with disabilities were reported by 39.6%. IDPs were identified by 41.4%, and poor households were mentioned by 34.9%. No respondents cited other groups as being significantly affected.

Humanitarian or Development Interventions Worsening Tensions or Conflicts

Figure 20 illustrates the respondents' perspectives on whether humanitarian or development interventions have worsened tensions or conflicts in their areas. The findings reveal district-specific variations in how interventions are perceived. In Bosasso, 42.9% of respondents reported observing humanitarian or development interventions that worsened tensions or conflicts in their area. However, the majority (57.1%) stated they had not observed such issues. This indicates that while tensions exist, more than half of the respondents believe interventions have not had a negative impact on local dynamics.



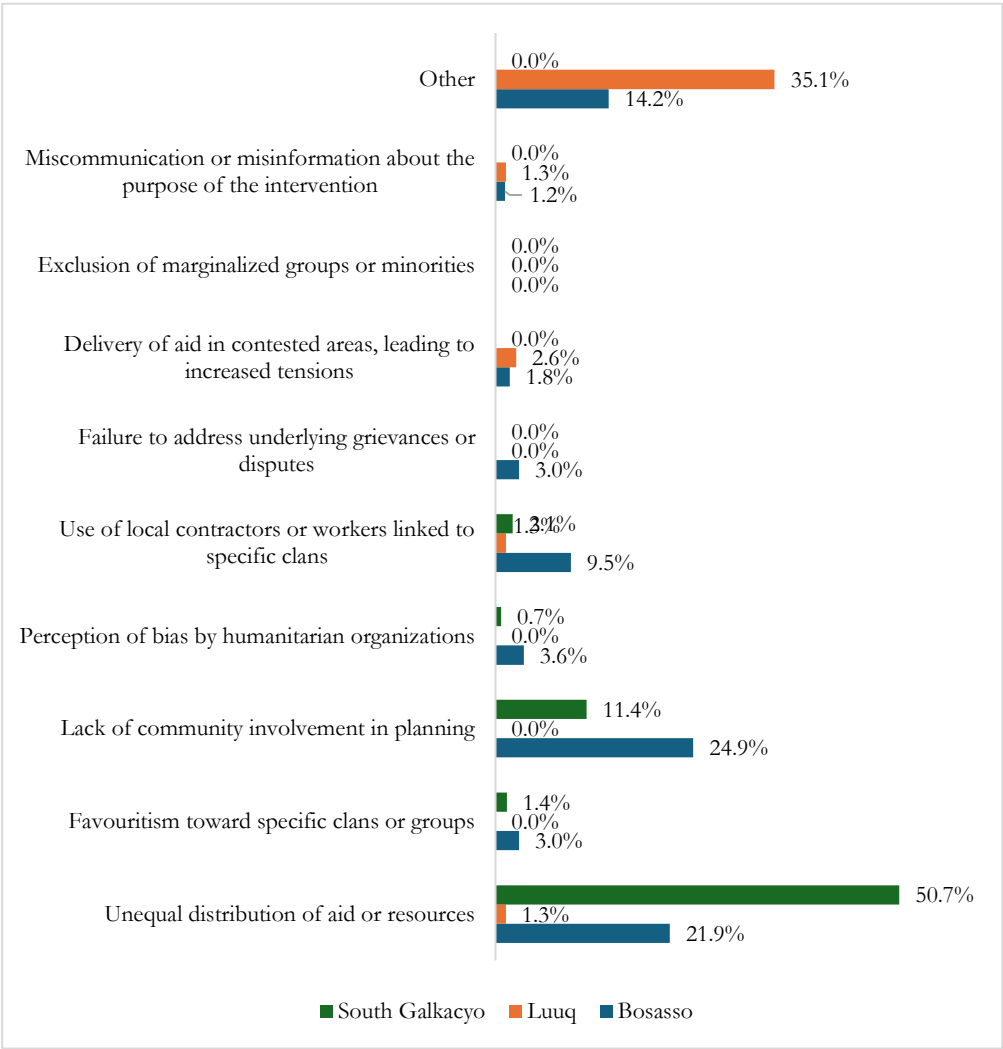
more than half of the respondents believe interventions have not had a negative impact on local dynamics.

In Luuq, only 4.3% of respondents reported that interventions had worsened tensions or conflicts, while an overwhelming 95.7% stated they had not observed such impacts. This suggests that humanitarian and development initiatives in Luuq are generally perceived positively or at least not as contributors to conflict. In South Galkacyo, 40.8% of

respondents reported observing interventions that had worsened tensions or conflicts, while 59.2% did not. This split indicates a moderate level of concern about the potential unintended consequences of interventions in the district.

How Interventions Contributed to Conflicts

Respondents highlighted several factors that exacerbated tensions in their areas when asked how humanitarian or development interventions contributed to conflicts. In South Galkacyo, the primary issue reported was the unequal distribution of aid or resources, identified by 50.7% of respondents, making it the most prominent factor contributing to conflicts. The use of local contractors or workers linked to specific clans was reported by 9.5%, reflecting concerns over perceived favoritism. Lack of community involvement in planning was cited by 11.4%, highlighting the need for greater community engagement. Smaller proportions of



respondents mentioned issues such as perception of bias by humanitarian organizations (3.6%) and favoritism toward specific clans or groups (1.4%).

In Luuq, the most reported issue was other factors, cited by 35.1% of respondents, suggesting unique local dynamics not captured in the predefined categories. Lack of community involvement in planning was reported by 24.9% of respondents, while unequal distribution of aid or resources was noted by 21.9%. Other concerns included failure to address underlying grievances or disputes (3.0%), favoritism toward specific clans or groups (3.0%), and perception of bias by humanitarian organizations (0.7%).

In Bosasso, the most significant factor was unequal distribution of aid or resources, reported by 21.9% of respondents. Lack of community involvement in planning was also a notable issue, identified by 11.4%. Other factors were highlighted by 14.2% of respondents. Additional concerns included favoritism toward specific clans or groups (3.0%), failure to address underlying grievances or disputes (3.0%), and perception of bias by humanitarian organizations (3.6%).

Findings from KIIs and FGDs across the districts reveal the critical importance of integrating conflict sensitivity into protection programming. Many participants expressed concerns about how certain interventions, particularly those perceived as unequal or biased, have contributed to local tensions. A respondent in Luuq noted, “When aid goes to certain clans or groups repeatedly, it creates resentment and competition.”

Several strategies were proposed by participants to enhance conflict-sensitive programming:

- **Conducting Regular Contextual Analysis:** Local leaders in South Galkacyo emphasized the need for continuous analysis of local dynamics to avoid inadvertently escalating tensions.
- **Ensuring Equitable Resource Distribution:** Participants in Bosasso highlighted that transparent communication about how resources are allocated can reduce perceptions of favoritism and build trust.
- **Involving Diverse Stakeholders:** Across all districts, respondents stressed the importance of engaging a broad range of stakeholders, including women, youth, and marginalized groups, in program design and implementation.
- **Establishing Grievance Redress Mechanisms:** FGDs in Luuq highlighted the need for clear channels where communities can raise concerns without fear of reprisal. This would improve accountability and help resolve disputes before they escalate.

A participant from Bosasso aptly summarized, “If aid is given in a way that doesn’t involve the people and doesn’t consider our problems, it can cause more harm than good.”

These insights underscore the need for a “do no harm” approach, where interventions not only avoid exacerbating tensions but also contribute positively to peacebuilding efforts.

Analysis of Conflict-Sensitive Programming Based on Respondents' Findings

The findings from respondents across Bosasso, Luuq, and South Galkacyo provide a critical lens through which to analyze the factors contributing to tensions and the challenges faced in humanitarian and development programming. These insights underline the need for conflict-sensitive approaches, tailored to local dynamics and socio-political contexts.

Lack of Equity in Aid Distribution as a Driver of Conflict

~~Unequal~~ Lack of equitable distribution of aid or resources emerged as a key source of tension, identified by 50.7% of respondents in South Galkacyo and 21.9% in Bosasso. This indicates a significant perception of unfairness in resource allocation, which may exacerbate local rivalries and grievances. The high prevalence of this issue in South Galkacyo highlights how the perceived or actual inequity in aid delivery can amplify existing fault lines within communities.

Community Exclusion from Planning Processes

The findings indicate that 24.9% of respondents in Luuq and 11.4% in Bosasso noted a lack of community involvement in planning as a factor contributing to tensions. This points to a disconnect between intervention designs and community priorities, which can foster mistrust. The comparatively higher percentage in Luuq suggests that programming in this district may be less aligned with local needs or that communities perceive themselves as being excluded from decision-making processes.

Clan-Based Favoritism and Perceived Bias

Favoritism toward specific clans or groups was identified by 3.0% of respondents in both Luuq and Bosasso, while 9.5% in South Galkacyo reported the use of local contractors linked to specific clans as a source of conflict. These findings reveal those perceptions of bias—whether intentional or not—can undermine the credibility of humanitarian and development efforts. Such perceptions can also escalate inter-clan tensions, particularly in areas like South Galkacyo, where clan dynamics are highly influential.

Transparency and Accountability Gaps

Perceptions of bias by humanitarian organizations were reported by 3.6% of respondents in South Galkacyo and Bosasso. In comparison, 1.8% in Luuq and 1.2% in Bosasso noted miscommunication or misinformation about the purpose of interventions. While these percentages are relatively low, they highlight localized or context-specific issues rather than widespread concerns. Findings from KIIs and FGDs support this observation, revealing that while many communities appreciate the efforts of humanitarian organizations, even minor instances of bias or miscommunication can lead to tensions, particularly in fragile settings.

These issues often arise when communities are unclear about how or why resources are allocated, which can fuel misunderstandings and mistrust. KIIs with local leaders also emphasized the need for more transparent and inclusive decision-making processes to address such perceptions. FGDs with affected communities highlighted the importance of clear communication regarding the purpose and criteria of interventions to prevent resentment and ensure equitable service delivery. While not a dominant concern for most respondents, these findings underscore the importance of

maintaining clarity and transparency to prevent localized tensions from undermining broader programming efforts.

Historical Grievances and Underlying Disputes

Failure to address underlying grievances or disputes was noted by 3.0% of respondents in Luuq and Bosasso. While a relatively small percentage, this finding highlights the critical need to analyze the role of longstanding disputes and grievances in shaping local conflict dynamics. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with local leaders and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with community members consistently pointed to historical tensions, such as unresolved land disputes and clan rivalries, as persistent drivers of conflict. These grievances, if left unaddressed, can be exacerbated by interventions perceived as unfair or poorly targeted, undermining trust and escalating local tensions. Incorporating mechanisms to address these underlying disputes through community engagement and inclusive planning is essential to fostering sustainable peace and reducing conflict risks.

Impact on Vulnerable Groups

Women and children were consistently identified as the most affected during conflicts, with 84.3% and 93.5% of respondents in South Galkacyo and Luuq, respectively, emphasizing their heightened vulnerability. These findings underscore the disproportionate burden that conflicts place on women and children, particularly in terms of safety, livelihoods, and access to essential services. KIIs and FGDs revealed that women and children frequently face barriers to accessing healthcare, education, and humanitarian assistance. For example, women reported challenges such as long distances to service points, a lack of female service providers, and fears of harassment or violence while traveling.

Children, particularly those in displacement settings, were reported to have limited access to education, with schools often disrupted or repurposed during conflict. FGDs with mothers in Luuq highlighted the growing concern over malnutrition and inadequate healthcare for children, exacerbated by reduced access to water and food supplies during times of insecurity.

Minority and marginalized groups also face distinct challenges, with respondents noting systemic exclusion from decision-making processes and inequitable aid distribution. In South Galkacyo, for instance, 28.7% of respondents from minority groups expressed concerns about being overlooked in service delivery, citing clan-based favoritism as a significant barrier. KIIs further highlighted that these groups often lack representation in community structures, leaving their needs and grievances unaddressed. These findings point to the importance of designing conflict-sensitive programs that prioritize inclusivity and address the specific needs of women, children, minorities, and marginalized populations. Interventions should focus on ensuring safe and equitable access to

services, enhancing representation in decision-making, and addressing the unique vulnerabilities of these groups to build resilience and foster social cohesion.

Disruptions to Aid and Service Delivery

Insecurity-related challenges, such as aid workers being unable to travel (35.1% in Luuq and 16.5% in Bosasso) and services becoming unavailable due to insecurity (64.9% in Luuq and 28.6% in Bosasso), were widely reported. These disruptions reveal the extent to which conflict undermines the delivery of essential services and the ability of humanitarian actors to operate effectively.

STUDY CONCLUSIONS

This study highlights critical protection risks, service gaps, and barriers to vulnerable populations' access to essential resources in Bosasso, Luuq, and South Galkacyo. Findings from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) reveal that communities face persistent threats, including gender-based violence (GBV), forced evictions, theft, and exploitation. Women, children, persons with disabilities, and minority clans were consistently identified as the groups most at risk, underscoring the urgent need for targeted protection interventions.

Access remains a significant challenge despite some basic services due to high costs, long distances, and insecurity. For instance, 64.9% of respondents in Luuq reported that services are often unavailable during periods of heightened conflict, while 41.4% in South Galkacyo cited financial constraints as a key barrier. In Bosasso, recurring issues such as poor infrastructure and inadequate sanitation facilities further exacerbate these challenges, particularly for displaced communities. Additionally, marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, highlighted the lack of inclusive infrastructure as a major obstacle to accessing essential services.

The recurrent disruptions caused by conflict and insecurity further hinder access to services. Tribal conflicts, border tensions, and strained relations between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and Jubaland State (JSS) have repeatedly disrupted livelihoods and aid delivery, with 35.1% of respondents in Bosasso and 64.9% in Luuq noting that aid distribution delays and service unavailability are common during such periods.

Furthermore, while communities have adopted informal mechanisms, such as self-organized watch groups and reliance on local leaders, these efforts are insufficient in addressing complex protection needs. Formal protection services remain limited, and coordination between humanitarian actors and local authorities is weak, contributing to service gaps and inequitable aid distribution.

The study underscores that poorly coordinated interventions, perceptions of bias, and unequal resource distribution can exacerbate existing tensions. These issues were particularly evident in Bosasso and South Galkacyo, where 50.7% of respondents linked local tensions to perceived favoritism in aid delivery. Such findings highlight the need for transparent, inclusive, and well-coordinated approaches in future programming.

Recurrent conflicts, driven by competition over resources, unresolved grievances, and political tensions—including strained relations between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and Jubbland State (JSS)—continue to disrupt service delivery and hinder the well-being of displaced and host communities. Vulnerable groups, particularly women, children, persons with disabilities, and minority clans, remain disproportionately affected by displacement and insecurity, underscoring the urgent need for targeted and inclusive interventions.

Moreover, perceptions of unequal aid distribution and poorly coordinated interventions have sometimes exacerbated tensions. This highlights the importance of adopting conflict-sensitive approaches that prioritize transparency, community engagement, and equitable resource allocation.

The study also points to the need for long-term, sustainable solutions beyond immediate humanitarian aid. Strengthening local capacities, enhancing collaboration between humanitarian actors and local authorities, and investing in youth and livelihood programs are critical steps toward fostering resilience and stability in these conflict-affected areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Comprehensive findings from KIIs, FGDs and quantitative data analysis across Bosasso, Luuq, and South Galkacyo inform the recommendations presented in this section. These recommendations address the critical protection risks, barriers to essential services, and conflict dynamics identified during the study. They emphasize the need for conflict-sensitive, inclusive, and sustainable humanitarian and development programming approaches.

Strengthening Community-Based Protection Mechanisms

Stakeholders: FGS, State Governments, Local Community Leaders, International Organizations

- Train community-based protection committees in early warning systems and rights-based approaches to proactively address emerging protection risks.
- Support local peacebuilding initiatives by providing mediation and negotiation training to traditional leaders, prioritizing their significant role in resolving disputes, as evidenced in Luuq.
- Establish community safety hubs in high-risk areas such as Bossaso, focusing on locations with heightened risks of GBV and theft.

Improving Access to Essential Services for Vulnerable Groups

Stakeholders: Humanitarian Actors, Local Authorities, NGOs, Private Sector

- Expand mobile service units in underserved areas like Luuq, addressing barriers such as long distances to service points.
- Introduce voucher-based systems or subsidized services, particularly in Bossaso, to alleviate high service costs for vulnerable populations.
- Ensure all new health, education, and water infrastructure is accessible to persons with disabilities, addressing long-standing physical barriers in communities.

Ensuring Transparency and Equity in Aid Distribution

Stakeholders: Donors, Humanitarian Organizations, Local Authorities, Civil Society

- Develop a transparent aid distribution framework involving representatives from different clans, genders, and vulnerable groups to foster inclusivity and fairness.
- Use community notice boards, radio programs, and digital platforms to share aid distribution schedules and criteria, ensuring that processes are transparent and accessible.
- Establish anonymous reporting mechanisms for communities to raise concerns about aid delivery, improving trust and accountability.

Promoting Conflict-Sensitive Programming

Stakeholders: Humanitarian Organizations, Donors, Local Governments

- Conduct conflict analyses to identify potential risks and ensure that programs do not exacerbate tensions.
- Engage diverse stakeholders, including marginalized groups and traditional leaders, to inform inclusive program design and implementation.
- Integrate peacebuilding elements into service delivery programs, such as youth engagement and conflict resolution training, especially in areas like Bossaso with recurring tensions.

Addressing Youth-Related Conflicts Through Livelihood Support

Stakeholders: NGOs, Donors, Private Sector

- Provide market-relevant vocational training programs targeting youth, particularly in Bossaso, where unemployment drives tensions.
- Offer start-up capital for youth-led businesses and cooperatives to create economic opportunities.
- Establish youth dialogue platforms to involve them in peacebuilding efforts and foster positive roles within communities.

Strengthening Coordination Between Humanitarian Actors and Local Authorities

Stakeholders: Humanitarian Agencies, Local Governments, Regional Coordination Bodies

- Create district-level coordination platforms for joint planning and implementation of interventions.
- Organize regular review meetings to assess ongoing programs and address challenges collaboratively.
- Develop shared information systems for stakeholders to streamline interventions and improve efficiency.

Increasing Awareness and Reporting of Aid Diversion

Stakeholders: Donors, Humanitarian Organizations, Local Media

- Conduct community awareness campaigns using local languages to inform the public about available services and their eligibility criteria.
- Establish safe, anonymous complaint mechanisms to encourage reporting of aid misuse or exclusion.
- Regularly share audit results and corrective actions with communities to build trust and demonstrate accountability.

Integrating Political Economy Analysis (PEA) into Future Programming

Stakeholders: Donors, Humanitarian Actors, Policy Makers

- Use PEA selectively in high-conflict areas or where governance challenges are significant to understand power dynamics and resource allocation issues better.

- Apply PEA findings to enhance stakeholder mapping and identify actors influencing service delivery and conflict dynamics.
- Embed PEA insights in strategic planning to address structural barriers without overcomplicating implementation.

Fostering Continuous Stakeholder Dialogue and Liaison Mechanisms

Stakeholders: Humanitarian Organizations, Local Authorities, Donors, Community Leaders

- Establish regular dialogue forums involving diverse stakeholders, including service providers, local authorities, community leaders, and humanitarian actors, to enhance coordination and address emerging challenges.
- Create a liaison structure in each district to serve as a communication bridge between communities and service providers, ensuring real-time feedback and issue resolution.
- Continuously monitor community perceptions and attitudes toward programming through periodic surveys and focus group discussions, adapting interventions to meet evolving needs.
- Support inclusive community consultations to ensure vulnerable groups, such as minorities, marginalized groups, women, youth, and persons with disabilities, are actively engaged in decision-making processes.
- Use the forums to promote shared learning by documenting and disseminating best practices and lessons learned across locations to inform and improve future programming.