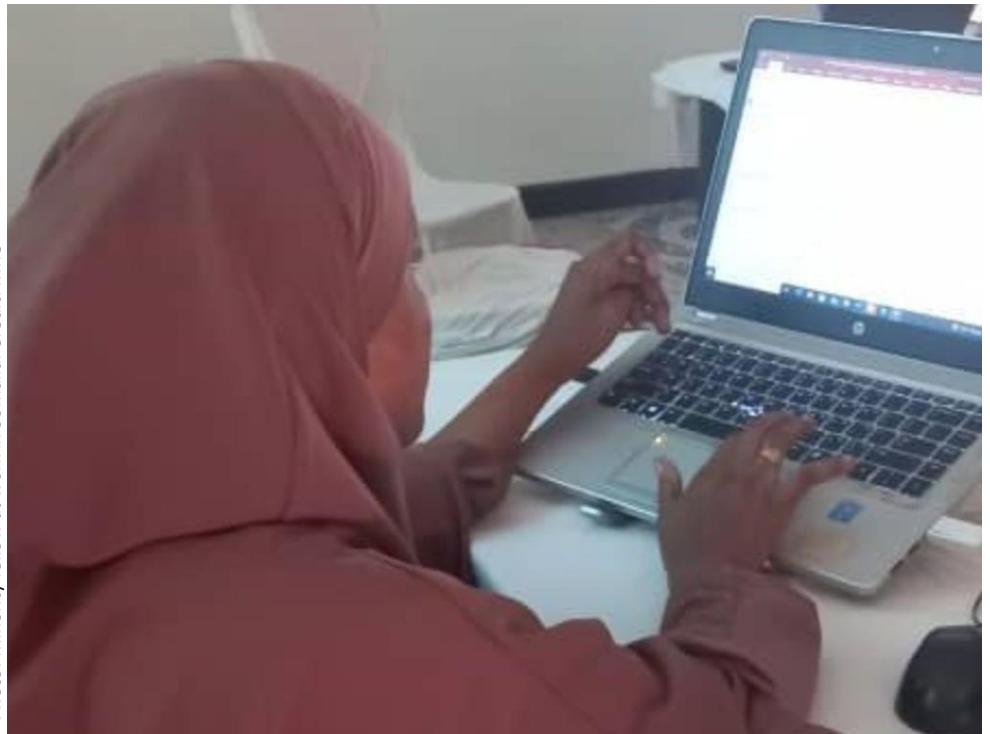


**Somalia Marginalized  
and Minority Fellows  
Project Pilot Cohort**

**(October 2021 – June 2023)**

Photo: Minority fellow at work in Somalia. Credit: MRG



# Final Evaluation REPORT

**AUGUST 2023**

**Evaluated by:**  
HURMA Consulting Services Ltd.

**Prepared for**

**minority  
rights  
group  
international**

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# ACRONYMS

COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FTE	Full Time Employment
HCD	Human Centered Design
HQ	Headquarters
KII	Key Informant Interview
MRG	Minority Rights Group
MS	Microsoft
NCE	No Cost Extension
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NOFO	Notice of Funding Opportunity
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development
PWDs	Persons With Disabilities
SWS	South West State
U.S.	United States
USD	United States Dollar

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**Somalia Marginalized and  
Fellows Project Pilot Cohort  
(October 2021 – April 2023)** Minority



# I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With United States (U.S.) Embassy in Mogadishu Somalia funding, Minority Rights Group (MRG) International has been implementing Somalia Marginalized and Minority Fellows Project Pilot Cohort between October 2021 and June 2023 (With a three-month no cost extension) in South West State and Mogadishu, Somalia. With the project due to complete on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2023, HURMA Consulting Services Ltd. has been commissioned to perform an independent evaluation to assess the performance of the U.S. funded Somalia Marginalized and Minority Fellows Project Pilot Cohort in Somalia.

The project aimed to achieve three objectives; to recruit and support 11 fellows (> 5 women, > 5 minority clan origin, 50% under 30); to advance understanding and buy-in from the key Somali government and other stakeholders on the value of greater political inclusion of members of marginalized and minority groups in public service and politics; and to develop and deliver a clear and authoritative evidence base and key learning points to contribute to a robust longer-term Somalia Marginalized and Minority Fellows Project with countrywide coverage.

Despite the project having been affected by delays and challenges that included a global pandemic of COVID-19, FGS parliamentary electoral processes, and the power transitioning of the newly elected government, the project has been highly successful in achieving its objectives to increase minority individuals; presence in government decision making, policy setting, and implementation; strengthening the capacity of the minority individuals to input into policy designs; enabling fellows to act as a bridge between policy makers and minority communities; and preparing fellows to handle longer term professional responsibilities in government institutions.

While there are still capacity gaps for fellows, there have been substantial investments in capacity building that began during the initial stage of the pre-deployment phase, continued during early deployment and were consolidated during post-deployments through career specific trainings, skill developments and/or travels to experience good practices and exposure visits to relevant opportunities within Somalia. This was increasingly viewed as worthwhile capacity strengthening to demonstrate the uptake of fellows' new skills, as evidenced by the MRG's strong knowledge of influential leaders in inclusion practice and by supporting the ability of fellows to better understand their operating environments, and relationships of trust with minority communities in SWS.

Fellows' increased capacity has translated into developing new skills and learning to apply them in ways that add value to their work and enhanced the effectiveness of project initiatives in their placements and communities. This has also enhanced their adaptability (as one of the most essential capacity areas that fellows need is to be able to adapt to evolving conditions), reacting to changes in their operating environments, and responding to new opportunities in their placements when this may arise. Our findings during the final project evaluating confirm that fellows experienced greater adaptability from having highly developed and diverse skill sets and the confidence to apply them in new directions towards their future professional careers .

Minority Rights Group (MRG) International has been implementing Somalia Marginalized and Minority Fellows Project Pilot Cohort between October 2021 and June 2023 (With an inclusive NCE expectation of three months from April 2023) in South West State and Mogadishu, Somalia. With the project due to complete on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2023, HURMA Consulting Services Ltd. was commissioned to conduct an external evaluation exercise to assess the performance of the Somalia Marginalized and Minority Fellows Project Pilot Cohort in Somalia.

### 2.1. Summary of Projects to be evaluated:

The project to be evaluated was USG-funded Somalia Marginalized and Minority Fellows Project Pilot Cohort that ran successfully to advance support for a pilot political inclusion effort to place young Somalis from marginalized and minority communities into a one-year fellowship with the Federal Republic of Somalia parliament, the South West State assembly, and/or executive institutions of South West State and Federal governments. The project aimed to achieve three objectives:

- Objective 1:** To recruit and support 11 fellows (> 5 women, > 5 minority clan origin, 50% under 30) to complete a 12-month work placement in a government office or a lesser period if placements prove difficult due to political factors.
- Objective 2:** To advance understanding and buy-in from key Somali government and other stakeholders on the value of greater political inclusion of members of marginalized and minority groups in public service and politics through the provision of relevant professional development, capacity building, and work experiences for young Somalis from marginalized and minority communities seeking careers in government, NGOs, and the private sector.
- Objective 3:** To develop and deliver a clear and authoritative evidence base and key learning points to contribute to a robust longer-term Somalia Marginalized and Minority Fellows Project with countrywide coverage

**Implementation period:** October 2021 and June 2023 (With an inclusive NCE expectation of three months from April 2023)

**Approved project budget:** 224,999.99 USD

**Funding Opportunity Number:** AF-MOG-ARDF-FY20-01

## 2.2. Delays and challenges:

- At the time of the project design, the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions still existed and many of the project activities designed were contextualized to observe the internationally recommended COVID-19 protocols to stop spread of the virus.
- During the course of project implementation, the project encountered obstacles that required immediate attentions of all the implementing organizations including MRG and the Political-Economic Section of the U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu due to the federal parliamentary elections in Somalia and subsequently the transition of power processes from the former government to the new government administrations. These resulted delays of placement opportunities for the fellows in the SWS and federal government institutions and parliaments.
- Following the transition of power of the Federal Government of Somalia and as a result of newly elected MPs and the new appointments of government officials to the ministries, the project faced huge challenges in securing the placements of the fellows with the Federal and State parliaments and as well as with the executive branch institutions in SWS.
- Ramadan and Eid holiday seasons in April and May 2022 had also a noticeable impact on fellows to commence their fellowship opportunity works because most government officials departed from work to complete the last 10 days of Ramadan and embarked on the Eid celebrations with their families.



## 3.1. Evaluation criteria and methodology:

HURMA Consulting Services Ltd. evaluators deployed the OECD DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability to guide the evaluation. This was a combination of approaches to gather data to assess the performance of the project. The evaluation process called for desk review of available literature pertaining to the project to deepen the understanding of the project. This included the U.S. Embassy Mogadishu Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), project proposal, project quarterly reports, budget reports, monitoring and evaluation plan and indicators, progress reports, recruitment and placement set up records, pre-deployment training - programme, attendance, evaluation, early deployment training - programme, attendance, evaluation, diaries and mentor record notes per each month of active placement, monthly meeting notes with fellows, whatsapp group conversation, supervisors' feedback mid- placement, and programme, attendance, evaluation of the Mogadishu research methods training.

The evaluation team conducted two field visits to Baidoa and Mogadishu where they interacted with the fellows, project staff, officials and key community stakeholders for the project . A combination of key informant interviews and focus group discussions were utilized to ascertain the perspectives of a cross section of stakeholders and the beneficiaries of the project (fellows and minority communities) who could offer reflections on the performance of the project and how the aspect of the project has been perceived more broadly. The stakeholders and target beneficiaries (fellows and members of the minority community) interviewed included government institutions (the immediate supervisors of fellows) based in SWS in Baidoa and Federal Government in Mogadishu, the target beneficiaries (11 Fellows and 11 minority community representatives - traditional elders) based in Baidoa and Mogadishu, 2 local partners and as well as the overall MRG's Coordinator of the Fellowship Program in Somalia (the list of those interviewed is withheld in this publication for security reasons).

The identification of evaluation participants was purposive sampling when selecting FGDs and KIIs with stakeholders and beneficiaries for their reflections on project performance. The evaluation team has presented the key findings to the donor and the prime/subaward recipients to reflect on key findings and allowed nuance and clarification around findings.

## 3.2. Evaluation limitations and constraints:

- Every effort has been made to implement the evaluation as planned, a number of factors have influenced the performance and approach deployed. Due to logistics related limitations part of the evaluation process was performed remotely through a

combination of video conferencing and voice-based calls using tools such as Zoom, MS Teams or WhatsApp and conventional mobile phone.

- Interviews conducted over remote tools may have resulted in limitations in building inter-personal rapport that may facilitate interviews and eliciting of information. While it was felt that focus group discussions would be beneficial to gain the views of a variety of participants to key project activities. Notably, the number of FGD participants was limited to between six people in Baidoa and five people in Mogadishu when usually 6-10 participants would be convened.
- Given that all the fellows were engaged in their personal activities, affected the timing of the KIIs since the fellows would commute from different places causing a disruption to the set time.
- Mogadishu has its own security challenges that affects movement when there is a new security alert or security incident.

## 4.1. Relevance

The final project evaluation has assessed the relevance of the key findings in two ways: Firstly, the relevance of the project objectives in relation to the contextual need. Secondly, the relevance of the project activities, and whether they were designed in ways that would meet the overall objectives.

### 4.1.1. Project objectives:

The first objective of the project focused on advancing the political inclusion of Somali minorities and marginalized groups in governance for their communities. The second objective of the Project was to capacitate 11 minority/marginalized fellows through the provision of relevant professional development, capacity building, and work experiences for young Somalis from marginalized and minority communities seeking careers in government, NGOs, and the private sector to advance the understanding and buy-in from the key Somali government officials and other stakeholders on the value of greater political inclusion of members of marginalized and minority groups in public service and politics. The third objective was to develop and deliver clear and convincing evidence based key learning points to contribute to a robust longer-term Somalia Marginalized and Minority Fellows Project with countrywide coverage.

Advancing the political inclusion of Somali minorities and marginalized groups in decision making, policy setting, and implementation is a common issue for not only the minorities and marginalized groups but also the humanitarian and development actors in Somalia. The evaluation found that the political inclusion of minority/marginalized fellows and capacitating them through the provision of relevant professional development, capacity building, and work experiences did advance greater inclusion of minorities and marginalized in the humanitarian and development programming in Somalia, ensuring equitable access to assistance and protection, and better consideration of the patterns of marginalisation they may experience. This is because patterns of marginalization that differentiate and discriminate the population have been further entrenched through structural processes, such as the 4.5 system - an instrument of exclusion<sup>1</sup>, which causes humanitarian and development projects to face a number of challenges, including lack of minority community and marginalized groups capacity to equally participate in design, planning and implementation of projects, lack of qualified

<sup>1</sup> René Brosius 25 June 2021 (<https://africanlegalstudies.blog/2021/06/25/the-4-5-system-an-instrument-of-exclusion/>)

and experienced staff or minority community workers in decision making, policy setting, and implementation, and as well as limited funding for marginalized and minority led organization to empower minorities.<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, the project objectives were directly relevant to the contextual needs and the project responded to the needs of minorities and marginalized groups in in the government decision making, policy setting, and implementation.

#### 4.1.2. Project activities

The project activities were relevant to the objectives articulated in the Somalia Marginalized and Minority Fellows Project Pilot Cohort. The project activities such as the identification and recruitment of 11 young professionals in Mogadishu and Baidoa, support to their placements in the executive institutions of the SWS and Federal governments, Federal Republic, and SWS parliaments; provision of relevant pre-deployment professional training, issuance of equipment and stipends to fellows, and identification of mentors on a voluntary basis to reinforce the capacity building activities. The work experience gains for the young Somalis from marginalized and minority communities are reflective of best practice, and exemplify activities that would relate to the achievement of the objectives.

## 4.2. Efficiency

MRG has worked to deploy funds efficiently through well-established sub-granting procedures to implement Project activities and to achieve overall objectives. The project implementation team had a clearly defined division of roles and responsibilities with HQ-Based and field personnel. The project was efficient in all expenditures such as domestic and international flights, per diem and lodging on candidates' travel to selection interviews, pre-deployment trainings, early deployment trainings, and debriefing meetings. The project also efficiently incentivized the 11 fellows per month for an average period of 12 months for majority of the fellows. Most of the mentorship, and on job trainings have been conducted virtually, saving on the overall budget.

<sup>2</sup> OCHA, "A study on minorities in Somalia," August 2002:

Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/studyminorities-somalia>

## 4.3. Effectiveness

### 4.3.1. Recruitment of 11 young professionals in Mogadishu and Baidoa

The recruitment of 11 young professionals from the minority and marginalized groups in Baidoa and Mogadishu, Somalia was designed in ways that meet gender and youth inclusion by merit. The recruitment processes followed has ensured the selection of five male fellows and six female fellows from Somalia’s marginalized and minority communities in collaboration with U.S. Embassy Mogadishu’s Political-Economic Section. The processes followed included:

#### → Solicitation Process:

- It is not common in Somalia to see organizations, agencies or institutions giving special consideration to the cultural diversity of the Somali population in the profit and non-profit business and governance environments as Somali people are made up of communities of different ethnic backgrounds, each group practicing its own distinct mode of living and culture in the midst of a conglomeration of a multi-ethnogeny society<sup>3</sup>. MRG with its implementing partners in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu have been innovatively effective and inclusive to open advertisements using online application forms written in various languages and Somali dialects:
  1. English language
  2. Somali language:
    - Af-Maay,
    - Af-Mahaa – northern dialect,
    - Kibajuni
    - Barawanese.
- The screening process of the applicants was effective and more relevant to the context by forming a selection panel, training them on the work they were supposed to undertake and developing selection criterion for the selection process of the potential candidates led by MRG. The tasks handled during the longlisting and shortlisting processes enabled the team to select potential candidates from the minority community in more transparent way to ensure all suitable applicants who showed interest in the fellowship opportunities from minority communities were eligible to pass to the next stage of the recruitment process.
- The verification mechanisms used to ensure candidates were representative of minority community included validating the minority clans they belong to, correspondence with the minority clan leaders (traditional elders) to confirm the

<sup>3</sup> Unearthing Apartheid in the Horn of Africa, Mohamed A. Eno – page 9

accuracy of their belonging to the minority community as per their claim in their online application submissions, their current social status, and their qualifications and work experiences, if any, and their willingness to continue with the application process for the candidates who were selected for further considerations.

- 21 potential candidates who were verified through the screening processes (longlisting and shortlisting) were selected for further consideration. Interviews were scheduled to take place in Mogadishu physically to ensure all the selected potential candidates show their competencies, skills, and qualifications in more organized and consistent manner with interview panel from MRG and representatives from the U.S. Embassy's Political Economic Section. Eleven out 30 candidates (female: 6 and male: 5, 75% <30 years) were selected on merit, encompassing a range of heritages and backgrounds; Somali Bantu (7), Banadiri (2), Eyle (1) and PWDs (1).
- All successful candidates who have been selected to become fellows received confirmation emails of their successful interviews/tests and were advised to undertake further vetting process with the departments of the criminal investigations with the Somali Police Force in Mogadishu and Baidoa prior their contractual award in coordination with the zonal offices. Although the periods of the placements differed, all fellows got placement opportunities.

#### → Pre-deployment:

- Pre-deployment training sessions were designed (based on a training needs analysis questionnaire shared with fellows) focusing on key common skills and confidence. A three-day pre-deployment training that took place between 21<sup>st</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022 in Mogadishu (with fellows supported to travel as needed). The topics covered during the training included:
  - a. Introduction to minority rights in SWS and in Somalia, defending and promoting minority rights, and moving towards equality.
  - b. Basic fundamentals of office 365 applications.
  - c. Budget planning, how to analyze and report budget variances with reasons, and financial reporting skills.
  - d. Professional notetaking skills from formal meetings and forums
  - e. Technical skills for inputs to working documents and what makes good notes/summary.
  - f. Event management and organization of logistics.
  - g. Technical skills and knowledge of different logistical elements, budget constraints, security constraints and SOPs while planning and organizing events.
  - h. How to participate in research and prepare a research report
  - i. How to handle situations of discrimination, hate speech or marginalization based on fellows' heritage or identity at workplaces,
  - j. How to accept receiving feedback to the effect that fellows' performance was below standard and what do fellows require to do to improve from there.

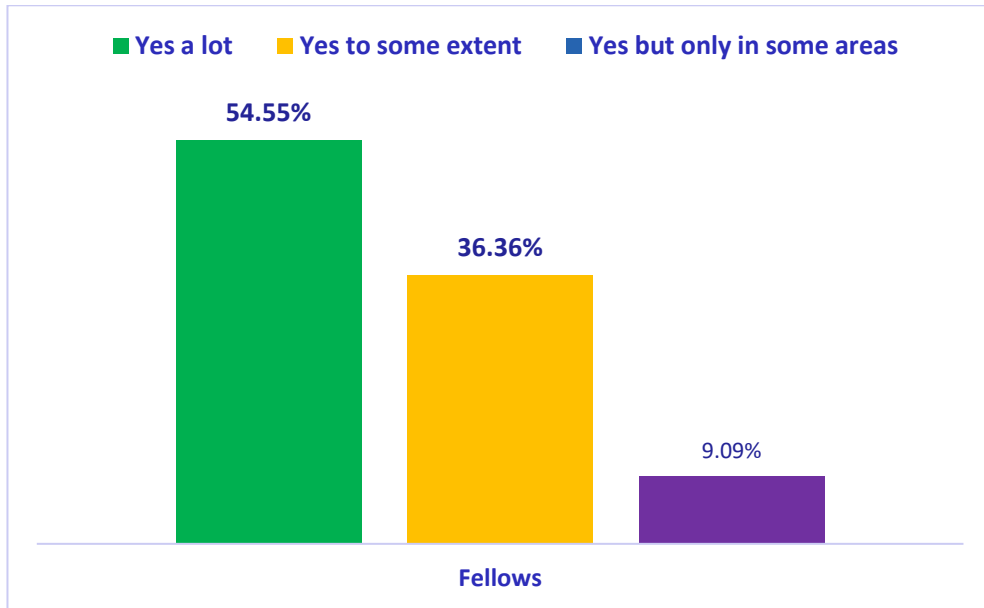
- k. How to handle situations whereby fellows are assigned a piece of work, without guidance, that fellows have not done before and which fellows don't know how to do, and fellows' requests for clarification are ignored.
- l. How to handle situations whereby female fellows experience discrimination, hate speech or marginalization based on their gender.
- m. Contextual-based presentation on intersectional discrimination, gender, disability, language, religion, ethnicity, age.
- n. Security Standing Operating Procedures
- o. How to handle situations whereby fellows are asked to pay a bribe or contribute part of their stipend in return for something.
- p. How to handle situations whereby fellows are offered a bribe, payment, or favor in return for something.

Findings from the evaluation show that the fellows who have been successfully selected for the placement opportunities were offered a comprehensive suite of support through a pre-deployment training and a grant to buy and/or upgrade computers and phones and to allow them to purchase minimal sufficient items such as food and data until they receive their first stipend. The pre-deployment training was a strategic entry point to the commencement of the program's inception phase. According to the fellows, this pre-deployment training supported the fellows significantly to take up the fellowship roles in their placements.

During the pre-deployment trainings, fellows were offered the space to do group work/homework exercises as experiments prior to their deployment to the workplaces/placements as one of the most effective ways to determine the readiness of the fellows for deployment. Among the key experimental discussions presented as findings from their groupwork exercises included their conclusions about work assignment without guidance at their workplaces, fellows' perspectives on issues relating to minorities and on what to do with multiple supervisor workloads.

Offering an evaluation space to the fellows for expressing their views about the pre-deployment training in Mogadishu was an effective way to measure the outcome of the training. Among the key questions to seek their feedback about the training, there were two strategic questions that guided the entire process of placements, (1) Do the fellows believe that they are prepared to start the work as a fellow after the pre-deployment training? and (2) Which were the most useful training sessions?

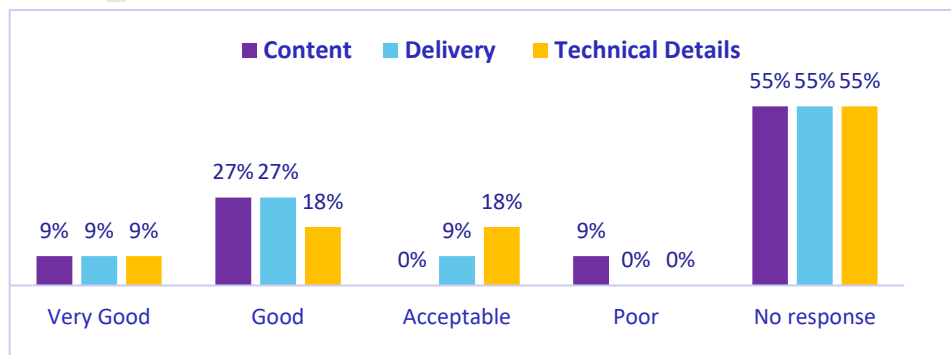
**Figure 1: Level of confidence to start work**



Out of all above-mentioned training topics, some of the key sessions which the fellow found very useful to their work placements were budgeting in the context of the government work processes, the level of participation in decision-making forums, presentation skills, how to write effective reports, community concepts and how to help them, understanding about the minorities and marginalized groups in Somalia, how to handle situations of discriminations in the workplace, confidence building, note taking and how to write meeting minutes, and how to write and/or respond to formal communication messages through email.

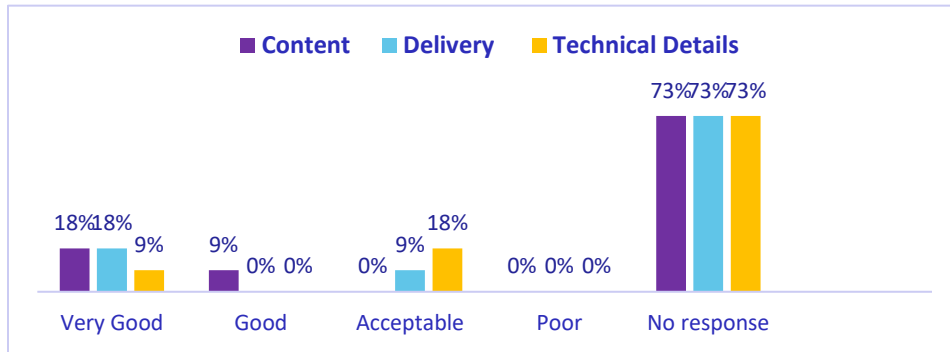
Ratings done after the pre-deployment training as a measure to evaluate the results was an effective mechanism to understand how fellows find the training content, delivery approach, and technical details of the trainings. The figure below presents the responses of the fellows as an indication of success:

**Figure 2: Introduction to minority rights**

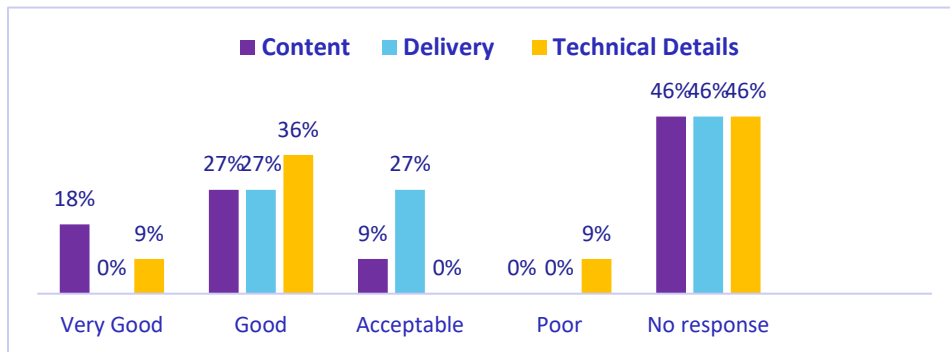




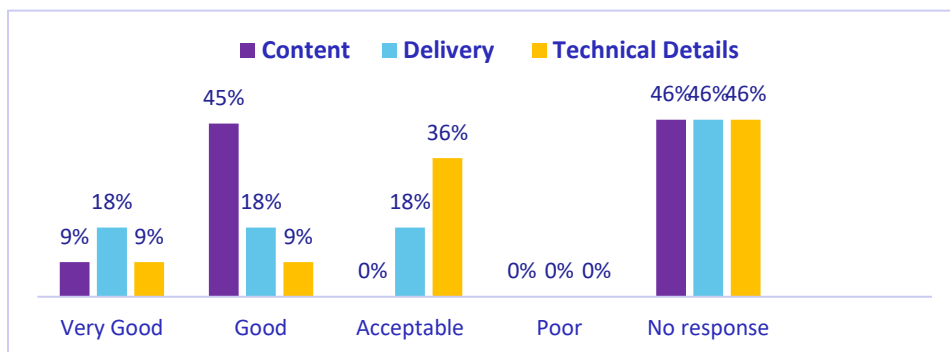
**Figure 3: Professional note taking from meetings**



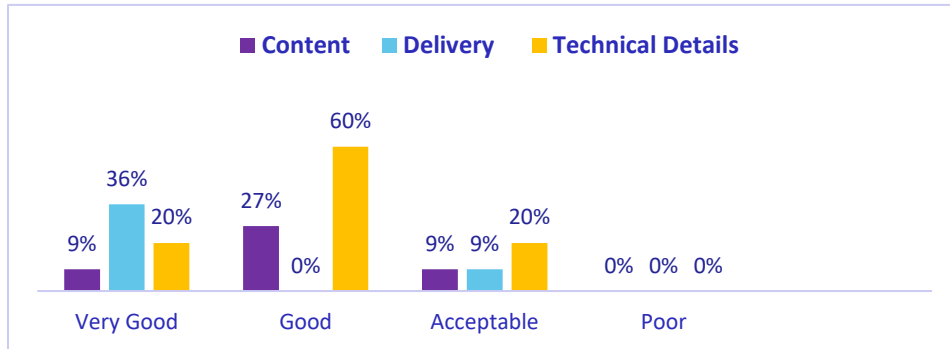
**Figure 4: Event logistics**



**Figure 5: Excel basics and refresher**



**Figure 6: Excel basics and refresher**



In a nutshell, all fellows mentioned that the duration of the training was short compared to the usefulness of the topics covered. Thus, the follow-up discussions by the evaluation team indicate that commitments of additional capacity-building trainings have been offered to the fellows.

**→ The Placement and Post-Placement**

The Placement and Post-Placement phases of the project have been instrumental in achieving the objectives of the fellowship program. As the fellows were deployed to their respective placements in Baidoa and Mogadishu they were formally introduced to their supervisors and provided with necessary documentation including identification cards (IDs) that are vital to access government installation and services and electronic equipment to facilitate their job performance. The fellows seized the moment to not only enjoy the privilege but also to help their community to access the government services. For instance, one fellow assisted a relative to acquire an important document using his ID to access the relevant offices. He had this to say,

*“Earlier in life, I faced significant challenges including access to government services, lack of a meaningful occupation, personally and within my community. I had experienced firsthand the difficulty of accessing government facilities when a close relative was arrested by the National Intelligence Agency (NISA). Determined to help, I navigated the complex bureaucracy, armed with only my ID card, and successfully secured their release, a privilege provided by the job placement following the participation in the fellowship program in Somalia”.*

The pre-deployment training played a crucial role in building their confidence and preparing them for the challenges they might encounter during their placements. The capacity building elements, designed to support the fellows to excel in their assignments and deliver practical skills relevant to their placement, enhancing their confidence to deliver. The courses offered, that included computer literacy, finance

skills, note taking and public speaking, supplemented by the mentorship and coaching throughout the placement, motivated fellows to grab the opportunity and to change the status quo.

Throughout the placement period, the program team maintained continuous support and mentorship for the fellows. Regular check-ins, virtual meetings, and engagement with mentors allowed for close monitoring of progress and addressing any issues that arose. This support system ensured that the fellows received guidance and technical assistance whenever needed, contributing to the successful implementation of their projects and tasks.

A robust monitoring and evaluation framework was implemented to assess the impact of the fellows' work. Key performance indicators were used to measure the effectiveness of their interventions and their contribution to promoting minority rights and equality. Regular progress reports provided valuable insights into their achievements and challenges, allowing for timely adjustments and improvements.

The periodic learning and reflection sessions were instrumental in fostering a supportive community of practice among the fellows. These sessions provided opportunities to share experiences, best practices, and lessons learned. The feedback received during these interactions contributed to program improvements and shaped future capacity-building initiatives.

Engaging with relevant stakeholders, including placement institutions, supervisors, and external mentors, facilitated effective collaboration and alignment of efforts. Monthly coordination meetings allowed for open communication and problem-solving, strengthening partnerships for impactful outcomes. A key feedback and expression received from one of the supervisors about the fellows' performances attributes to the dedications and the commitments of the fellows who demonstrated their abilities to contribute to the State-building and development agenda in all their workplaces. *“I never imagined individuals from the marginalized and minorities communities could make contributions to this most challenging work environments in the world where political dominations, social exclusions, and discriminates against marginalized and minority communities ranks the highest and yet the highest risk environments in Somalia. I am happy to work with a young individual from the marginalized and minority communities who is dedicated to demonstrate his best of abilities in transforming such challenges his communities are facing. If opportunity exist, I recommend such opportunities for more individuals from minorities could make huge difference”, Fellow’s supervisor in Southwest State.*

When gaps were identified during the monitoring process, additional capacity-building sessions were organized to address specific needs or challenges faced by the fellows. This demonstrated the program's responsiveness to their evolving

requirements and ensured they had the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in their roles.

As the placement period came to an end, the program team worked closely with the fellows to develop transition plans for their post-fellowship phase. This support aimed to secure permanent employment opportunities or facilitate further educational pursuits, contributing to their professional growth beyond the program.

The comprehensive evaluation conducted at the end of the placement period provided valuable insights into the overall impact of the fellowship program. Feedback from fellows, supervisors, traditional elders, and the project team informed valuable lessons learned and recommendations for future iterations.

Disseminating the findings and outcomes through various channels will contribute to knowledge sharing, advocacy, and the program's sustainability. The final report, case studies, success stories, and presentations will highlight the successes and challenges faced, contributing to the broader discourse on promoting minority rights in Somalia.

In conclusion, the post-Placement phase has solidified the impact and sustainability of the fellowship program. By providing continuous support, monitoring progress, fostering learning, and engaging stakeholders, the program has laid a strong foundation for promoting minority rights and equality in Somalia. The project's success is a testament to the dedication and commitment of the fellows, the program team, and the valuable collaboration with stakeholders. With the knowledge gained from this phase, the program is well-positioned to create lasting positive change in the lives of marginalized communities.

## 4.4. Sustainability

Three analyses were conducted for sustainability; sustainability of results, social sustainability; and financial sustainability.

### 1.1.1. Sustainability of Results: Strengthening Individual Capacities

The capacity strengthening efforts of the Somalia Marginalized and Minority Fellows Project Pilot Cohort were not designed only with the aim of providing ad-hoc training input but were linked to result-oriented professional developments, with the aim of enhancing or developing new knowledge, skills, and attitudes to function effectively, work towards sustainability, and achieve individual and organizational goals. Young Somalis from marginalized and minority communities seeking careers in government, NGOs, and the private sector were able to benefit from capacity building initiatives to advance their understanding, build their skills and competences to function effectively through trainings and peer-to-peer learning, familiarizing with compliances and regulations, and on-the-job training.

The core areas of institutional competence that affected the performance of all fellows included (but were not limited to) financial planning and reporting, key communication tools in governmental and non-profit works, Minority Rights: international Standards and guidance for implementation in the contexts of defending and promoting minority rights, abilities to find answers to questions and/or solutions to problems through research, and the ability to put all fellows together to form a new functional whole for achieving a common goal collectively at places of their work. Strengthening individual capacities moved away from linear notions of change to a more dynamic view of capacity strengthening as a process influenced by the abilities of the fellows to take up new roles in the government offices, handle a multitude of responsibilities interact with other government staff and fellows simultaneously.

### 1.1.2. Social Sustainability

The secondments of fellows from the minority and marginalized community to government institutions promoted social changes. This Somalia Marginalized and Minority Fellows Project Pilot Cohort have introduced a new social sustainability approach and an effective way to fight against the setbacks of the minorities and marginalized groups in Somalia over the medium and long term. The project created an irresistible current towards the changes promoted which included:

- Fellows became recognized as representatives of the minorities and marginalized groups (who have limited immunity in the eyes of the government) who handled huge responsibilities of assigned projects and portfolios in their placed institutions at State and federal levels.

- Placements have changed the mind-set of the leaders from the marginalized and minority communities and supervisors about attitudes towards the fellows to a new viewpoint that enhances these community leaders and supervisors to seek additional placements options or to find similar opportunities for other young professionals.
- Being a Fellow at government institutions enabled fellows to assist their community members to access social services which was previously impossible due to access restrictions.

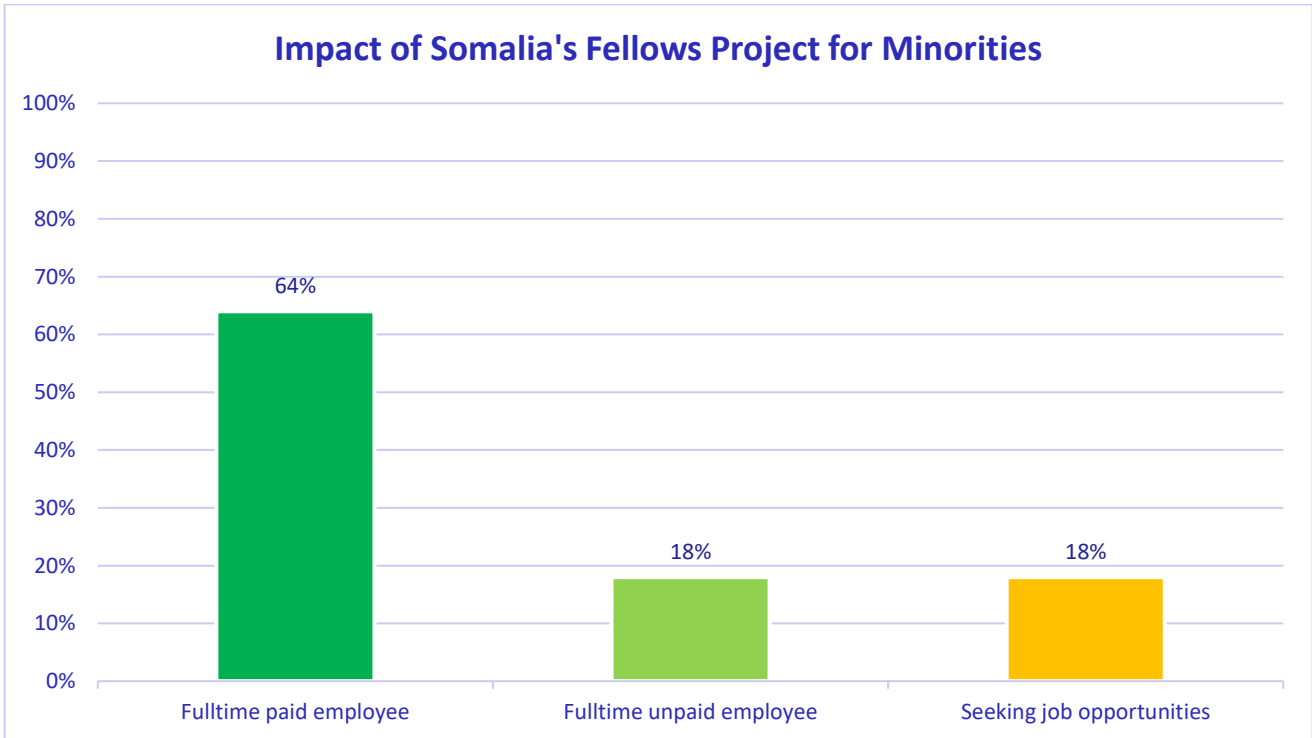
## 4.5. Impact

The impact of the MRG fellowship program in Somalia has been profound and far-reaching for those involved and those closest to them, leaving an indelible mark on the lives of individuals and the communities they represent. Through this transformative initiative, participants have not only gained essential skills and experience but have also been empowered to overcome significant challenges. The fellowship program's emphasis on skill development, access to influential networks, and financial stability has enabled individuals to rise above adversity and achieve their dreams. As a result, these empowered individuals have become agents of positive change within their communities, advocating for marginalized voices, driving impactful projects, and fostering inclusion. For examples of these please see the case studies attached as Annex D. The program's success stories stand as a testament to the transformative power of opportunities, determination, and the unwavering pursuit of one's aspirations. In this way, the fellowship program continues to inspire and empower individuals, creating a ripple effect that reverberates through communities, fostering inclusivity, and catalysing positive change in the region.

This fellowship program goes beyond mere training, emphasizing the cultivation of results-oriented professional development and the enhancement of skills and attitudes that contribute to sustained positive change. The program equipped young individuals from marginalized and minority backgrounds with the necessary tools to function effectively in roles across government, NGOs, and the private sector. Through a combination of targeted training, peer-to-peer learning, and exposure to compliance and regulations, participants were prepared to take on responsibilities that not only advance their careers but also address the challenges faced by their communities. By focusing on core areas of competence such as financial planning, communication tools, minority rights advocacy, research abilities, and effective collaboration, the program fostered dynamic capacity strengthening. This approach enabled fellows to not only excel in their roles but also transform their workplaces and initiate positive change collectively. The project also recognizes that a lack of skill or capacity is not the primary barrier to minority individuals'

ability to gain posts that allow them to build their experience and therefore a career. The US team, MRG used their networks, social capital and ultimately their influence to broker deals whereby placement opportunities would be offered to these fellows.

Moreover, the fellowship program has catalyzed social sustainability by introducing a new perspective on the potential for change within marginalized and minority communities. Fellows are seen as representatives of these groups, assuming substantial responsibilities within government institutions. This paradigm shift has influenced attitudes and mindsets, encouraging others to seek similar opportunities and placements for aspiring young professionals. One direct impact of the project was the design and ultimately successful funding of a scheme with many similar elements operating in Puntland, Hirshabelle, Jubaland and Somaliland. Beyond personal growth, the program's impact has extended to the broader community, as fellows are now better positioned to assist their community members in accessing previously restricted social services. By creating a ripple effect of positive change and fostering a culture of inclusion, the fellowship program demonstrates a sustainable approach to addressing the challenges faced by marginalized and minority communities in Somalia.



Somalia Marginalized and Minority  
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In conclusion, the MRG fellowship program in Somalia has achieved a profound and lasting impact on both individuals and the communities they represent. This transformative initiative has empowered participants to overcome significant challenges and develop essential skills, leading to personal growth and positive change within their communities. The program's focus on skill development, access to influential networks, and financial stability has enabled individuals to rise above adversity and fulfill their aspirations. As a result, these empowered individuals have emerged as advocates for marginalized voices, driving impactful projects and fostering inclusivity within their societies.

The program's success stories documented by the evaluation team serve as powerful testaments to the potential of providing opportunities, determination, and unwavering pursuit of goals. The MRG fellowship program's ripple effect has extended beyond the fellows themselves, catalyzing positive change throughout communities and promoting a culture of inclusion. The sustained impact of the program lies not only in the tangible skills gained but also in the transformative shift in attitudes and perspectives.

The program's commitment to strengthening individual capacities has brought about dynamic change, moving beyond linear notions to create well-rounded professionals capable of making substantial contributions. The social sustainability approach has revolutionized how marginalized and minority groups are perceived, with fellows serving as representatives who actively engage in promoting social change and equal access to services. This approach has reshaped mindsets and attitudes, inspiring others to seek similar opportunities and promoting a more inclusive society.

Through innovative recruitment processes, comprehensive training, mentorship, and continuous support, the MRG fellowship program has created a robust framework for sustainable change. The post-placement phase has further solidified the program's impact by fostering a supportive community, continuously monitoring progress, and facilitating fellows' transition to permanent employment or further education.

As the fellowship program continues to share findings and outcomes, its influence will extend even further, contributing to broader knowledge sharing, advocacy, and sustained positive change. The success of the MRG fellowship program demonstrates the immense potential of investing in marginalized and minority communities, offering them the tools, opportunities, and support they need to create lasting impact and drive transformative change within their societies.



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## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

### **On Project Design:**

- In drafting similar future projects, the usage of people's centered development approach is highly recommended, in order to promote ownership and sustainability that focuses on improving minority communities' self-reliance, social justice, and participatory decision-making in political and socioeconomic spheres. This process should engage as many relevant stakeholders as possible including potential government departments to incorporate their perception as early as possible.
- During the scoping of the project, there were limited interactions between selected fellows and the head of the departments of their workplaces because project targeted senior government offices for the design consultations. Due to budget limitations, the heads of Departments of the Fellows' workplaces were insufficiently engaged during the inception period. This limited the perspectives of the heads of the departments whose primary responsibilities were to supervise fellows at their departments. Therefore, the follow-on project design should use the backward planning method, allowing for enough time (minimum three months inception phase) to plan, implement and to draft the recommendations, to in a timely manner to be presented during the development of annual work planning and budgeting sessions.
- Use of a dedicated Logical Framework tool with allocations of resources is highly recommended, in order to ensure a thorough analysis of the logical chain leading from inputs to project outputs and outcomes; All project activities should have attached indicators (direct or proxy indicators), with a clearly set out methodology of collecting data, frequency, and responsibilities. This will ensure that, during project implementation, a Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism will be created, and reliable information will be collected with the involvement of all parties.
- Based on the feedback from the respective supervisors during the final evaluation, it was clear that there was a need to adopt a collaborative tool that could be used to gauge the fellows from professional aspects of their work that includes promoting the core values, core competencies and functional competencies. Should there be similar project designs in the future, There is a need for follow-up activities with clear timeframe and, to agree with the governments, organizations, and agencies of fellows' placements on the development of a dedicated guide for project Managers/supervisors and fellows/staff that is similar to the [International Atomic Energy Agency \(IAEA\)'s competency framework model](#).

### **On the Work Processes:**

- Based on the feedback from the fellows in relation to their placements, there was a need to enhance consensus building among the fellows, the implementing partners, and the government institutions towards finding placements. While all fellows appreciated the placement opportunities in the government institutions, some believe that they could have made more significant contributions to the state-building processes of the country if they were placed in departments relevant to their qualifications. Therefore, adopting Human-[Centered Design \(HCD\) approach](#) could bridge similar gap as HCD is a

beneficiary-led process that has been tested globally and is recommended for adoption in developing countries like Somalia where large minority populations face widespread discrimination and exclusion from participating fully in social, economic, and political lives. This HCD approach provides an opportunity for the minorities to actively participate and contribute to decision-making forums and other avenues.

- As the ultimate goal of the program was to have young Somalis from the minority and marginalized communities included in political, social and economic development avenues through preparing them to take full time employment in government agencies, NGOs, and private sector companies. The findings from the evaluation show that fellows were not clear about the mechanisms in place that could help them formulate individual plans for measuring their performance and help them develop improvement plans that were tailored with their existing plans and deliverables as an iterative process that is a both dynamic and flexible capacity strengthening process. This approach could assure the government and non-government institutions, organizations and agencies to technically support the on-the-job training, coaching, mentorship of the fellows in close collaboration with MRG. Therefore, it is recommended to have such mechanisms in place should there be a similar programming targeting minorities and marginalized communities in Somalia.

### ***On Project Results:***

- The final evaluation team noted meaningful participation and contribution of females which surpassed the program's 50% target, as did participation from youth (75%) and all fellows were from minority and/or marginalized communities. Feedback from the supervisors of the fellows suggest exploring initiating strategic engagements with all stakeholders from the government and non-government institutions, organizations, agencies, academics, and the private sector in the future through a similar marginalized and minority programming that provides space with the stakeholders to input into policy designs that affects their programming such as the development Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) toolkit to replicate the meaningful participation of women and minorities and marginalized groups in all parts of society.
- Key findings from the discussions with the marginalized and minority community leaders during the final project evaluation indicates that they were optimistic about the future careers of these fellows who benefited from the Somalia Marginalized and Minority Fellows Project Pilot Cohort. These community leaders demonstrated their motivation as a result of the benefits of the program, which the fellows brought to their communities. Therefore, employing more of the peer-review mechanism with the key members of the minority communities during the implementation of similar projects in the future can periodically create an enabling environment for minority communities to feedback the benefits at large and the placements offered as into social, economic, and political inclusion opportunities.
- Adopt convening minority and marginalized groups self-resilience forums to seek the understanding of minority cultural heritages and the substantial gaps addressed to

shape the minority self-resilient community and sustainable socioeconomic and political landscapes in the context of societal and political challenges in Somalia.

### ***Project continuity:***

- As a pilot project for the inclusion of young Somalis from the marginalized and minority communities in Somalia into the humanitarian, and development avenues, a lot has been achieved through this project. Some of the young Somalis from the marginalized and minority communities who benefited from this pilot project are now fulltime paid workers in different humanitarian organizations, adding huge value to humanitarian work efforts by ensuring the inclusivity of the marginalized and minority vulnerable communities into their lifesaving interventions and thereafter, they will be able to take forward their future career endeavours. Therefore, USG and MRG should consider availing enough resources to continue building on these successes gained and keep the momentum for longer term support for similar programs that will not only ensure the inclusion of the young Somalis from the marginalized and minority communities into government and humanitarian organizations but also create an enabling environment for such young individuals from the marginalized and minority communities to contribute to policy review, policy formulations, policy discussions and policy implementation that affect the lives of millions of Somali citizens including the marginalized and minority communities. This cannot be realized without recognizing their potential for involvement in the development sector.

### ***Stakeholders Engagements:***

- The project has carried out extensive engagements with stakeholders during the implementation of the project. Period engagements with stakeholders can promote the Visibility, Experience, Trust, & Actions toward building a healthy society that enjoys equal treatment, equal opportunities, and equal share of resources within larger communities. These fundamental human rights cannot be guaranteed without influencing the decisions of policy-makers and other stakeholders who are in leadership roles for the implementations of such policies. Therefore, MRG and the implementing partners should consider improving such engagements at all levels to ensure the minorities are at the centre of iterative, measurable and results driven project designs.

### ***Performance Monitoring Plan:***

- As part of quality assurance and oversight mechanisms, there is a need to adopt a joint monitoring plan that enable field staff to conduct frequent visits to host institutions of the fellows at state and federal levels to monitor their performance and observe their level of efforts and their capabilities to handled assigned tasks at their places of work. This can promote accountability at organizational level and establish mechanisms to report back to the funding agencies in more practical and ideal way.

### ***Collaborative Learning and Adaptation***

- The project should adopt a Collaborative Learning and Adaptation (CLA) process in the next phase of the project to strategically collaborate with relevant stakeholders who are also in the advocacy of minorities and marginalized groups, continually learn, and promote adaptive management approaches in socioeconomic and political inclusion of minorities and marginalized groups.

## Annex A: Collective Impact

Collective impact is a transformative approach to addressing complex societal challenges by leveraging the combined efforts of diverse stakeholders, organizations, and communities. This collaborative model focuses on a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and a backbone support structure. In the context of a short coaching session for minorities organized for the fellows by the evaluation consultants of the MRG Somalia fellowship program, collective impact offered a powerful advocacy opportunity and a framework to foster collaboration among the fellows, inclusivity in all aspects of society and drive meaningful attitudinal change through advocacy.

By bringing together the fellows from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives, the coaching session enhanced a dynamic alumni’s network of learning and collaboration. Participants are expected to engage in joint initiatives, sharing knowledge and resources, following the program’s establishment of a clear mission, measurable goals, and a system for tracking progress. Through consistent communication and the guidance of a dedicated support team, the fellows will ensure that efforts align, overlap, and reinforce one another, leading to a more comprehensive and sustainable impact on advancing minority representation and empowerment.

## Annex B: Case Studies

### Case Study 1.

Title: Transformative Impact of the MRG Fellowship Program: Empowering Individuals and Communities

Introduction:

The Minority Rights Group (MRG funded by the U.S. Department of State initiated a transformative fellowship program in Somalia. This case study highlights three inspiring journeys of individuals who participated in the program and experienced significant personal and professional growth, becoming catalysts for positive change within their communities. The MRG fellowship program has empowered these individuals by providing them with opportunities for skill development, access to influential networks, and the necessary support to overcome barriers and achieve their dreams.

#### A Journey of Determination and Success

Faduma<sup>4</sup>, a determined and ambitious individual, faced the challenge of finding meaningful work after graduating with a Bachelor of Agriculture degree. Through her perseverance and the discovery of the MRG fellowship program, she emerged as one of the successful candidates among eleven fellows. The program provided her with a work placement at one of the ministries in Southwest State of Somalia. With unwavering commitment and eagerness to contribute, she quickly ascended to the role of an Admin Officer, gaining access to influential networks, and opening doors she once only dreamed of. The fellowship program not only transformed her career but also provided financial stability, enabling her to establish her long-awaited eCommerce business.

#### A Journey of Overcoming Challenges

Hassan<sup>5</sup> from the marginalized Banadiri community, faced discrimination and exclusion in his pursuit of a professional career. However, through the MRG fellowship program, he discovered a ray of hope. He seized the opportunity to showcase his skills and passed all interviews and exams, earning a position within the program. His journey led him to work as a senior advisor in the Protection Sector in one of the ministries in Southwest State administration. His advocacy efforts brought tangible benefits to marginalized communities, including improved access to

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<sup>4</sup> This is a pseudonym to avoid revealing her identity.

<sup>5</sup> This is a pseudonym to avoid revealing his identity

international aid, humanitarian assistance, and the establishment of a Minority's Network. Through the fellowship program, he became an agent of positive change and a beacon of hope for his community.

### Digital Engagement and Empowerment of Citizens

The MRG fellowship program also enabled individuals to address broader community issues. Through the program, Jama<sup>6</sup> focused on enhancing citizen engagement by implementing a digital platform. Following an extensive research and collaboration with government officials, the fellows identified the need to set up an accessible platform to bridge the communication gap between citizens and the government. Leveraging their position and collaboration with government offices, the participant and their team crafted a user-friendly platform accessible through web and mobile applications. This platform aimed to bridge the gap between citizens and the government, facilitating open communication, feedback, and public service improvements. The impact of this fellowship project was remarkable, revolutionizing citizen engagement, improving government-citizen dialogue, and enhancing public services. The success of the project garnered recognition from both the government and citizens, reaffirming the value of collaboration in effecting positive change.

### Conclusion:

The MRG fellowship program in Somalia has proven to be transformative, empowering marginalized individuals to overcome barriers and achieve their dreams. Through skill development, access to influential networks, and (minimal) financial support, participants like Ms. Faduma, Hassan and Jama have made significant contributions to their fields and communities. The program's emphasis on advocacy and community engagement has also led to remarkable projects that enhance citizen-government interactions and address broader societal issues. The success stories of these individuals stand as a testament to the transformative power of opportunities, determination, and the unwavering pursuit of one's dreams. The MRG fellowship program continues to inspire and empower individuals, fostering inclusivity and positive change in Somalia.

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<sup>6</sup> This is a pseudonym to avoid revealing his identity.

## Case Study 2.

Case Study: Abdulkadir<sup>7</sup> - A Journey of Transformation Through the Fellowship Program

*“Every dream is valid when given the opportunity and support to realize it. My gratitude’s goes to the US government and MRG for your support and for renewing my hope”.* Abdulkadir.

### Introduction

In this case study, we explore the transformative journey of Abdulkadir, a determined individual from the Southwest State of Somalia. Abdulkadir’s story showcases the impact of the fellowship program funded by the U.S. Department of State through Minority Rights Group (MRG). We will examine the challenges Abdulkadir’s faced, the opportunities the fellowship program provided, and the profound changes he experienced throughout his journey.

### Background and Challenges

Abdulkadir's journey began against a backdrop of significant challenges faced by minority communities in Somalia. Limited access to government services, discrimination, and a lack of employment opportunities hindered his personal and professional growth. Moreover, the absence of essential skills, such as computer literacy, further exacerbated his challenges. Abdulkadir felt disheartened and disconnected from his sense of belonging within society.

### The Fellowship Program

The fellowship program became a turning point in Abdulkadir's life, offering him the support and opportunities he desperately needed. Through the program, he gained essential computer skills, improved his self-confidence, and became an advocate for his constitutional rights. The fellowship also provided a stipend to cover his expenses, fostering financial stability and reducing the burden on him and his family. Furthermore, the program created a network of friends and colleagues who became a crucial support system throughout his journey.

### Professional Development and Growth

The fellowship program played a pivotal role in Abdulkadir's professional development. It offered him extensive training and mentorship opportunities, focusing on public speaking, report writing, basic financial management, and leadership skills. The program also negotiated a placement for Abdulkadir in one of the Ministries in Southwest State, allowing him to apply his newfound skills in a real-world context. Abdulkadir's dedication and passion for change made him WASH Officer in Southwest state schools. He conducted research on the challenges

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<sup>7</sup> This is a pseudonym to avoid revealing his identity.



faced by minority pupils in schools and shared his findings with relevant humanitarian organizations in Baidoa, resulting in promised support for specific schools based on the data. Abdirahman also engaged with the Southwest youth, inspiring them to stay connected and collectively transform their society.

### Impact and Empowerment

Today, Abdulkadir stands as a testament to the transformative power of the fellowship program. The program provided him with a comprehensive set of skills, experiences, and connections that elevated his prospects and empowered him to make a difference. Within the ministry he has been placed, Abdulkadir became an agent of change, utilizing his knowledge and passion to drive positive initiatives. His journey has not only transformed his own life but has also inspired others in his community to pursue their dreams.

### Lessons Learned and Conclusion

Abdulkadir's success story highlights several key lessons. Firstly, with the right opportunities and support, individuals can overcome adversity and create a brighter future for themselves and their community. Secondly, programs that address specific challenges faced by marginalized communities have the potential to drive transformative change. Finally, fostering a strong support system and creating networks of like-minded individuals can be instrumental in empowering individuals to achieve their goals.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, Abdulkadir's journey serves as an inspiration to others, showcasing the transformative power of a fellowship program in overcoming challenges and achieving personal and professional growth. His story demonstrates the importance of access to opportunities, skill development, and a supportive network in empowering individuals to create positive change within their communities. Abdulkadir's determination and dedication provide a beacon of hope for marginalized communities.

### Annex C: Resources & Links

<https://socialinnovation.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Collective-Impact-Handout.pdf>

<https://collectiveimpactforum.org/what-is-collective-impact/>

<https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286927475\\_The\\_Bantu\\_Jareer\\_Somalis\\_Unearthin\\_g\\_Apartheid\\_in\\_the\\_Horn\\_of\\_Africa](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286927475_The_Bantu_Jareer_Somalis_Unearthin_g_Apartheid_in_the_Horn_of_Africa)

<https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

<https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/18/03/competency-framework.pdf>

[https://www.pactworld.org/node/2732/void%280%29%3B#:~:text=Human%2DCentered%20Design%20\(HCD\),for%20communities%20and%20local%20partners.](https://www.pactworld.org/node/2732/void%280%29%3B#:~:text=Human%2DCentered%20Design%20(HCD),for%20communities%20and%20local%20partners.)