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# Country analysis

## (Somaliland)

### ***Part 1. Aim and method of the pre-study***

The ambition of Forum Syd is to strengthen its efforts in Somaliland. The growing commitment amongst Somalilanders living in Sweden provides stronger support for the efforts of Forum Syd. The civil society in Somaliland has a unique role to play, since it has rebuilt the country after the war that ended in 1991. Within the civil society, there are strong and forceful organisations, which can be strengthened by the activities of Forum Syd. This pre-study was conducted in the challenging environment of today's Somaliland. The aim of the pre-study is to come up with recommendations and proposals about how Forum Syd can work in Somaliland in the future. The pre-study as well as the future work will be characterised by openness to new thoughts and ideas, in order for the possibilities offered by the civil society in Somaliland to be exploited.

## ***1. Aim and method***

### **1.1. The goals of Forum Syd**

The comprehensive development goals of Forum Syd are solidarity, justice and cooperation between civil societies in South, East and North, and a democratisation from below, where women and men are equal. This is achieved through working together with member organisations in order to strengthen the development work of the civil society, as a force for a just and sustainable development, based on the human dignity of every individual, and the right to reasonable conditions of life.<sup>1</sup>

### **1.2. Aim**

The aim of the pre-study is to investigate the conditions of future development work by Forum Syd in Somaliland, and thereby examine how the future work can be conceived, in order to strengthen organised civil society. Furthermore, the cooperation between Swedish non-governmental organisations (SvEO<sup>2</sup>) and local organisations (LEO<sup>3</sup>) will be analysed

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.forumsyd.se>

<sup>2</sup> Svensk enskild organisation (in Swedish)

<sup>3</sup> Lokal enskild organisation (in Swedish)

and evaluated. Civil society will be mapped, and local and international work will be measured up to the actual needs. This is necessary to do, to be able to give recommendations about how Forum Syd can support existing development work in the best way, and to be able to design a consistent programme that will fulfil overlooked needs. That is why one of the goals with the pre-study is to examine in what degree the civil organisations in Somaliland are working to fulfil the needs expressed by people themselves in the area, and to investigate in what way they are accomplishing their own goals. The cooperation and partnership between the Swedish organisation and the local organisation will be evaluated from the local partners point of view and perspective, which means that we will investigate how the cooperation is supporting the capacities of the local organisation, and if there is room for strengthening this cooperation even more.

### 1.3. Method

The pre-study was a field study, carried out under September 2005 in Somaliland. The focus of the study was the civil society and its entities, individuals, local, international and umbrella organisations. Based on these different categories, strategic choices were made to make it possible to analyse the data within the time frames of the pre-study. First, a choice was made based on the size of the organisations and their working time. We started by meeting the biggest and most firmly established organisations. We believe that their knowledge and experience of the civil society in Somaliland is of greater value to study than those newly started and smaller organisations. After getting a general idea on civil society, we met with newly started and smaller organisations in order to broaden our perspective.

Individual or group interviews were used when meeting organisations depending on the circumstances. At every meeting with an organisation, we used an interview template, with overall themes. However, the specific questions were adjusted to each individual interview. We strived to make sure that during each interview, a room for an open conversation will be available. When necessary, the interviews were supplemented with field visits, concerning the projects that the organisations are running. This is made to get a better overall evaluation of the goal and work of the organisation. We supplemented the descriptions of the organisations with interviews with key personalities in the society, among others government representatives and clan elders. Additionally, field trips were performed to smaller villages to get a greater insight into the Somaliland society. Written resources were used to enlarge the background data. Based on the collected materials, we described and analysed the situation in Somaliland, as well as the organised civil society. Taking in consideration certain aspects of civil society, which are of interest to Forum Syd. The recommendations that are proposed were built on the data collected and on our experiences, and they should be combined with the knowledge of Sveo and Forum Syd. The study was carried out by a team consisting of three Consultants.

## **Part 2. Society in Somaliland – problems and opportunities**

### **2. War and peace in Somaliland**

#### **2.1. Background**

During the colonial era, today's Somaliland was a protectorate under Great Britain. Unlike southern Somalia, where Italy was governing directly, the Britons were using the political structures of Somaliland to wield their power. The Britons also used Somaliland as an outpost toward Asia, and its cattle trading was a source of revenue. In 1960, Somalia proclaimed its independence, including the territory of Somaliland. Because of the differing colonial past, southern Somalia and Somaliland were never incorporated as one stable and functioning unit.<sup>4</sup>

#### **2.2. The war and its consequences**

The republic of Somaliland proclaimed its independence in 1991, after the collapse of the state of Somalia. During the years of President Siad Barre's government, the population of Somaliland was subject to a strong oppression from the central power, by discrimination, limited freedom of movement, and persecutions. Somalilanders were treated as second-class citizens under Barre's regime. Somali National Movement (SNM), a resistance army with its base in the Isaaq clan, took up weapons in the battle against Barre's regime in 1982. The situation deteriorated into a war, first and foremost against the Isaaq clan, which escalated at the end of the 1980s.<sup>5</sup> This also led to a great part of the population being forced to escape, a majority to Ethiopia, but many also to Europe and Sweden. Somaliland was to a great extent destroyed, and its capital Hargeisa was ravaged. Today, it is difficult for an outsider to imagine this taking place, since hundreds of thousands of refugees have been repatriated, and great parts of Hargeisa have been rebuilt. However, the blown-out houses, as well as big camps of internal refugees, bear witness of the war. Apart from that, there are yet a number of mines left in the ground, still being an obstacle to people in their everyday lives, although most of the mines today are believed to have been disarmed.

#### **2.3. Peace and security in today's Somaliland**

Today, there is peace in Somaliland. By completing the peace process on a local level, stability has been brought about in the country, unlike the rest of Somalia, still plagued by the war. There is an obvious difference between the peace process in Somaliland and in the rest of Somalia. In 1991, clan leaders in Somaliland united on a local level, in order to find a peaceful path ahead. The goal was to achieve reconciliation in the country, by letting all parties participate in the peace talks, including those supporting Barre. The parties successfully came to an agreement, thanks to the fact that the peace negotiations were conducted on a local level, and that people were allowed to take part in them. The population

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<sup>4</sup> Academy for Peace and Development (WSP International Somali Programme), *Rebuilding Somaliland - Issues and Possibilities*, 2005, p.6ff

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 11ff

takes great pride in the work of their clan elders, and in the fact that peace was achieved internally, through the clan structure, without too much of external involvement. To facilitate contacts between the local and state level, local councils with representatives from the new government as well as clan elders were set up, where methods to achieve reconciliation and peace were conceived in concert. Thus, cooperation between the central powers, clan elders and the people is still vital in Somaliland society.

However, in 1994 there were new fights about the central power, when a sub-clan of Isaaq revolted against the government, since they felt excluded from the power. The conflict lasted for two years, but after peace negotiations headed by clan elders, both sides successfully were reconciled. Since then, there has been stability in the country, apart from a border dispute with Puntland. Both Somaliland and Puntland have claims on the two regions of Sool and Sanaag. The claim of Puntland is based on the fact that the people of these regions share a common identity, since people living there belong to the Darod clan, a majority in Puntland. Somaliland, on the other side, points out that the regions historically belonged to British Somaliland, and thus has the same experiences as Somaliland. The city of Las Canood in Sool has been taken by Puntland, and despite the fact that Somaliland has not resisted with military means, the situation is tense. The military conflict in these regions tends to renew itself, and was culminating in 2003, when the army of Puntland tried to assassinate the president of Somaliland, at the moment visiting Sool. The conflict has been subject to mediation between elders of the clans in question, who have thus contributed to avoid an escalation of the military conflict.<sup>6</sup> Somaliland was also struck in 2003 and 2004 by the murders of four international aid workers. Ever since, the security of international workers is a high priority.

### ***3. The effect of the clan on society***

#### **3.1. The clan structure**

The clans are the heart of the social system in Somaliland. The central regions in the country are mainly populated by Isaaq, the western regions by Ciise and Gadabuursi, and the eastern regions by Dulbahante and Warsangeli. Apart from these five clans, there are Midgan, Tumul and Yibris, which historically have been socially and economically marginalized clans in society. These three clans have been separated from the other clans, and according to the local legal system *xeer*, cross marriages are not allowed.<sup>7</sup> Historically, there have also been certain occupations held by the marginalized clans, such as barbers, shoe-cleaners and circumcisers, and it is still today difficult to get employment in other areas. However, the seclusion is continually vanishing, today marriages with other clans are taking place, and there is an ongoing integration in society.

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<sup>6</sup> World Bank, *Conflicts in Somalia: Drivers and Dynamics*, 2005, p. 36

<sup>7</sup> I.M. Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 2002, p.10

### 3.2. Conflict solution

The clans consist of a number of sub-clans and groups paying *diya*. Through belonging to a clan, all men are connected to a *diya*-group, united closely together by the right of demanding compensation, or the collective responsibility to pay compensation for murder or other violations of the law. The *diya*-groups are small clan units that consist of the closest relatives. The *diya*-groups constitute the most important level of the social organisation of the individual, after the family.<sup>8</sup>

Conflicts between clans are primarily dealt with by the clans themselves. Clan elders (representing the clan e.g. on a village level), *caaqils* (leaders of sub-clans and *diya*-groups) and the *suldan* (leader of the whole clan) all speak for the clan. The clan representatives living most closest to their clan members have the most concrete and direct power. In this case, this involves mostly clan elders on a local level and *caaqils*. The role of *caaqils* can be seen as an institution between the state and the people, solving certain types of conflicts between these two. Nowadays, there are meeting places where *caaqils* from several sub-clans can gather across the clan boundaries, in order to achieve peace and solve conflicts.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.3. Identity

It is through the clan that the identity of the individual is forged, and it is the clan that decides how a person relates toward the people in his social vicinity, as well as toward outsiders. At the same time, it is a bit difficult to talk about the identity of a single individual, since it is the clan as a collective that constitutes this identity. The clan identity is seen as a powerful force, keeping society together and allowing it to function. The influence of the clans is ubiquitous on all levels of society, from the state to the village. Internally, the clan provides security and works as a safety net for its members, and externally its primary function is to create good relations to other clans.

Clan membership is inherited on the male side. Women are born into a clan, but when they are married, they switch to the clan of their husband. Therefore, women's clan identity is closely linked to that of their husbands and fathers. In this way, women have double clan identities, but practically, their clan identity becomes vaguer, and they are considered not to belong to any clan for real. However, also women have a place in the social relations of the clans, and they get a certain safety through the clan identity of their husbands.<sup>10</sup>

### 3.4. The clan as a political power

The foundation of democracy is an active participation of the people, where decisions are based on their opinions, and all voices have an equal value. In a representative and centralised democracy, the elected politicians have a greater responsibility. The reason for this is that there is no possibility for everyone to take part of the information needed to make

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<sup>8</sup> Gardner & El Bushra, *Somalia – the Untold Story*, 2004, p. 154f

<sup>9</sup> Meeting with representatives for the House of Caaqils; Caaqil Ahmed Iadan Yusuf, Caaqil Suldan Rooble, Caaqil Deria Hersi Ali, 2005-08-06

<sup>10</sup> Gardner & El Bushra, *Somalia – the Untold Story*, 2004, p. 160f

decisions. This representative model of democracy is advocated in the West and by the donor community. The clan structure differs from this model in several ways, but that does not mean that it is not democratic, since the clans contain a decision-making structure, working closely with the people on a local level. Within the local units of the clans, decisions are made through *shirs*, which is a reunion where each man has the right to address issues and problems regarding an individual or the whole community. Effort is made to handle and solve issues and problems through unanimous decisions. In 1994, the issue of distribution of powers was the reason for the internal conflict. Since 1996, the importance that all clans feel included has been firmly stressed in politics.<sup>11</sup>

In Somaliland, representative democracy is combined with the existing clan structure, through a parliament with two chambers, the *Guurti* (house of elders) as well as the House of Representatives. By means of the *Guurti*, the local level, through clan elders, influence the central politics. In today's situation, the weak state needs to use the clan structure and the legitimacy it brings. However, it is hard to know how the balance between the two chambers in the parliament will evolve in the future. Even though many believe, that the importance of the clan on society will diminish in the future, today the state is more dependent of the clan, than what the clan is of the state.

Clan elders have the function of a link between the state and the members of the clan, since on the local level, the elders possess the executive power. Primarily, people trust their clan, and only secondly the state. Thus, it is difficult for a state that is weak in so many aspects, to represent the population independently from the clan. The great influence of the clan on the political representation results in minorities, where we include refugees, internal refugees (IDPs) and minority clans, having difficulties of achieving representation.

## ***4. Politics in Somaliland***

### **4.1. The political situation**

The state structure of Somaliland consists of the legislative, the executive and the judging power. Parliament, the legislative power, consists of the house of the clan elders, *Guurti*, and the house of the representatives, who are elected. The president, wielding the executive power, appoints the ministers, who do not necessarily have to have a seat in parliament. The judging power in today's Somaliland consists of different legal systems existing side by side; partly the *xeer*, partly Sharia laws and partly secular laws. *Xeer* is the local legal system based on the clan. It has an important function, since it is most often used to solve conflicts and disputes within and between the clans.

### **4.2. The state and civil society**

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<sup>11</sup> Meeting with representatives for the House of Caaqils; Caaqil Ahmed Iadan Yusuf, Caaqil Suldan Rooble, Caaqil Deria Hersi Ali, 2005-08-06

The state of Somaliland is weak, and does not have the capacity to enforce the reforms of society that are necessary to create a better balance between the state and civil society. The explanation to the weak position of the state versus civil society can be derived from the civil war, when the state of Somalia collapsed. For years, foreign aid has almost exclusively focused on strengthening civil society, in order to enable it to provide to the people of Somaliland the social service that the current state wants to, but is unable to offer. The strong position of the civil society may be a problem, since its participants do not have a responsibility for the whole population, but merely for their own groups, defined in advance. The ambition of the state, on the contrary, is to take responsibility for all citizens and the development of the whole country.

As a result of the relation to the international organisations, the local organisations have been forced to account for their work in an open way, while there has been no transparency what concerns the work of the state. This has led to a greater transparency in civil society than in the state, which has contributed to a sense of scepticism from civil society towards the state. However, there is willingness in civil society to strengthen the state, in order to achieve a better balance with the civil society. Some organisations, though, say that the state in certain areas shows a lack of confidence in civil society, which has led to the state trying to direct the work of the organisations to get more control.

#### **4.3. The elections**

Currently a lot of resources and efforts are focused to arrange democratic elections for the parliament, which will be held in September of 2005. There is a strong will to show that Somaliland has the capacity to conduct democratic, national elections, since that would improve the possibilities for Somaliland to get international recognition. The elections will take place with candidates from three parties. The current party in government is UDUB, which has a majority in parliament. The other parties are Kulmiye, that in part has its roots in the liberation movement SNM, and UCID, which is supported by a great part of the diaspora. To vote according to clan is a self-evidence to many Somalilanders. It is important that the clan members vote according to clan, since this demonstrates the strength of the clan, and can have a direct impact on politics. The clan also works as a link between the state and the citizens, for example at the upcoming elections, since only the clan has the ability to reach out and convey the messages of the politicians, and encouraging people to vote. Since a majority of the people in Somaliland belongs to or is linked to a clan, the possibility for a large turnout is great.

#### **4.4. Recognition**

One of the most important political issues in Somaliland is to gain international recognition, as a sovereign state. According to the international community, Somaliland is considered to be a part of Somalia. However, Somaliland's striving for independence constitutes no obstacle for the possibility of Somalia to become a nation of its own, since Somaliland does not rule out the possibility to form a federation with Somalia, when the situation has been

stabilised. Somaliland nevertheless sees its independence as a necessary prerequisite to open any discussion with Somalia. The experience of the Somaliland people to be governed by the state of Somalia carries a great deal of emotional gravity. The many years of oppression and civil war are still very vivid in people's memories today. There is a common view that Somaliland has to become an independent nation, with no bonds to Somalia, in order to be able to go on. According to several international organisations working in the country, it is not a question of whether, but when, Somaliland will gain its independence.<sup>12</sup> A recognition of Somaliland would enable the country to take part in international banking systems, and hence international currency would to a greater extent enter the country. It would also result in Somaliland becoming a possible member of multilateral organisations, and getting access to bilateral aid. Furthermore, a recognition of Somaliland would probably have a positive impact on the development of the entire region, what concerns peace and security, and on the economic development, which requires stability in the region.

## ***5. Changing gender roles***

### **5.1. Power and organisation**

During the past decades, gender roles have been both challenged and changed in Somaliland. The change started already in the 1970s, when unemployment resulted in many men leaving for the Arab countries to find work. Then women became responsible of the family, and in a higher degree had to make decisions concerning family and home, which was a totally new situation. The war has accelerated this change, and popular views of what is feminine and masculine have been challenged. After the war, men have had difficulties finding their role in society. Traumatization because of war, high unemployment and use of khat has led to a widespread passivity. At the same time, women have gained an increased informal power, as a consequence partly of the growing responsibility for the home, partly of the growing economic influence which is a result of supporting a family, and partly because women are organising themselves to create better conditions. The organising is taking place on a larger scale in the cities, in organisations such as Nagaad, an umbrella organisation working with the issue of women's influence in politics and against violence against women. The organising is also taking place in a smaller scale in villages, where women join to help each other and the village, to discuss common problems and possibilities, and to strengthen their identity as women. The increasing economic influence of women, combined with them organising themselves, make their possibilities to bring about a change and a development of society, both regarding the evolution of society as a whole, and the situation of women specifically, greater than ever.

### **5.2. Femininity and masculinity**

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<sup>12</sup> Most national and international organisations have expressed this view during our stay.

Views on what is male and female exist in all societies, including Somaliland. There is a strict division as to what activities are considered to be female and male, as well as between the places where women and men interact. When women enter areas traditionally perceived as being male, the gender division that is norm in society is threatened. An obvious example of questioning this norm, is the basket training for girls arranged by the youth organisation Socsa. Socsa encountered resistance on several levels of society, from authorities who did not want to grant space for the activity; from parts of society expressing their disapproval; and from boys in the neighbourhood throwing stones. All this because of the view that sports are reserved for boys and men, and that girls should not be exercising sports. However, this also shows that girls and women are organising themselves in order to let girls act as a positive force to challenge the norms that restrict them.<sup>13</sup>

The changing gender roles have in some cases lead to women taking over work assignments and activities, earlier run by men. However, the opposite has not taken place, i.e. men have not been taking over assignments and activities performed by women. The consequence is, that women are responsible for home and family, and at the same time having a work outside of home, to ensure the economy of the family. Thus, women are performing double work, not only straining themselves, but also affecting the family and the children. The mothers are away from home the entire day, leaving the children to look after each other. The reason for the great load of work is that women themselves do not possess the possibility to influence the areas where they are active. They have very small possibilities to influence public family policies, and it is still men who have the supreme right of decision in the family.<sup>14</sup>

### **5.3. Women's possibilities of decision**

Decision-making on all levels is based on the clan system, and politics equal representing the clan. Since women have an unclear clan identity, it is difficult for them to participate in politics. Therefore, the women candidating in the parliamentary elections and the fact that there are two female ministers, constitute a challenge to the view that women have no role in public politics. Many organisations are working to encourage female politicians, and stress that they should be candidates in the respect of being women. Since politics until recently have been a closed arena to women, the most effective way for women to participate in decision-making may be to focus on their performances, rather than on their female identity. The problem is, that what counts as a performance is decided by men, based on their conceptions.

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with Zuhur Yassin Ibrahim and Khadra Kahil, Socsa, 2005-07-29

<sup>14</sup> Meeting with Committee for Concerned Somalis (CCS), 2005-08-02

## 6. Economy and employment

### 6.1. Production

Livestock raising is a staple industry in the local economy. For the state, export of cattle used to be an important source of revenue, but as a result of a ban on imports introduced by Saudi Arabia, it is of lesser importance today.<sup>15</sup> Besides livestock raising, the largest industry sectors in the country are fishing, agriculture and charcoal production. Along the coast fishing is important, but the depopulation makes it difficult to develop the fishing industry. The importance of the harbours has also diminished because of the restrictions on imports enforced by Saudi Arabia.<sup>16</sup>

Somaliland's own production is very limited, and both food and other consumers' goods are imported. The space of action of finance politics is very limited, since the lack of internal production does not enable independent actions. Because of the lacking capacities, it is not of current interest for Somaliland to build a traditional export industry, since it would be difficult to compete on the global market. Finding ecologically sustainable alternatives, safeguarding local knowledge while refining products, might result in an alternative industry of export. An example of this is the Candlelight project, where henna has been produced locally. Women collect the plants in the countryside, and then finish the product manually. A part of the production is exported, with a "fair-trade" signature, while some of it is sold in Hargeisa.

The state of Somaliland hopes that transnational companies will want to invest directly, if Somaliland is recognised internationally. Today, there are few foreign companies active in the country, with the exception of those run by the diaspora. The government, however, points out the natural resources in the country, and looks forward to extraction in the future. If companies begin to show an interest for Somaliland, there might be a risk that the weak state is unable to balance them. A strong and well-functioning state is necessary to ensure that companies respect the interests of the people in Somaliland.

### 6.2. Women as an economic catalyst

Women are running a majority of the small businesses in the country. Most businesses concentrate on trade in some form. The activity has often been expanded through micro-credits<sup>17</sup>, granted by local or international organisations. Women's importance to private economy has increased throughout the years, partly because of the unemployment among men, and partly because of women's ability to organise themselves and generate income to the household. A reason to why women have had to take a greater economic responsibility, is that women feel more responsible for their homes and for the education of their children, than

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<sup>15</sup> Ministry of Planning, *Somaliland in figures*, 2004

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Muhammed Hassan Ibrahim, Academy for Peace and Development, 2005-08-15

<sup>17</sup> Micro-credits are small loans, granted to a person wanting to start up an activity. Several loan receivers form a group, and in this group each person pays a smaller amount every month. This amount is granted to a new person, alternatively to an existing member in the group, allowing him/her to expand the activities.

the men do. An obvious example of this is the fact that men spend a lot of their own income, and that of their families, on khat. The large part that khat holds in the household economy does not leave much space for anything else. Women are forced to generate income both to their households, and to finance the abuse of khat of the men. This strikes families already in distress, who have difficulties with meeting their fundamental needs.

### **6.3. Unemployment and khat**

In Somaliland, it is difficult to enforce an active economic policy, which would stimulate the job market, since the domestic production is low. This is partly due to the dependence of international money caused by the import, and partly to the restraint on the manpower capacity caused by the widespread misuse of khat. In order to rebuild the economic base of Somaliland, the state and civil participants would need to find new markets to regain economic control. For example, khat trade is generating 200 million USD each year, at a low estimate.<sup>18</sup> The money generated by khat trade is not invested in Somaliland, since most of the khat is imported from Ethiopia. Thus, khat has double effects on economy, both paralysing portions of the working population and draining money from Somaliland to Ethiopia. For the men in Somaliland, days are divided into two shifts, where the morning to some extent is devoted to work, while the afternoon is devoted to chewing khat.

### **6.4. The diaspora**

Within the private sector, the diaspora has a crucial role, through its direct investments, which has huge repercussions on the economic development in the country. The diaspora also contributes economically by visiting Somaliland, for vacation or to follow up investments. In both cases, the foreign currency spent contributes to a stronger economy. The additional economic contribution from the diaspora to relatives also have a great importance to the single family, often being a necessary complement to the household budget. The advantage of the diaspora, however, may diminish, since the next generation growing up outside of Somaliland may not automatically feel the same loyalty to the homeland of their parents.<sup>19</sup>

## **7. Environment**

### **7.1. Urbanisation**

The soil of Somaliland is barren, water is scarce, and people in the countryside live on the margin. This became conspicuous in 2004, when the drought struck heavily against the nomad population and the cattle herders. In order to survive the drought, many nomads and cattle herders moved closer to the large cities, where there was water and alternative sources of income. The pressure on the cities, primarily Hargeisa, is very large, and has had serious consequences on the urban environment. In the cities, there is a lack of a functioning garbage collecting system and a city planning able to handle the increasing population.

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<sup>18</sup> Kraft Gunnar & Dahllöf Tell Åke, *Somaliland – Reserapport februari/mars 2004*, Forum South, p. 2

<sup>19</sup> Interview with the Minister of planning, 2005-08-09

A growing problem connected to urbanisation is the increasing amount of orphans in the cities. The increasing number of such children is a result of many escaping the drought in the countryside, coming to the cities to find a job or to avoid starvation. Many children have also ended up in the streets when their parents have divorced, or because of other family problems. A large majority of children living in the streets are boys, and most of them live together in gangs. They survive by the means of leftovers from restaurants, or by stealing. Violence in the streets is the biggest problem, both within and between the gangs, and from restaurant personnel and other adults. Many of the children abuse drugs, such as glue-sniffing or rests from khat. There are some organisations working with the street orphans. Soyvo is supporting them, and trying to reunite them with their parents. They also have a football team for street orphans. Furthermore, Havoyoco is working with street orphans, letting them take part in their circus project. The circuses have shows where they also inform about children's rights.

The social security net provided by the clans does not cope equally well with the problems in the urban milieu, as showed by the maladjustment of some groups in the urban areas. If there were alternatives, not wearing on the environment, the possibility for people to stay in the countryside would be greater, which in turn would lead to a better environment both in the cities and in the countryside, providing better opportunities for solving the social problems in the cities.<sup>20</sup>

## **7.2. Charcoal**

The role of the once so important livestock raising has changed drastically over the last years. War, pollution, changes in consumer behaviour, privatisation of land, migration of work force from the countryside to the cities, and a more isolated state market where large producers are prioritised, are all factors affecting livestock raising. Pollution is one of the most important reasons to the changes over the last years, and have lead to the diminishing of the cultivable land areas. As a result, cattle raisers have been forced to find alternative sources of income.<sup>21</sup>

Biomass, in the form of charcoal for cooking and wood for heating, is used in most households, which means that trees are chopped down to be used as fuel. Before the war broke out in 1988, charcoal production was a source of income for the most desolate in society. More recently, there have been changes in the production of charcoal, among other reasons because of the fast pace of urbanisation. A large portion of the city population uses metal stoves that demand a great deal of energy, contributing to an increased demand for charcoal. The greater demand has lead to a hardening competition, where market shares and access to land have become key factors to a continuing trade with charcoal. Moreover, the

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with Sadia Musse Ahmed, Pastoral and Environment Network for the Horn of Africa (Penha), 2005-08-13

<sup>21</sup> Killeh & Awale, *Impact Assessment Togdheer Region, Somaliland*, 2003, p. 4

import stop imposed by Saudi Arabia has resulted in many nomads being forced to begin production of charcoal, as an alternative source of income.<sup>22</sup> During a period of 15 years, the charcoal industry has swelled, as a result of which trees are being cut down faster than they grow up. This contributes to the soil erosion, a problem in large parts of the country. The cutting down of the trees and the soil erosion mean that the soil is unable to absorb and contain water.

The charcoal production is mainly run by men, and the income generated by the sales is to a great extent spent on khat. Consequently, many charcoal producers are indebted, which limits their possibility for investments in cattle. When the younger generation started to engage in charcoal production, they consequently began to move less with their cattle herds. The cattle now graze in enclosed areas, instead of being moved continually to new fields, as was previously the case. As a consequence, the nutrient content in the soil is deteriorating in the enclosures, since the soil has no chance of recovering.

The impoverishment of the countryside, that is a result of the great energy consumption in the cities, additionally renders circumstances in the countryside more difficult, and accelerates the urbanisation. Several organisations are actively working to reduce charcoal production, through finding alternatives and methods for reduced energy consumption. Candlelight has worked at length in order to devise heating pots that preserve the heat, so that less charcoal is needed. They have also been looking at alternative woods, such as *miskit*, a sort of wood that spreads very quickly, in order to come up with alternatives to today's charcoal.

### **7.3. Water**

Lack of water is one of the greatest problems in Somaliland, and the population in the countryside is struck particularly heavily. A positive change for people in the countryside is the construction of *berkads* in their surroundings. *Berkads* are reservoirs of water, cast in concrete, that are filled during the rain period and gives access to water during a longer period. However, the construction of *berkads* has resulted in nomads becoming more domiciled.<sup>23</sup> The increased settlement concentrations in these areas means a higher pressure on the environment, which leads to diminishing grazing fields. Both international and local organisations are working towards increasing access to water for people in need. An example is DRC, that is constructing wells and *berkads* in villages in the countryside; and another is Havoyoco, engaged in a water programme involving the drilling of wells in refugee areas.

The nomads who still move over larger areas do this in shorter periods, since fertile soil and access to water is limited, which also affects the ability to recovery of the soil. This leads to competition for resources, and there are signs that show that several local conflicts have been caused by environmental changes and lacking resources. Some areas have been fenced

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<sup>22</sup> Ministry of Pastoral Development, *Impact of Charcoal Production on Environment and the Socio Economy of Pastoral Communities of Somaliland*, 2004, p. 6

<sup>23</sup> Killeh & Awale, *Impact Assessment Togdheer Region*, Somaliland, 2003, p. 4 9

illegally, in order to ensure access to resources. This problems equally strikes nomads, charcoal producers and cattle herders, as well as farmers. There is no system of rules to regulate the use of the soil, a fact that exacerbates the efforts to prevent conflicts.<sup>24</sup>

## **8. Social service**

### **8.1. Health care**

The access to health care in Somaliland is very limited, especially in the countryside. The lack of health care is by many considered as the greatest and most acute problem in Somaliland. There are twelve hospitals with only 1,586 beds, spread in the six regions. At the hospitals there is a lack of both equipment and personnel. In the countryside there are often no hospitals, clinics, personnel or equipment, and people's possibilities of travelling to the larger cities to get health care are very limited. Foreign donors have contributed with a relatively high amount of money in order to rebuild the health care after the total collapse in 1988. Today, there are organisations supporting local clinics in the countryside to increase their capacity, so that more people will have access to a basic form of health care. In regions with no clinics in the vicinity, there are efforts to build new premises. Organisations, such as Candlelight, contribute with materials and equipment, for instance by distributing medicine for infants and mothers, to be used at deliveries to prevent complications. Since the country cannot offer adequate health care, organisations often support and even run the activities. For instance, IPRT runs a clinic for orphans, and Candlelight is focusing on health care for women and children.

Virtually the entire population in Somaliland has experienced war and refugee life, which has taken its toll on people, both physically and mentally. There is a large group of people in need of mental care, as a result of war traumas.<sup>25</sup> There are mental asylums in Hargeisa and Berbera.

The possibilities for treatments of people with HIV/AIDS is limited, with some exceptions for Hargeisa. There, as in a few other cities, people can come to make tests. At the Hargeisa Hospital, there is a special ward for people infected with HIV and suffering from AIDS, and UNAIDS provides the hospital with basic medicines, but antiretroviral medication is still unavailable in the country.<sup>26</sup>

### **8.2. HIV/AIDS**

The Somaliland society is, in many respects, divided between women and men. Most social occasions are divided according to gender, such as parties, khat sessions, weddings or just

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with Ahmed Ibrahim Awale, Candlelight for Health, Education and Environment, 2005-08-11

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Fahran Adan Haibe, Gavo, 2005-07-26

<sup>26</sup> Somaliland HIV/AIDS Network (Sahan), *Responding to the HIV/AIDS Challenges of today and tomorrow*, Hargeisa, 2004, s. 4

social interaction. Sex before and out of wedlock is totally unacceptable according to the predominant social values. Thus, it is also not discussed, since that would mean accepting the occurrence of such practices. Within this context, HIV/AIDS is a problem that is very difficult to deal with, since it would fall into the same category as sex out of wedlock.

Nevertheless, the Somaliland society must acknowledge that HIV/AIDS is an existing problem. Probably around 1,4 % of the adult population are infected, but it is difficult to establish an exact number, since many are afraid of telling about their disease.<sup>27</sup> People infected with HIV are widely stigmatised, and many believe that the disease only exists within certain groups of society, such as minorities, refugees and non-muslims.<sup>28</sup> There is also a view that those who are infected have committed sins, and that the disease is God's punishment. The disease is blamed on external factors, as it is deemed unthinkable that the disease can proliferate internally. However, sex out of wedlock does occur, for instance among young people and under the form of prostitution, even though such things are kept quiet. Prostitution can, for example, occur in connection with khat sessions. At the khat sessions there is a male spirit of community, as the khat enables a peaceful interaction between men. When a woman takes part in this sphere, it is on the men's conditions. In certain cases this leads to men purchasing sex from the woman, for money or khat. In order to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS, it is necessary to deal with the problem that prostitution constitutes.<sup>29</sup>

Most local organisations have information on HIV/AIDS on their agenda, and there are many workshops about the topic. This has created an awareness about the disease.<sup>30</sup> The focus is often on what the disease means, its symptoms and how it is to live with HIV/AIDS (e.g. how infected people can receive help). Moreover, the stigma carried by infected people, and their vulnerability is discussed. As this is a sensitive issue, some organisations are taking a detour through other programmes to inform about HIV/AIDS. An example is CCS, which discusses HIV/AIDS with women who come to the organisation in connection to the micro-credits granted by the organisation. But the great problem is that the organisations seldom discuss how the disease spreads, since that would mean discussing extramarital sex, which the organisations cannot address successfully.

### **8.3. Education**

The education system in Somaliland is based on a primary school, from first to eighth form, a secondary school of four years, and after that university. Apart from this, there is a number of professional schools, primarily driven by local organisations. The primary schools charge a fee each month, but in some villages children who are unable to pay are excepted. There is a sense of collective responsibility, where it is everyone's duty to make sure that children go to

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<sup>27</sup> Interview with Anwar A/Rahman Warsame, Sahan, 2005-08-11

<sup>28</sup> Somaliland HIV/AIDS Network (Sahan), *Responding to the HIV/AIDS Challenges of today and tomorrow*, Hargeisa, 2004, p. 3

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Anwar A/Rahman Warsame, Sahan, 2005-08-11

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

school. However, far from every child has the possibility to finish primary school, especially girls. In 2003, only half as many girls as boys went to primary school. There are several reasons to why many children are short of a satisfactory education, for instance the lack of schools and teachers, and the fact that children must help out in their homes. The reasons for the low percentage of girls in school are partly the fact that parents prioritise the boys' education, premature marriages, and the lack of female teachers, who could act as role models to the girls. The reason to why the parents give priority to the education of the boys, is that the girls probably will marry outside the clan, and hence their knowledge will not stay within the family and clan. The possibilities for education for disabled children are even more limited, and in the ordinary schools there is no knowledge about the specific needs of the children, nor adjusted materials.<sup>31</sup>

Several organisations, both local and international ones, are working to satisfy the need for teachers and school premises. When schools are built to serve for primary or secondary education, investments are often made by local or international organisations to build the premises, under the condition that the village or a Community Based Organisation (CBO) assumes responsibility for running the school. Superior, private or complementary education is almost exclusively run by organisations. An example is professional education, where students take subjects such as informatics, tailoring, carpentry, plumbing, electricity, mechanics, pottery, administration and cookery. The aim of the professional education is to have the students employed after the education is finished. Women are underrepresented both in public and private schools, and some organisations offer scholarships for higher education or complementary courses for female students. Special education, such as schools for mentally disabled children, are financed by foreign donors, since it would be too costly for the state.

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<sup>31</sup> Interview with Ahmed Ibrahim Awale, Candlelight for Health, Education and Environment, 2005-08-11

## **Part 3. Organisational life in Somaliland**

### **9. Organisations in civil society**

Civil society has had, and still has, a vital role to play for the development in Somaliland. The leadership within the clans, as well as the more local basis of civil society, were determinative factors to gain the peace and stability in the country of today. In the stateless framework in the aftermath of the war, civil society provided the means for rebuilding the country, thus channelling commitment and hopes for the future. In many cases, civil society has adopted activities normally performed by states, such as health care and education.<sup>32</sup>

CBO's and NGO's are two main components in civil society in Somaliland. CBO's work at a local level. They could be women's organisations, youth organisations, agricultural organisations and pastoralist organisations. They have already been working at length in Somaliland, for instance the independence movement during the colonial era started out as local youth organisations. NGO's, on the contrary, are relatively new in Somaliland, and most of them started after the war. The difference between the NGO's and the CBO's, however, is in many cases marginal.

#### **9.1. Community Based Organisations**

Historically, in Somaliland it has been common to organise in the local area. An important part of organisational life in Somaliland is people uniting at a local level, in order to pursue common interests and issues regarding the village and its inhabitants. In most villages in Somaliland there are organisations and communities working with local issues. At a village level, women's organisations are the most frequent ones, and they are also the most well-organised. The primary aim of the organisations is for women to unite in order to help each other in various ways. For example, raising money for somebody who is ill. Also, it is the women's organisations that ensure that the most vital needs of the village are satisfied. In many cases, international organisations and local NGO's use CBO's as intermediaries, for instance when micro credits are granted to women's organisations in the villages.

#### **9.2. Local Non Governmental Organisations**

There is a number of firmly established local organisations, most often city-based. They normally work in many sectors, and have many projects and programmes running simultaneously. They receive financial support from international organisations, which has contributed to their structure demonstrating an organisational model following western standards. In the 1990s, the activities were focused on rebuilding the country materially. Today the work has been broadened, and also encompasses knowledge and awareness issues regarding problems such as HIV/AIDS, female circumcision and khat. Havoyoco constitutes an example of a firmly established organisation with a high esteem and a long experience.

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<sup>32</sup> Interview with Muhammed Hassan Ibrahim, Academy for Peace and Development, 2005-08-15

Young, returning refugees founded the organisation in 1992. Earlier, it had a clear focus on young people, but now the work covers a wide spectrum. The organisation runs short-term projects, e.g. an emergency fund for food distribution, and long-term projects, as professional education and pre-emptive measures regarding for example HIV/AIDS. Havoyoco has established contacts with international organisations that finance the projects implemented by Havoyoco. The organisation also has contacts with locally based organisations, with which they are performing the projects in unison.<sup>33</sup>

As a contrast, there are smaller organisations, both in revenue and width of actions, working on a smaller scale. Their work is more concentrated to specific areas, and it is usually based on voluntary efforts. They have limited possibilities of receiving financial support from international organisations, both because of their lack of routine when applying for projects, and because of their inability to compete with more established organisations. Fedha is focusing on households run by women, and to a certain extent on environmental issues. Fedha is working with scarce resources, but adjusts its projects after the conditions. An example is that they are arranging cleaning days, when the area around the office is cleaned, and thereby drawing attention to the big problem of the polluted urban environment.<sup>34</sup>

There is also a number of organisations working with research. Some are researching solely within a specific area, whereas others combine the research with practical development work. Often, they write research papers for a client such as international or local organisations. The research contributes to a greater knowledge about changes in society, as well as concrete problems, as for instance the risks caused by land mines and the marginal role of women in politics. When pursuing research, FOPAG concentrates on a specific district, investigating the factors affecting society, e.g. recent sources of conflict. The sources of conflicts that are identified should be made known to the local leaders, hence the study is combined with education of e.g. local governmental administrators. The ambition is to spread knowledge about specific, local sources of conflict to the local as well as to the central level.<sup>35</sup>

### **9.3. Umbrella organisations**

There are different types of umbrella organisations, which all have in common their goal to co-ordinate and strengthen single organisations. Most of them are directed toward organisations working with a specific aim, for example HIV/AIDS, youth and gender issues. These umbrella organisations have three goals. The first is to strengthen their members through capacity building. The second is to co-ordinate organisations and efforts within the specific area. The third is to gather competencies and experiences within the area. An example is Nagaad, uniting 32 organisations working with women's and gender issues. The organisation has its roots in the changes of gender roles after the war, as well as in the will to unite and strengthen women. Nagaad works in different ways to strengthen their members

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<sup>33</sup> Interview with Mohammed Elmi, Horn of Africa Voluntary Youth Committee (Havoyoco), 2005-08-14

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Amina Haji Ibrahim, Female Headed Households (Fedha), 2005-08-14

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Sadia Musse Ahmed, Forum for Peace and Governance (Fopag), 2005-08-13

and give them advice and help for conflict resolution. At the moment, Nagaad does not accept new members, preferring to concentrate its support to the existing ones. The idea is to concentrate on making fewer organisations stronger, instead of aiming at as many organisations as possible. Nagaad is working on a national level, while its members are implementing the programmes or projects on a local level. They are also applying for funding on behalf of its member organisations, and co-ordinating grants. The organisation is also working with specific gender issues, for instance by participating in a regional campaign against violence against women, focusing on female circumcision.<sup>36</sup>

Apart from the area-restricted umbrella organisations, there is COSONGO, which encompasses the largest number of member organisations, 94 ones. Their goal is to work as an umbrella organisation for NGO's in different sectors of civil society. With the great number of NGO's appearing during the 1990's, they saw a need to co-ordinate their efforts. COSONGO works as a link between international donors and local receivers, supplying their members with advice, administration, lobbying and conflict management.

Apart from these strong, often city-based umbrella organisations, there are several smaller umbrella organisations, working locally. Some only have a few members, like for instance the umbrella organisation Mandeeg. Mandeeg is an umbrella organisation for three women's organisations in the village of Cadeadley. The member organisations are working with different issues, uniting in the umbrella organisation around issues concerning the whole village.<sup>37</sup>

#### **9.4. International Non-Governmental Organisations**

The international organisations are working in different ways in Somaliland. There are relatively few possessing an office in the country, and if they do, it is located in Hargeisa. Though the international organisations are few, they are completely decisive for the funding of local organisations. There are also some international organisations working from outside Somaliland, but they are also supporting local organisations, primarily financially. A few international organisations run their own activities in the country. An example is Danish Refugee Council (DRC), having its office in Hargeisa, but also having local offices in several cities and villages. DRC runs its own projects, but also supports local organisations financially. In the villages where DRC is present, they are often running several projects, such as agricultural projects, school constructions and micro credits. The organisation attaches great importance to the fact that the projects must have local support and a long-term perspective. In order to ensure this, they co-operate among others with clan elders. An example is letting the clan elders function as informers in the work to promote human rights.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Interview with Sado Hashi Awa, Nagaad, 2005-07-31

<sup>37</sup> Field trip, Cadeadley, meeting with Mandeeg, 2005-08-04

<sup>38</sup> Justiniani Victoria, *Human Rights and Peace Advocacy Impact on Somali Customary Law – The Toghdeer Experience*, Danish Refugee Council (DRC), 2004

## ***Part 4. The opportunities of foreign aid in Somaliland***

### ***10. Analysis and discussion***

In our pre-study, we mapped civil society in Somaliland, exposing the collective structures that are affecting civil society. The country is deeply marked by the clan structure. The clan system is built on relations between people, and is the paramount source of identity. It is an important component in the local context where foreign aid is meant to have impact.

Today, civil society has an enormously important role to play in Somaliland. It is providing people with both social service and giving them a voice in society. Thus, it is important to support the strong force that civil society constitutes. In our pre-study, we discussed several aspects of society. The clan structure and civil society are recurring phenomena, as well as in the problematic situations and in the opportunities that we have drawn out. In order to work in a constructive way in Somaliland, donors must be aware of the importance of clan structure and civil society.

#### **10.1. Co-ordination**

There is a number of international and local organisations working in Somaliland, but there is no self-evident operator co-ordinating the efforts. Many organisations are working within the same sectors and in the same geographical area, but we have the impression that there is a lack of a comprehensive co-ordination of the efforts being made. COSONGO earlier tried to create opportunities for co-ordination, but after some turmoil in the organisation, this work has come to a halt. There is a wish from the organisations that the state should have a clearer role in the comprehensive co-ordination. However, there is a certain co-ordination by the umbrella organisations, primarily in certain areas. Forum Syd should not initiate new projects or programmes with no base in the existing work of the local organisations, since this would be counter-productive regarding the aim of strengthening civil society and the efforts for co-ordinating.

#### **10.2. The clan structure**

International organisations must relate to the clan structure in their work, and be attentive to its influence on society. It is hard for organisations to work independently, as well outside as inside the framework of the clan. Each individual in the clan is expected to work for the good of the clan members. Those working in the organisations thus have the expectations on them to work for their clans, a fact that has an impact on the efforts of the organisations. Since the local organisations and their members constitute a part of the clan structure, it is difficult to stay neutral in relation to the clan. As the international organisations are not contained within the clan structure, they are able to work more independently, with a broader spectrum, including the marginalized groups of society. There are local organisations trying to preserve a clan balance, both regarding their personnel and their target groups. It is vital that

international organisations do not encourage divisions between the clans, by giving precedence to a certain clan.

The clan system is the most tangible societal institution in Somaliland. However imperfect, as foreigners we cannot disregard it, since that would mean disregarding Somaliland. That is why foreign organisations must respect the existence of the clan system and work with it, not against it. Working in an established system should imply that the organisations take that system into account, and understand how they affect it and are affected by it. The organisations need knowledge about how society works in order to be able to work in it, otherwise they run the risk of being more harmful than helpful. It is very problematic that people are excluded from the clan structure, but in order to obtain long-term results, the work must be based on the structure in which people place their identity.

### **10.3. Gender structure**

One of the obstacles to a positive development in Somaliland is the combination of men being passive, and at the same time keeping the power. Men are expected to lead the development of the society, as they have the power, but in today's Somaliland, men as a collective do not possess the capacities demanded to bring about the necessary changes. The present efforts are often aimed at strengthening the capacities of men, so that they might lead the development once again. This is a problem, since the actual capacities and abilities of men, related to the common capacities in society, remain unquestioned. To concentrate on men automatically diminishes the possibilities of others to contribute to the development. Many organisations are working to strengthen the position of women versus men. However, their aim is not necessarily to make the women take part in and lead the development on their own. To aim at both women and men will probably have a positive influence on the development of society. To concentrate on women would also lead to a positive development, including the change of the gender structure. Hence, to concentrate on women at this stage will mean a greater change.

### **10.4. Foreign aid and its impact**

Bearing in mind the feeble economy of the country, both the state and the civil society are in a weak position to negotiate with the financiers of the activities. As a result of the unequal distribution of power between the donors and the receivers, it is the donors that decide what is wrong and what is right. Since the receivers are completely dependent on the money of the donors, they are forced to please them. Consequently, foreign aid in Somaliland is marked by short-term thinking, since international donors seldom give aid to run organisations, preferring single projects. This has led to a concentration around Hargeisa, where most of the international organisations are located, and conformity of the projects. As a result, the receivers of the aid have opinions that are more in line with those of the international organisations. In reality, the possessors of the economic power most often have the final right of decision. To make the efforts more long-term, those possessing knowledge about the context in which the aid is to function, should have the right to decide.

To diminish the dependence, the donors must prioritise support to the local capacity. In a short perspective, it is much easier to build e.g. a school, where the donor is able to quantify the results. When is it not possible to define the goals beforehand, the donors become unsure of what they are supporting, as the results might not correspond with their goals. Despite of the fact that donors often have the ambition to let people decide over their own future, this can only take place inside the frame of conditions set up by the donors. This paradox must be resolved, in order to make the foreign aid achieve the impact envisaged by the donors.

At the local village level, the effects of the dependence on aid are very obvious, especially in the villages where international organisations are or have been active. There is a belief, that development can only take place because of the efforts of international organisations. This becomes even more obvious in villages situated by the greater roads, for instance between Hargeisa and Berbera. There the inhabitants watch international convoys driving through the villages, and they hope that they will stop at their own village to start a project. When so much of the expectations for the future is concentrated to the international organisations, people's belief in their own ability to take initiatives diminishes. The reason why the organisations seldom work with long-term, locally based projects, is that there are few donors with enough capacities, abilities and will to complete the extensive pre-work needed to support the local capacity.

Normally, the problem regarding aid is considered to be a long distance between donor and receiver, as this leads to the donors lacking insight in the local context. The result might be resources ending up in the wrong places, also according to the donors themselves. The solution of the donors is to shorten the distance, for example by visiting the site and discussing with people affected by the aid. As long as the foreign aid workers live in a secluded and protected environment, the distance of power between donor and receiver tends to widen. The real solution to this dilemma is to be located at the site where the aid is to function. This means, that if the activities are taking place in a refugee camp, the donor must live and work in this refugee camp, under similar conditions as the people involved in the project. It is not enough to open an office nearby, since this would mean creating a physical and mental barrier between donor and receiver. The alternative is to rely on the capacities contained by the local organisations, and to strengthen their work on the site. Forum Syd should always adjust its work to the situation and the target group for the foreign aid. Thus, if possible, they should actively be working to be located on the site where the aid is to function. Otherwise, the partner should run the activities on the site.