LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINING PEACE
Case Studies
This publication is a product of Social Policy Section and the Humanitarian Action and Transition Support Unit, Programme Division, at the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

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Cover photograph: © UNICEF/UN0307570/Knowles-Coursin Temirbek, 11 years old, and his sister Akbermek, 6 years old, stand outside their burnt-out home in Furkat District, in the southern city of Osh, Kyrgyzstan. Their house was destroyed during riots in the conflict. Their large ethnic Kyrgyz family now shares a tent in the courtyard of their home, 2 July 2010.

Contents page photograph: © UNICEF/UN0315486/English Boys play in a pool of standing water in Nugaal, Puntland, Somalia. Whilst much of Puntland has experienced a prolonged period of low rainfall, the long-awaited Gu’ rains has brought relief to parts of the region, 22 May 2019.
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ANNEX 1: SOMALIA SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL 20
Children wait in line to enter the El Diviso school with the general student body comprised of Awa indigenous children, 3 March 2016. National data shows that out of 7.6 million people in Colombia who are registered as victims of the conflict, 2.5 million are children. Indigenous children have been particularly vulnerable throughout the conflict.
COLOMBIA
CASE STUDY

OVERVIEW
Colombia has been affected by armed conflict spanning more than 50 years, which has disproportionately affected children and adolescents. Conflict has exposed them to dynamics that violate their rights and subjected them to recruitment by armed groups, sexual violence, injury or death from anti-personnel landmines, and other forms of violence. Meeting the challenge of improving local governance in Colombia’s rural areas is crucial to ensuring a sustainable peacebuilding process.

SETTING THE CONTEXT
General background
Colombia has a population of over 47 million people, 32 per cent of which are children and adolescents. Today, 75 per cent of the population lives in urban areas – and this is expected to grow to 85 per cent by 2050. Colombia is an upper-middle-income country with an advanced legal and political framework. Sustained economic growth and the expansion of social protection programmes have contributed to the decrease in the proportion of the population living in income poverty (from 49.7 to 28.5 per cent between 2002 and 2014) and to the fall in the extreme poverty headcount rate (from 17.7 to 8.1 per cent over the same period).

The conflict
The armed conflict, which began in the mid-1960s, involved various guerilla groups, the largest and most influential of which is known as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo; FARC-EP). Each group framed its opposition to the Colombian government differently, but most mobilized supporters via a communist stance, campaigning on issues like poverty, political exclusion and social justice. At the same time, the government fortified its power by appealing to order and to the administration of justice. The resulting conflict led to amplified tensions, increased civilian casualties and the further geographical spread of the conflict in the 1980s and 1990s.

The root cause of the conflict is contentious, but depictions typically attribute it to the remnants of inequality left over from the era of Spanish colonialism. This inequality, opposition groups claim, was amplified under decentralization and local governance as racial groups and the rural poor were marginalized by land ownership practices and by the uneven or poor coverage of public services in these regions. This produced clientelism, a social hierarchy and provisions that rendered local elites the predominant beneficiaries of policy decisions.

President Juan Manuel Santos and FARC-EP commander Rodrigo Londoño finalized a peace treaty in late 2016 following a long period of negotiations, which had commenced in 2012. During the formal conflict period, there were 7.6 million registered victims, of whom 31 per cent were children and adolescents.

Despite a signed accord with FARC-EP, violence persists and children remain especially vulnerable. Other major armed groups, like the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional; ELN), still remain active.

2 Ibid.
4 Country Programme Document: Colombia.
Colombia is a unitary republic with three tiers of administration comprising 32 departments, the capital district of Bogotá and more than 1,100 municipios (municipalities). Historically, the country was characterized by its very centralized, presidential governance system.

In the 1980s, municipal authority was mostly cosmetic and revolved around street cleaning and the management of slaughterhouses. The delivery of critical public services such as water and education was still largely the responsibility of central government. In the 1970s and 1980s, poor public services led to political unrest in the form of civic strikes. These uprisings propelled reform, including the creation of a new constitution, and municipalities were given more authority, administrative duties and resources. From 1988 onwards, local authorities oversaw education, health, and infrastructure related to transportation and agriculture, and mayors became popularly elected. This is coincided with increases in both intergovernmental transfers and local revenues.

Fiscal decentralization followed in 1993, with Law 60/1993 and Law 100/1993, changing how local administrations received funding from central government. The new approach was more equitable than the previous, centralized approach, which had favoured affluent areas. Towards the end of the 1990s, inequality had therefore significantly levelled off.

Decentralization was not without its problems, however, as armed groups exploited the lack of a concentrated executive and fortified rule of law to their advantage, and local politicians often engaged in clientelism with them. Furthermore, local leaders, including mayors and councillors, were frequently targeted during the conflict. Mayors and local government staff were often coerced to leave their post and operate instead from the capital. This contributed to capacity gaps in poor rural localities.

UNICEF EXPERIENCES IN PEACEBUILDING AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

UNICEF Colombia aims to develop and invest in children, adolescents and youth since securing their economic empowerment and combating the inequality that underlies the conflict provides a more systematic and sustainable route towards peace. The country office has worked on a wide array of initiatives to tackle the ways in which children are affected by conflict.

UNICEF Colombia has worked cooperatively with central and local government actors, most notably through the Colombian government’s National Development Plan 2014–2018, which prioritizes peace, equity and education. By acknowledging that “La paz es territorial” (peace is local), the Plan creates the framework to remedy preferential treatment, corruption and the considerable variation in public services at the sub-national level to close the inequality gap in rural areas. UNICEF has played a part in enhancing the Plan by strengthening coordination between central and local administrations through technical assistance, capacity development and targeted aid.

In terms of its engagement in local governance, UNICEF Colombia has taken a dual approach. On the one hand, the country office has supported the strengthening of local institutions and governance processes (Facts & Rights). On the other, it has worked on a complementary approach by adding and developing models and methodologies to build peace through the active participation of children and youth in decision-making (Voices of Children).

Facts & Rights

The strategic alliance Hechos y Derechos (Facts & Rights), which encompasses a range of national and sub-national government actors from various sectors under the leadership and support of the UNICEF Social Policy section, organized a large consultation meeting with mayors in 2014. Its aim was to develop consensual strategies to build peace in the municipalities most affected by violence and inequality (see Box 1).

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2 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
The meeting tried to address three questions:
• What actions need to be taken to guarantee the protection of child, adolescent and youth victims of the armed conflict?
• What actions need to be taken to guarantee a basic package of social services for children, adolescents and youth who are victims or at risk of the ongoing armed violence?
• What actions need to be taken to guarantee reconciliation and the construction of new peace initiatives with children, adolescents and youth?

The meeting prioritized nine strategic actions:
• Increase local resource allocation, allocation efficiency and budget transparency.
• Strengthen cultural, recreational and leisure activities for children, adolescents and youth.
• Strengthen families, educational entities and communities to provide a protective environment.
• Support local income generation, on-the-job training and employment projects, and programmes that support improved water, health and education services.
• Allocate dedicated resources to guarantee the rights of children, adolescents and youth.
• Decentralize and increase autonomy in decision-making, taking into account the specific context of each territory.
• Strengthen school and non-formal education settings as spaces for the formation of political culture, peace, truth and democratic coexistence.
• Generate spaces for dialogue between different actors with the active participation of children, adolescents and youth to improve decision-making and rebuild trust among all actors.
• Strengthen social cohesion by developing awareness-raising activities and training programmes for civil society and communities.

Based on these actions, UNICEF Colombia supported the identified municipalities through technical assistance and capacity development to make public planning and management processes more responsive, particularly to excluded groups and to mainstreaming child protection in the municipal development plans. Efforts have also included advocacy and mobilization initiatives. This approach has, for example, resulted in special local government budget lines for children directly affected by the armed conflict and who are in need of protection.
Voices of Children
Taking into consideration the voices of children, adolescents and youth in peacebuilding is another key objective. The UNICEF Child Protection section has been developing the capacities of children and youth to actively participate in peacebuilding through participative methodologies and campaigns such as Somos paz (We are peace), Paz a la joven (Peace to youth) and Paz a tiempo (Peace in time) (see Box 2).

In addition, UNICEF is implementing the project Toward Reconciliation and Peacebuilding: Reintegration of Girls and Boys from the FARC-EP. This seeks to reintegrate into their families and communities children and adolescents separated from FARC-EP or other non-state armed groups (either formally or ‘by the back door’).

The Toward Reconciliation and Peacebuilding project supports reintegration by:
• re-establishing child and adolescent rights
• developing life projects
• enabling access to comprehensive reparations
• encouraging participation in reconciliation and peacebuilding.

Box 2. Participative methodologies and campaigns

Somos paz is a conceptual and methodological tool that seeks to promote and strengthen the capacities of children and adolescents as peacebuilders through art, music, sport and communications. Somos paz starts from the premise that peacebuilding is a process of capacity strengthening, in which children and adolescents acquire the tools necessary to take the lead in reconciliation activities in their own communities. Somos paz constitutes a proven strategy, having already been implemented in several parts of the country and engaged with more than 5,000 children and adolescents, and it is currently run in nine territories by local projects. Somos paz follows on from the two strategies below, which aim to equip children and adolescents to lead the peacebuilding process in Colombia.

Paz a la joven has targeted young community leaders for capacity building. They have been learning to organize peace movements in their communities and are trained to act as peace ambassadors.

Paz a tiempo provides an online six-month certificate course for young people aged 12 to 18 years on peace and peacebuilding at the local level. The initiative met with great interest, with more than 9,000 candidates – from across all 32 departments of Colombia – signing up for the course.
CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

In UNICEF Colombia’s experience, it is crucial that peacebuilding programmes are based on a thorough analysis of local governance structures, mechanisms, processes and stakeholders. Given the complexity of the political system – both in areas directly affected by violence and not affected by violence – such knowledge should cover the national, departmental and municipal levels and should be shared with local governments.

To ensure that a peacebuilding programme is successfully implemented via local governance processes, one of the essential steps required following conflict analysis is to introduce and prioritize children's rights in local planning processes. This has allowed UNICEF Colombia to support the capacity building of local governments to better respond to social exclusion, particularly in relation to the victims of the armed conflict and internally displaced persons.

Establishing a peacebuilding intervention through local governance processes also calls for mechanisms to enable meaningful participation, accountability and monitoring, especially given the prevalence of corruption. The UNICEF country office has thus supported various watchdog institutions in Colombia such as ombudspersons, prosecution authorities and accountability actors.

Timing of UNICEF input is an issue, however: given the high risk of youth being recruited by criminal gangs and post-demobilization armed groups, UNICEF was sometimes required to provide immediate and short-term input, which may not always allow for thorough analysis and consultations. The question of timing is also relevant to the transition from humanitarian work to development work.

Also, the potential ambiguities regarding the concept of peacebuilding make it difficult to define standard objectives and indicators for monitoring and evaluation, inhibiting a holistic approach. A shared understanding of the concept within UNICEF and the United Nations could therefore facilitate the coherent integration of peacebuilding, including within local governance processes. It is essential to find ways to add peacebuilding through local governance efforts to existing results-based management and monitoring and evaluation frameworks, while relying on conflict analysis to develop context-specific objectives and indicators.

UNICEF Colombia learned that implementing peacebuilding activities at the local governance level in Colombia is resource-intensive, both in terms of time and human resources, and requires a more long-term approach given the country’s deeply entrenched political problems.

Finally, depending on the local context, the choice of language and conceptual references used in programming should be carefully assessed for any unintended associations with sensitive political or ideological movements connected with the peacebuilding context.
Adulazis, 5 years old, stands in the doorway of his fire-gutted home in the southern city of Jalal-Abad. He, his three brothers, and their parents continue to live in the remains of their home, and are receiving relief from UNICEF and partners.
KYRGYZSTAN
CASE STUDY

SETTING THE CONTEXT

Kyrgyzstan, a nation of nearly 6 million people, is located in Central Asia and borders China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. With the gross national income for 2016 estimated at US$1,100 per capita, Kyrgyzstan was only recently classified as a lower-middle-income country. Approximately 2.3 million children make up 37 per cent of the country’s population.

Kyrgyzstan gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 and shortly after implemented a parliamentary democracy, which was a first for in Central Asia. In 2010, a liberal constitution was adopted, which guarantees the separation of powers, fundamental human rights and a system of governance based on the rule of law. The election of Almazbek Atambayev in 2011 marked the first peaceful transfer of presidential power. Two increasingly open, fair and transparent parliamentary elections have since been held, though it is clear that women and ethnic minorities have been under-represented in both.

The Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic (2010) also consolidated a system of local self-governance. The administrative system of Kyrgyzstan is characterized by 3 sub-national tiers of governance consisting of 7 regions and 2 cities, including the capital Bishkek; districts administered by government-appointed officials; and the local self-government (LSG) level, which includes municipalities in urban areas and ail okmotus, self-governing bodies that each cover up to 20 small settlements and are headed by locally elected mayors and councils. LSG competences embrace water provision, refuse collection, sports, culture, local economic development and, notably, the organization and implementation of measures relating to children and young people.

The independence of Kyrgyzstan coincided with a shift in inter-ethnic demographics, mainly due to the emigration of Russians from the country: as a proportion of the total population, the ethnic Kyrgyz population increased in size from 50 to 80 per cent. Ethnic Uzbeks, based in the south, represent 14 per cent of the population – currently the largest ethnic minority in Kyrgyzstan. Ethnic Russians, in the north, represent 6 per cent of the population.

Within a context of democratization, the change in demographics provided politicians with an opportunity to gain votes through identity politics and populist messaging. In 2010, ethnic violence erupted in the south, resulting in 418 deaths and the destruction of 2,800 homes. Feelings of social injustice and of suspicion still linger, slowing recovery and inter-ethnic integration. The situation remains particularly fragile in the Fergana Valley, which spans Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and is home to mainly ethnic Uzbeks from Kyrgyzstan. In a context of unmarked and disputed borders, recurring community-level conflicts over governance and access to resources give rise to a continual threat of further escalation.

The lack of quality basic services, the weak capacities of local public servants and the public perception of pervasive corruption (according to opinion polls) add to this complex situation. A large percentage of the population has sought a better life abroad – 30 per cent of the Kyrgyzstan gross domestic product consists of...
personal remittances – causing families to be separated, which in turn affects parental care and supervision. Young people increasingly resort to religion to achieve spiritual comfort and guidance, and a minority of them – more than 500 according to some estimates – have travelled to the Syrian Arab Republic to join the armed group Islamic State in the hope of a better future.

**UNICEF APPROACH TO PEACEBUILDING**

UNICEF Kyrgyzstan implements a variety of conflict-sensitive programmes that support the equitable delivery and effective management of basic social services (education, health, social protection, and clean water and sanitation) in ways that build local and national capacities to address root causes of conflict at the policy, community and individual levels. The three-fold strategic approach to peacebuilding involves:

- strengthening vertical social cohesion by promoting and channelling the voices of adolescents through their participation in local policymaking – this requires LSG capacity development to ensure the delivery of equitable access to quality social services and to build legitimacy through participatory processes
- fostering horizontal social cohesion by removing obstacles that keep social groups apart or marginalized – this implies the need to protect the most vulnerable children and to build cohesion between law enforcement authorities and vulnerable adolescents, especially those in migrant communities
- promoting civic engagement and competence development (non-cognitive skills), particularly among adolescents – to boost individual capacities that contribute to horizontal social cohesion at the community level and to vertical social cohesion.

**UNICEF ENGAGEMENT IN PEACEBUILDING THROUGH LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

The United Nations Country Team Peacebuilding Needs Assessment conducted in Kyrgyzstan in 2013 highlighted the conflict potential related to the lack of trust between citizens and the state as well as among citizens, especially between ethnic groups. The assessment found instances of weak state control and governance that affect the trust of people in state institutions, as those institutions tend to provide an unequal or uneven access to quality public services, leaving the [sic] room for discriminatory approaches and deprivation from social, economic, cultural, civil and political rights. It also identified an overall sense of impunity and a tendency to resort to violence to resolve disputes, leaving women, children and youth most vulnerable. A lack of civic identity and the prevalence of ethno-nationalism further increase the potential for conflict. The assessment pointed towards the need for checks and balances mechanisms and strengthened participation in public affairs by minorities, women, youth and other excluded groups.

The Kyrgyz Republic Peacebuilding Priority Plan 2013–2016, which was developed following the assessment, identified three desired outcomes. UNICEF prioritized two of these outcomes in line with the strategic approach to peacebuilding:

- LSGs, in partnership with related state institutions and civil society, should have the capacity to bridge divisions and reduce local tensions.
- Policies, pilot initiatives and approaches that enable the further development of a common civic identity, multilingual education and respect for diversity and minority rights should be developed and implemented.

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16 UNICEF has conducted interventions using Peace Recovery Facility funds (in 2015) and through the Peacebuilding Fund Immediate Response Facility. The UK government began its peacebuilding partnership with UNICEF through its support of the Equity Programme (2012–2015) and continued its involvement through the Conflict Stability Security Fund, a cross-border (Tajikistan–Kyrgyzstan) conflict prevention and stability programme. UNICEF has also worked with the Japanese government to reduce the social inequalities in access to essential health services in Kyrgyzstan.
17 In programme countries, the United Nations Country Team is the United Nations’ highest level of inter-agency coordination and decision-making body.
**LSGs and social protection**

LSGs are well placed to effectively promote the social inclusion of vulnerable groups through the delivery of equitable and accessible public services. In 2013, the State Agency for Local Self-Governance and Inter-Ethnic Relations was established, presenting a strong opportunity to support LSGs to bridge existing ethnic divisions and reduce tensions. Thirteen LSGs and related state institutions joined efforts with UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to model mechanisms to identify the most vulnerable children and youth and their families as a precondition for providing access to basic services and appropriate case management. The joint programme analysed local legal and operational mechanisms for reaching the most vulnerable, identifying both opportunities for and deterrents to equitable service delivery. Local service providers from conflict-affected communities were then trained to identify and respond to vulnerabilities in an inclusive manner. The approach was officially endorsed in 2015, when the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic passed Regulation No. 391 on the identification and case management for children and families in a difficult life situation. The Regulation has scaled up the approach nationwide, assigning clear roles and responsibilities to LSGs and central authorities and guaranteeing access to social benefits and social services for vulnerable and poor children and their families.

**LSGs and youth**

Evidence suggests that in conflict situations in Kyrgyzstan the disenfranchisement of youth makes them susceptible to becoming both victims and perpetrators of violence. Young people belonging to ethnic groups other than the Kyrgyz ethnic group may also be easily lured into participating in conflicts along ethnic lines. At the same time, the positive agency of young people is increasingly acknowledged, including in terms of their dual roles as rights holders and duty bearers and their ability to contribute to innovation and to the development of their communities. In this context, UNICEF Kyrgyzstan interventions have been guided by the following theory of change: If adolescents and youth acquire non-cognitive skills that enable them to act as peace actors, and professional skills and competences, they will be better prepared to engage in socio-political and economic life, to find opportunities for self-realization and to contribute to the improvement of living conditions at the local level. Narratives of extremism and radicalism will then be less attractive to adolescents and youth, because they will instead focus their attention on realizing their potential while contributing to the common good.

In Kyrgyzstan, specific state institutions at the national level govern youth matters. For example, the State Agency for Youth, Sports and Physical Culture is in charge of youth policy. The National Youth Policy Strategy and its accompanying action plan are the primary documents guiding the youth sector in Kyrgyzstan, and UNICEF Kyrgyzstan currently supports the process of updating the Strategy. Youth affairs, in general, are formally a service provided by LSGs. The enactment of youth-related services is at the discretion of LSGs and is contingent on both their capacity and financial resources. As a result, LSG youth work has ranged from being virtually non-existent to providing support for one-off sports or folklore events that have limited sustainable impact. Linkages between national youth strategies and local youth initiatives have been weak.

In the aftermath of the 2010 violence, UNICEF Kyrgyzstan engaged in a partnership with central government and local governments, international development organizations and civil society organizations to create a network of youth centres. The youth centres provided a safe space for young people from different backgrounds to come together, learn technical and social skills, and discuss issues and possible remedial and preventive actions. Since 2012, this programme of work has taken a more systemic approach, by introducing common standards for professional youth work in conflict-affected communities, which include a focus on youth leadership, communication and citizenship skills; career planning; youth participation in local government development planning and budgeting; and monitoring of the delivery of local services. In parallel, the programme introduced a youth policy course, aimed at local public servants, at one of Kyrgyzstan’s graduate schools.

Since the course launched, 50 LSG youth workers have been trained to date, which has in turn resulted in the introduction of more than 60 youth initiatives and over 20 new LSG youth services. In 10 pilot communities, youth now participate in LSG budget hearings, through which they can advocate for LSG funds to be allocated to issues that matter to them. The programme also supported LSGs to engage the services of civil society organizations and private companies as a key means by which to support local youth policy implementation.
CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Contextual challenges
Political parties are articulated around divisions – whether relating to territory, lineage or clan, religion or national identity – thus making it difficult at times to communicate the debates and policies around issues, including youth issues. Local governments are primarily interested in local infrastructure development, as action in this area will result in tangible outputs.

Hence the population expects LSGs not to abide by their own policy decisions, because:
- the fiscal system is centralized, and most LSGs depend on levelling grants from central government – this does not facilitate the responsiveness of an LSG to local citizens’ needs and demands, and so institutional accountabilities between the LSG and central government are diluted
- of the high turnover of local public servants, mostly due to low salaries, lack of career development and lack of motivation
- there is no institutionalized culture of evidence-based and participatory policymaking/decision-making.

Lessons learned regarding social protection interventions
- On-the-job capacity development with LSGs will help to clarify roles and responsibilities at various political levels.
• Aligning social protection mechanisms to international standards will help to provide better services to the most vulnerable (central and local authorities primarily aim to reduce the number of beneficiaries, while international criteria aim to reduce poverty headcount, severity and gap, or impact on consumption share).
• Supporting LSGs to enforce their own strategic plans and use them as tools to set the local policy and funding framework will help to ensure consistency across the priorities and interventions of aid agencies, central government and other stakeholders.

Lessons learned regarding youth interventions
• LSGs frequently support and benefit from adolescent and youth engagement in decision-making. Efforts to institutionalize this approach within the existing legal framework and processes, particularly around LSG planning, budgeting and monitoring, will strengthen vertical social cohesion.
• The peacebuilding case for increasing LSG capacities to manage and benefit from participatory processes must be coupled with skills development for adolescents and youth so they may contribute to local planning processes in a constructive and effective manner. This is particularly relevant for girls and for adolescents and youth from minority groups.
• Special attention must be paid to the role of elders in communities – which is grounded in custom and traditional values – in helping to ensure that youth engagement is perceived as a positive contribution to be encouraged and facilitated, and not as either inappropriate or a threat.

WHAT’S NEXT?

UNICEF has further refined its approach to peacebuilding to tackle the conflict potential of extremist and exclusionary ideologies in contexts where adolescents and youth feel disenfranchised and powerless. UNICEF seeks to fill in the gaps between frequently short-term conflict mitigation projects through longer-term engagement with LSGs, understanding that peace is a social process in which well-being and the fulfilment of material needs and expectations are also instrumental. The UNICEF approach is to adapt interventions to the local context, support LSGs and national institutions to learn lessons from them, and advocate for the scaling up of those actions that bring a peace dividend. UNICEF Kyrgyzstan thus adopts a holistic approach to make salient and viable the role of children, adolescents and youth as peacebuilders, by addressing the following two dimensions:

Equitable access to justice for children and adolescents
UNICEF will partner with policymakers, ombudspersons and LSGs to model interventions that foster social cohesion among adolescents and institutions by:
• Improving the conditions and services for children in contact, and in conflict, with the law.
• Supporting regular interactions between youth and local authorities and law enforcement bodies to overcome stereotypes and build greater closeness and mutual trust.

Adolescent and youth inclusion
UNICEF will partner with line ministries, the State Agency for Youth, Physical Culture and Sports and the State Agency for Local Self-Governance and Inter-Ethnic Relations to model the Youth- and Child-Friendly Local Governance initiative. This provides a framework for introducing child and adolescent rights in local development planning. Together with their communities, children and adolescents will be able to bring their well-being priorities to decision makers for consideration and hold them accountable for their actions. The duty bearers will facilitate adolescent and child-centred participatory planning processes and report to the public on progress. Such an approach can strengthen social cohesion as it involves collaborative action by people of different ethnic groups and LSG for the good of the entire community. In specific, UNICEF will ensure that:

• LSGs will extend evidence and participatory-based policymaking with the aim of improving the realization of child and adolescent rights.
• National institutions will provide the policy framework and incentives.
• Children and adolescents will be supported to develop skills and competences that allow them to contribute meaningfully to local planning, budgeting and monitoring; and civic education and youth-designed outreach actions will be implemented to address child, adolescent and youth issues.
Barwaqo, 7 years old, “I like when the teacher reads to me. I like English the most.” Ayanle School in Ainabo, Sool region is supported by UNICEF under the Education in Emergency programme.
SOMALIA CASE STUDY

SETTING THE CONTEXT

Somalia, including the self-declared independent Somaliland, remains a fragile and conflict-prone country due to the presence of armed groups, competition for scarce resources and power, state fragility, environmental degradation, the lack of a common national vision and social cohesion, and the proliferation of small arms. After the fall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991, and in the absence of a unified national government, Somalia split into three main zones: Somaliland (seen as a ‘special arrangement’ due to its self-declared independence), Puntland State of Somalia, and South and Central Somalia.

Somalia is the second most fragile country in the world and the most corrupt. See: Fund for Peace, Fragile States Index and the Corruption Perceptions Index. The country is currently on a trajectory towards greater stability, however. There has been relative peace and stability in Somaliland and Puntland State of Somalia since the mid-2000s. While Al-Shabaab still controls large areas in the southern part of Somalia, the Somali government's efforts to push the armed group out of major town centres have, with the support of the African Union and the international community, yielded results. A federal structure has existed in Somalia since 2012 and the Somali Compact has enabled the emergence of new federal member states in the southern part of the country. Although the state-building exercise is far from over, the process of establishing federal and state levels of government is largely complete. Local governments (district/municipality) have been operating in Puntland and Somaliland for many years, but their establishment in the new federal member states – a process closely tied to other stabilization, conflict resolution and reconciliation efforts – is just commencing.

Trust in government was low among the population after a long conflict, and governance arrangements were deeply contested. Lengthy consultation with traditional and religious leaders, as well as with Somali stakeholders from around the world, resulted in a transitional constitutional arrangement and the basis for state-building was formed. Somalia’s Provisional Constitution (2012) frames decentralization by articulating that services should be provided by the lowest level of government where there is capacity to do so. The Provisional Constitution further recognizes that there is a continued need to clarify functions and revenue assignments among the federal, state and local levels of government. At the federal member state level there are some laws, policies and practices that designate service delivery responsibilities to the state and local government levels, however, the legal framework has many contradictions and does not extend to the whole country.

It is against this background that the United Nations Joint Programme on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery (JPLG) – implemented by UNICEF, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) – was introduced in 2008.

At that time, district investment in service delivery was minimal and sporadic, and state ministries continued to deliver services in parallel to local government. A series of negotiations held between central and local government authorities on the sharing of responsibilities for service delivery resulted in the development of a decentralization policy (and an accompanying road map) in Somaliland and Puntland, in 2013 and 2014 respectively.

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18 After the fall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991, and in the absence of a unified national government, Somalia split into three main zones: Somaliland (seen as a ‘special arrangement’ due to its self-declared independence), Puntland State of Somalia, and South and Central Somalia.
19 Somalia is the second most fragile country in the world and the most corrupt. See: Fund for Peace, Fragile States Index, 2016; Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index, 2016.
21 The United Nations Joint Programme on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery (JPLG) has since been implemented over two 5-year phases (2008–2012), entered its third phase.
The policy sets out the existing service functions of local governments, such as waste management, business licensing and birth registration, as well as a strategy for devolving to local governments key functions in the education, health, natural resources, roads, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sectors.

As a global advocate for children and the lead United Nations agency in a number of service delivery sectors that have a direct impact on children's well-being (e.g., health, education, WASH, child protection), UNICEF has a keen interest in strengthening systems and capacities at all levels of the Somali government to deliver services effectively and equitably. By investing in local government institutions that are uniquely positioned to support service delivery by virtue of their mandate and proximity to populations, UNICEF is able to expand and sustain people’s access to social services, and safeguard health, education, WASH and child protection outcomes for children and their families.

In 2014, UNICEF led efforts to pilot decentralized service delivery, in line with the Puntland and Somaliland decentralization road maps. The service delivery model (SDM) piloted supports districts to perform their devolved service delivery functions in the areas of education, health and water. As a result, 12 districts have been able to carry out minor rehabilitation and extension of primary schools and health and water facilities; oversee maintenance, repairs and garbage collection; regularly pay the salaries of guards and cleaners as well as utility bills; establish public–private partnerships to manage water infrastructure; and support social mobilization efforts, including hygiene and sanitation awareness and the promotion of girls’ access to education.

UNICEF APPROACH TO PEACEBUILDING

Theory of change (see Annex 1)

The SDM is a ‘learning by doing’ exercise intended to support local governments to carry out basic devolved functions and contribute to improving access to, and the quality and consistency of, basic services available to the public. It seeks to demonstrate that districts can and should be actively engaged in local service delivery.

The theory of change for the SDM is as follows:

- If a strong enabling environment for district-led service delivery is established through the clarification of roles and responsibilities shared among different tiers of government, better collaboration and coordination on service provision, and strong community engagement and oversight, and
- If the ability of districts to effectively support service delivery is demonstrated through the strengthening of their technical, management and oversight capacities and rigorous testing of their planning, procurement and financial management systems, and
- If tangible evidence is provided of the added value of district engagement in local service delivery, in terms of improving access to, and the quality and consistency of, basic services
- Then there will be greater ownership and investment by districts in their service delivery role, and greater recognition of and support and investment in district-led service delivery on the part of citizens, state and central governments, implementing partners and donors.

In addition:

- If districts secure sustained multi-stakeholder support and investment in their service delivery role, then they will be able to effectively, consistently and equitably deliver on their service provision mandate, and thus contribute to community well-being
- As a result, the social contract will be strengthened and there will be greater government legitimacy and improved resilience and social cohesion, which will contribute to more sustainable peace and human development outcomes for children, women and men.

22 A major precondition is that local governments, through the JPLG and similar programmes, receive the necessary legislative and capacity-building investments needed to support their service delivery role. Such investments include broader decentralization policy reforms and the strengthening of each district’s planning, human resources, procurement and financial management systems.

Key assumptions:
• When local governments support the delivery of basic services, it helps to build their legitimacy. While increased access to services does not necessarily result in increased government legitimacy, the manner in which services are delivered (e.g., how people are treated, whether they have access to channels of redress) – whether by state or non-state providers – can have a positive impact on perceptions of government.
• When local governments are responsible for implementing service delivery functions, they will be more engaged in resolving service delivery challenges in their localities. In a context where local governments have previously had limited involvement in local service delivery, supporting them to carry out specific service delivery functions increases their contact with these services and the populations that use them, and makes them better equipped and more likely to take action to resolve service delivery bottlenecks and grievances.

Programme interventions
SDM inputs can be summarized as follows:
• Sector decentralization strategies that clarify the service delivery functions, roles and responsibilities of different tiers of government.
• Dialogue and coordination platforms (e.g., technical working group, sector coordination meetings) that bring together authorities from all levels of government to discuss issues related to decentralized service delivery.
• Joint missions among officials from each level of government to monitor service delivery in district-supported facilities.
• Technical consultants placed within key ministries, tasked with supporting the roll-out, oversight and coordination of SDM activities in target districts.
• Technical and oversight training for staff in district social affairs departments who have responsibility for overseeing social services in their localities.
• Service delivery planning and budgeting exercises that bring together district, regional and state authorities to discuss service delivery priorities, target facilities and financial contributions (from JPLG, district and ministry sources) as part of the provision of grants (see below).

• Provision of grants as co-funding to support districts to carry out their decentralized service delivery functions and to test procurement, human resources management and other core district systems as they engage in the planning, tendering, contracting and monitoring of rehabilitation, equipment, staffing and other service delivery-related activities.
• Use of social accountability tools such as the community scorecard to support citizens to provide feedback and engage in dialogue with district and regional authorities on local service delivery.
• Advocacy efforts aimed at sharing district progress and achievements with the Somali public, state/central government, implementing partners and donors, and at encouraging greater recognition and support for the service delivery role of districts.

Key achievements
Dialogue and coordination forums have brought together state and local governments to clarify functions and strengthen collaboration. UNICEF support for regular intergovernmental meetings, including inter-ministerial committee/technical working group meetings, sector coordination meetings and joint monitoring visits, has contributed to the building of trust and the strengthening of collaboration among different tiers of government. Regional and state authorities increasingly recognize, appreciate and support the service delivery role of districts. For example, the Ministry of Education devolved additional functions to districts in Somaliland in 2016, including the payment of teacher top-up incentives and awareness-raising activities on student enrolment in rural primary schools.

Another product of the improved dialogue has been the development of sector decentralization strategies that present a road map for the expansion of decentralized service delivery in the health and education sectors. As a result of these efforts, the latest Education Sector Strategic Plan for Somaliland (2017–2021) now includes a policy objective to decentralize primary education functions to local governments, which demonstrates growing alignment between decentralization and sectoral policies and plans.
Increased local government ownership of and investment in service delivery has resulted in significant increases in contributions to services from local revenues. Significant progress has been made in stimulating district ownership of and investment in local service delivery. Of the US$3.7 million in funding mobilized for the SDM pilots since 2014, district authorities in Puntland and Somaliland have invested more than US$1.1 million. In Somaliland alone, revenues from local sources represented 46 per cent of the SDM budget for 2017, with another 10 per cent of the budget coming from sector ministry sources. In Somaliland’s Berbera district, the revenues from local sources directed towards service delivery increased from US$40,000 in 2014 to US$242,705 in 2017 (up by more than 600 per cent).

Local government engagement in local service delivery has increased service coverage and improved consistency. In 2017, 61,000 students in 272 primary schools in Puntland and Somaliland benefited from improved learning environments as a result of district support for classroom rehabilitation and extensions, regular electricity and water supply, and improved hygiene and security. Overall enrolment in public primary schools in Berbera district increased by 32 per cent between 2014 and 2017, while girls’ enrolment increased by 36 per cent over the same period. Schools receiving support from Garowe municipality in Puntland saw a 20 per cent increase in overall enrolment in the 2017/18 academic year as compared to the previous year, while the enrolment of female students increased by 32 per cent year-on-year. As a result, these schools have now achieved gender parity. Users of 74 health facilities in Puntland and Somaliland have benefited from regularly maintained and better equipped infrastructure, improved hygiene due to the construction of toilets and incinerators, and community sensitization to maternal and child health. Some 6,000 households benefit from the rehabilitation and extension of water facilities, which are now managed through public–private partnership companies. Strong district oversight has ensured that the population is able to access clean water at affordable prices.

With JPLG support, district authorities have also demonstrated their ability to promptly respond to service delivery challenges and thereby contribute to the continuity of local services. This has included responding promptly to health facility maintenance requests; acting fast to rehabilitate schools affected by fires and strong winds, allowing the affected children to quickly return to their lessons; and making efforts to fill gaps left by other service providers. District officials are also emerging as strong advocates for improved local service delivery, regularly raising concerns with sector ministries regarding the management of front-line providers.

Local government authorities have progressively established legitimacy and increased public trust. The enhanced capacity of local governments to provide services that better respond to citizens’ needs has improved state–society relations. Members of community education, health and water committees now feel empowered to raise service delivery concerns directly with district officials and monitor their responses. The community scorecard approach has been instrumental in mobilizing citizen feedback and dialogue with local governments and, ultimately, stimulating demand for greater accountability in local service delivery. Target districts in Puntland and Somaliland have also seen significant increases in tax revenues over the duration of the JPLG. Property taxes alone have increased by 485 per cent in Somaliland and by 196 per cent in Puntland since 2008. The fact that citizens are now more willing to pay taxes is a strong indicator of their trust and confidence in their local governments, and suggests that citizens have been able to make the connection between their payments and improvements in local service delivery.
CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Challenges and risks
• Delays in attracting additional funding for service delivery at the local government level has exerted pressure on the SDM grants, which were designed to serve as catalytic funds to be replaced over time by funds from domestic sources and bilateral donors. While the JPLG has successfully leveraged funds from local revenues to support service delivery, the volume of economic activity, particularly for rural local governments, remains low and consequently constrains the level of revenue mobilization. Somalia’s nascent national public financial management environment means that the appetite for budget support is still very limited, and delays in finalizing and formalizing relevant functions and revenue assignments has resulted in few intergovernmental transfers reaching districts.
• Chronic capacity constraints mean that few of the district social affairs departments responsible for overseeing service delivery are fully staffed and their skill levels remain low.
• Service delivery roles and responsibilities are still not fully understood, despite investment in sector decentralization strategies and dialogue forums. Some sector ministries have shown resistance to the decentralized service delivery agenda, while there are districts that continue to invest in areas that fall outside of their mandate.\(^{28}\)
• A challenging operating environment, resulting from high operating costs and poor access and communications, continues to make it difficult to support decentralized service delivery – and local governance programming in Somalia more broadly – particularly in a context where strong investment in capacity- and relationship-building is needed within and among the three tiers of government.

\(^{28}\) Some districts in Puntland and Somaliland continue to invest significant resources in secondary and tertiary education institutions even though local government laws restrict their mandate to primary education institutions only.
Lessons learned and recommendations

• Decentralized service delivery requires coordinated engagement by all relevant ministries and levels of government, backed up by strong political will.  
• Sustaining decentralized service delivery depends on predictable funding and financing arrangements. Policy discussions on the transition to domestic financing must be an integral part of programming.  
• Sustained advocacy is needed to further articulate, align and implement the division of functions and responsibilities between state and local levels of government, as a means of creating a stronger enabling environment for decentralized service delivery. Continued advocacy that targets communities, state and central governments, donors and implementing partners is also important, both to raise the profile of local governments as credible service delivery partners and to mobilize greater support for this role.  
• Sustaining local governance reforms in fragile states calls for prolonged technical assistance to address systemic capacity gaps and to provide stability in a turbulent political climate.  
• Engaging local government in service delivery contributes to the improved resilience of, trust in and legitimacy of government. The role of local government should therefore feature more prominently in the peacebuilding and development strategies of governments, donors and implementing agencies.

CONCLUSION

Through the decentralized SDM pilots implemented in Puntland and Somaliland, the JPLG has shown that local governments can have a clear and active role in local service delivery, and that their investments can help to improve access to, and the quality and consistency of, basic services for the populations they serve. JPLG experiences will be used to advocate for a clearer division of functions and responsibilities for service delivery between state and local levels of government, and for greater technical and financial support for districts in their service delivery role.

As the JPLG moves into its third phase of programming, the focus in Puntland and Somaliland will be on expanding decentralized service delivery by supporting the recruitment of skilled staff at district level and investing in their oversight and management capacities. The programme will further leverage revenues from local sources to support service delivery while advocating for additional domestic and international support (including from UNICEF programmes) to progressively replace the JPLG funding. A comprehensive yet realistic approach to supporting decentralized service delivery will be adopted in the emerging federal member states and districts, recognizing that their capacity levels vary significantly and that their revenue mobilization capacities in particular may be very limited. Building on the experiences in Puntland and Somaliland, UNICEF will strengthen local government capacities to gradually take on service delivery functions by investing from the outset in state dialogue and coordination platforms that can help to clarify service delivery roles and responsibilities and ensure the alignment of decentralization and sectoral policies and plans.

29 The Vice Presidents of Puntland and Somaliland have served as champions of local governance and decentralized service delivery. They have played a critical role in bringing together key stakeholders to drive policy change. A similar strategy will be adopted in the emerging federal member states.
A student writes on the blackboard at Qansahley Primary School in Dollow town, Somalia. The school has 851 students (of which 59 per cent are girls). The majority are from the nearby Qansahley settlement for internally displaced people and previously have not had access to formal schooling.
ANNEX 1
SOMALIA SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL (SDM)

Theory of Change

SDM inputs
- Sector decentralization strategies/plans
- Coordination platforms
- Sector decentralization strategies/plans
- Technical consultants
- Training of local government staff
- Planning and budgeting support
- SDM grants (co-funding)
- Social accountability tools
- Advocacy

Strong enabling environment
- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Collaboration between tiers of government
- Community oversight

Demonstrated local government capacity
- Technical, management and oversight capacity
- Strong planning, procurement and financial management systems

Demonstrated value-add
- Increased access to, and quality and consistency of, basic services

Local governments take ownership of and invest in local service delivery

Key stakeholders recognize, support and invest in local government-led service delivery

Local governments effectively contribute to equitable service delivery and community well-being

Stronger social contract, increased government legitimacy, and improved resilience and social cohesion

Sustainable peace and human development outcomes

Other JPLG policy and capacity-building inputs

Peace and development programmes
Mohamed, 11 years old, had never been to school before he came to Ainabo to live with his relatives. “There are two things I like about school,” he says. “One, because I like to learn. Two, I want to serve my country. I want to go to university and become a teacher.” Ayanle School in Ainabo, Sool region is supported by UNICEF under the Education in Emergency programme.