Improving Accountable Service Delivery with the People's Voice in Borama District

Thorough the implementation of decentralized service delivery, the Government of Somaliland has transferred new functions, authority, responsibilities and financial resources to district administrations which has enhanced health, education and water management, and positively impacted Somali lives.

These newly decentralized functions are outlined in memoranda of understanding signed between the respective ministries and Borama and Burao districts. In health and education, they include: infrastructure rehabilitation and routine maintenance, payment of water and electricity expenses and social mobilization activities. In water management, they include the establishment of a Public Private Partnership for managing of water points, oversight of water provision to the community and maintenance of water facilities.

The Community Scorecard provides a real time monitoring mechanism, using SMS phone messaging technology to give voice to community perspectives on the quality of services provided by district authorities, thereby strengthening accountability in service delivery, supported by the UN Joint Programme on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery. In Borama, the Community Scorecard covers 48 schools, 24 Mother and Child Health Centres and 21 Water Points. Every month, 203 community health, education and water committee members attached to these facilities provide structured and constructive feedback via SMS Scorecard in response to a series of questions on service quality sent to their mobile phones. Feedback is captured through a database and used to generate monthly reports. These are shared with officials from the district and the relevant line ministry, and form the basis for

quarterly interface meetings where authorities and committee representatives can discuss key issues and develop joint action plans to improve service delivery.

Abdishakur Omer, is a Field Officer seconded from the Civil Service Institute in Hargeisa to support the Community Scorecard process in Boroma. He is responsible for maintaining respondent contact lists, mobilizing committee members to participate in the scorecard, disseminating feedback reports and monitoring implementation of action plans. Abdishakur Omer says*: "Monitoring the newly decentralized functions is really important to ensure services are delivered to agreed standards. It is also providing a voice and empowering communities to provide feedback on the quality of health, education and water services."*

Abdishakur Omer and Abdilahi Nour with the Head of Social Affairs Department at Borama Municipal Offices, October 2017

He continues: "*The benefits of the Community Scorecard are that it improves the quality, efficiency and accountability of the school, or health facility or water point. It has also helped the community to understand their role in community-led*

monitoring of services for the improvement of service provision and accountability. It is also helpful for a service provider to know that if something goes wrong, the community are now able to voice the problem and there is a system in place to resolve it."

The Community Scorecard Focal Point at the Social Affairs Department, Abdilahi Nour Farah, who supports district authorities to develop a response plan against community feedback, says: *"The Community Scorecard process encourages communities, service providers and the district administration to resolve issues. In our discussions we also identify limitations and expectations jointly and identify issues that have to be resolved at the district level. Every three months, the district council, Social Affairs Department staff, regional sector representatives and representatives from the Community Scorecard Committee meet. During these meetings, problems are identified, and an action plan is formulated to address these problems."*

The Community Scorecard is strengthening the coordination and information flows between the Borama Mayor, district council, line ministries representatives, and service providers and communities on the ground. It is also raising awareness and improving understanding of citizen perceptions of services and service providers at large. The ongoing and dynamic feedback on specific service-related indicators and interventions at the community level is also enabling JPLG and its partners to track the effectiveness and impact of decentralized service delivery.

At the Ahmed Salan School in Borama, the Community Education Committee is actively engaged in the Community Scorecard process. A representative on the committee, who has three children at the school responds to the monthly SMS messages. He says: *"We welcome decentralization as our local government has become more aware; we also welcome support from our local government. This school and our children have benefitted from water, furnishings and construction. The situation for children and*

parents has improved because if there is a problem, we know as parents where to go and we have the chance to discuss with the administration and to know local government."

Yahya Indhanour Omer is a pupil at the Ahmed Salan School and is 17 years old. He says *"I transferred to this school because it is good quality. The school also has good teachers and a kind head teacher. The teachers are trying to understand the students' perspective as well."* Yahya likes maths and would like to be an accountant. His father is a pharmacist. He likes to play football and is a supporter of Real Madrid.

Yahya Indhnour Omer

Asha Ahmed Ali is a pupil at the Ahmed Salan School and is 17 years old and in Grade 8. She likes science. She has five brothers and three sisters. Her mother is very keen that she goes to school. She is hoping to become a doctor.

Asha Ahmed Ali

Mako Ibrahim Omer, Borama Mother and Child Health Centre, October 2017. Mako is a member of the Community Health Committee. She replies to the SMS poll on a monthly basis, reporting on the quality and consistency of health services provided at the Borama MCH.

About the United Nations Joint Programme on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery:

- JPLG is comprised of five UN agencies (ILO, UNCDF, UNDP, UN-HABITAT and UNICEF) and together with our partners, the Government of Somaliland and donors, have provided support to strengthen the role and capacity of local governments to deliver services to citizens in Somaliland since 2008. The overall programme goal is that local governance contributes to peace and equitable delivery of services to people in Somaliland.

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