

# Minority Inclusion Learning: Focus on Implementing Partners

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Minority Rights Group



SIMAE





Cover Image: A refugee camp in Baidoa, Somalia. May 2019.

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### Minority Rights Group

Minority Rights Group (MRG) is a nongovernmental organization (NGO) working to secure the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples worldwide, and to promote cooperation and understanding between communities. Our activities are focused on international advocacy, training, publishing and outreach. We are guided by the needs expressed by our worldwide partner network of organizations, which represent minority and indigenous peoples. MRG works with over 150 organizations in nearly 50 countries. Our governing Council, which meets twice a year, has members from 10 different countries. MRG has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and observer status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). MRG is registered as a charity and a company limited by guarantee under English law: registered charity no. 282305, limited company no. 1544957

### Daami Youth Development Organisation (DYDO)

DYDO is primarily based in Hargeisa, Somaliland, and is a non-political, non-profit making, human rights, aid and development-oriented organization, legally registered in 2007 by individuals from Somaliland's minority communities dedicated to improving the degraded conditions and rights of the underprivileged minority groups in Somaliland. DYDO seeks to help minority communities create sustainable solutions to the problems they face, and progress away from absolute poverty, exclusion, marginalization, and unemployment. It is a minority-led organization that advocates for equality and inclusion of minorities in the mainstream social, political, and educational systems of the country

### Puntland Minority Women Development Organization (PMWDO)

PMWDO is a minority-led organization working to improve the social welfare and build the capacity of marginalized minority women and children. They provide primary education, healthcare and training in environmental management and income generation, to achieve sustainable development.

### SIMAE

Somali Intellectuals for Minority Advocacy and Empowerment (SIMAE) is a local non-governmental organization based in Baidoa, Southwest state of Somalia. It is a minority-led NGO which advocates for the rights and equality of marginalized ethnic and social groups. Its activities include advocacy, education, health, and social mobilization to create awareness for the rights and inclusion of marginalized people.

# Minority Inclusion Learning: Focus on Implementing Partners

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# Executive summary

In 2021, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) commissioned Minority Rights Group (MRG) to undertake a minority inclusion learning review of their programmes in the Horn of Africa covering Somalia including Somaliland, northeastern Kenya and southeastern Ethiopia. The focus of the work was on ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities, as described in key UN texts. The results were mixed, with work in Kenya showing strong minority inclusive elements but work in Somalia showing that minorities faced significant levels of exclusion in both aid and development interventions. The publication of the report and linked advocacy by minority-led organizations, MRG and SDC as well as other like-minded donors caused significant shifts in attention towards minorities by the aid sector in Somalia.<sup>1</sup>

In 2024, SDC asked MRG, working with three local minority-led partner organizations<sup>2</sup> (DYDO, PMWDO and SIMAE), to revisit the issue to assess the extent to which minority inclusion had changed. Noting that the first study had been undertaken at the level of the portfolio as a whole (which had prevented the surfacing of direct relationships between Swiss inputs -into mostly large multi-donor efforts- and the exclusionary results after many intervening steps), it was agreed that this study would take a local approach, identifying initiatives where effects were expected to be felt in a limited geographical area, beneficiaries of Swiss interventions could be identified and a sample could be interviewed, so as to ascertain whether they were minorities or not and to understand their experience of the intervention. The fieldwork was initiated in four locations: Rabdhure/Bakool region; Baidoa/Bay region; Hargeisa/Somaliland; and Garowe/Puntland (although one of these locations was ultimately found not to meet the study criteria). The interventions that were studied ranged from cash for food and resilience programming to participation in local government dialogues.

Overall the minority inclusion review found that SDC's Implementing Partners (IPs) were aware of potential minority exclusion, most were knowledgeable about minorities in their areas of operation and a reasonable proportion of the overall beneficiaries belonged to minorities.

On the other hand, while being aware of minorities at community level, most Swiss IPs were not able to identify minorities among their beneficiaries at the level of households or individuals, and were still extremely

reluctant to ask direct questions about minority status (this is discussed more below). Given this last point, a question arises as to whether the reach achieved was intentional or accidental; our finding is that it was deliberate but that minorities were primarily identified at the level of community and not household. This was based on general knowledge concerning where minorities lived. Assuming that the communities identified as minorities are homogeneous and exclusively comprise minority households, it would be a small additional step to allocate minority status on the basis of residence in a minority community. This would enable the reporting of disaggregated data in project results matrices, even in situations where teams feel that security or socio-cultural concerns would prevent them from asking about minority status directly. Our findings suggest that the reluctance to ask such direct questions may be based on outdated assessments of the risk of doing so as well as being linked to adherence to a (false) narrative that Somalis are a homogeneous people who share one common ancestry, culture and language.

Some small variations were noted between minorities and majority clan beneficiaries with minorities being more likely to use cash for food to pay gatekeepers rent in several locations and significantly more likely to pay gatekeepers for other reasons in one location. However, the reported levels of benefits passed on to gatekeepers overall was relatively low and certainly lower than that reportedly discovered by a 2023 UN-funded study on Post-Distribution Aid Diversion (PDAD).<sup>3</sup> There was also some evidence that minorities were less minded to express their opinions when invited to participate in meetings and may tend to limit their role in meetings to listening rather than expressing their views. This is almost certainly linked to internalised racism, whereby community members have concluded that their views are not valued, together with knowledge that making claims may in the past have come with the risk of triggering reprisals.

## Recommendations for all donors (and other actors) operating in Somalia

- Donors and agencies should find ways to clearly signal the way in which the term 'minority' is being used in discussions with IPs, e.g. 'clan minority', 'ethnic minority' or 'minority (as in the 0.5 in the 4.5 formula)'.
- Donors and agencies should consider developing explicit guidance for IPs and staff in writing concerning their expectations and minimum guarantees concerning minority inclusion in programmes. This guidance should allow sufficient flexibility for IPs to take into account local contexts and sensitivities but should nonetheless clarify minimum standards of inclusion in practice as well as of monitoring and reporting on minority inclusion.
- Donors should ensure that project proposals explicitly set out how ethnic minority inclusion will be achieved, how this will be tracked and what evidence of its success (or not) will be supplied. Minority (and other) inclusion should be mainstreamed in all aspects of project proposals and not relegated to one section. This should include mandatory text on all three disadvantage factors (gender, disability and ethnic minority). It should be mandatory that clear text on all three factors appears in project results matrices as well as narrative or descriptive passages.
- Donors and agencies should ensure that third party monitoring and external evaluation TORs require explicit attention to ethnic minority identity and other inclusion/exclusion factors.
- Donors and agencies should sensitively encourage IPs and staff to increasingly test out asking individuals to share their minority or majority clan affiliation and encourage those that do so to share their experiences with others.

- Donors should continue to ask questions about whether minority participants in meetings feel able to express themselves fully when in mixed groups and consider, as is already the case for women and girls, whether complementary ethnic minority-only conversations should be convened.
- Donors and agencies should ensure that local teams include (collectively) members who speak and understand all local languages.
- Donors should continue to question the degree to which it is acceptable for life saving support, such as cash for food, to be passed on to gatekeepers for rent or other services and should seek long term solutions to this.

## Recommendations for Swiss and Swiss IPs operating in Somalia

- The practice of identifying ethnic minorities at the level of community should be accepted but should be systematized so that the number, identity and feedback from such communities can be identified, monitored and reported with confidence. Residence in an ethnic minority settlement can thus be used as a proxy for minority identity in a context where IPs continue to identify objective risks in relation to asking direct questions about minority identity.

# Acronyms

**DYDO** Daami Youth Development Organization  
**HCT** Humanitarian Country Team  
**IDP** Internally Displaced Person  
**IP** Implementing Partner  
**LNOB** Leave no one behind  
**MRG** Minority Rights Group  
**PDAD** Post-Distribution Aid Diversion

**PMWDO** Puntland Minority Women's Development Organization  
**SDC** Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation  
**SIMAE** Somali Intellectuals for Minority Advocacy and Empowerment  
**TOR** Terms of reference

# Introduction

In 2021, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) commissioned Minority Rights Group (MRG) to undertake a minority inclusion learning review of their programme portfolio in the Horn of Africa.<sup>4</sup> The focus of the work was on ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities (as included in the UN framing instrument, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities).<sup>5</sup> In Somalia, it was noted that there was a close relationship between risk of exclusion and groups identified through a political power sharing model known as the 4.5 formula, as originally agreed (orally) at a peace conference in Aarta in Djibouti in 2000 which brokered a deal to end the long running civil war in the country. The 4.5 formula refers to the fact that four politically powerful clan groups each get an equal share of political (and thus largely also economic) opportunities whereas the remaining groups are awarded (in theory at least) half of what each of the other groups receives.<sup>6</sup> The issue of minority exclusion in Somalia was well known anecdotally prior to the 2021 minority inclusion learning review, but the study used groundbreaking methods to collect and present compelling evidence of the impacts of such marginalisation on minority community members' experiences of development and humanitarian aid for the first time.

The publication of the report and linked advocacy by minority-led organizations, MRG and SDC as well as other like-minded donors contributed to significant shifts in attention to minorities in the aid system in Somalia.<sup>7</sup>

In 2024, SDC asked MRG to revisit the issue to assess the extent to which minority inclusion had changed. The first study had been undertaken at the level of the portfolio, which had prevented the surfacing of any direct relationships between Swiss inputs - into mostly large multi-donor efforts - and possible exclusionary results after many intervening steps. Noting these limitations, it was agreed that this study would take a local approach, identifying initiatives that SDC was supporting where effects were expected to be felt in a limited geographical area and where beneficiaries of Swiss interventions could be identified and a sample could be interviewed, so as to ascertain whether they belonged to minorities or not and to gain an understanding of their experience of the intervention. This allowed the research to shine a light at the micro level and bring attention to specific programming steps that may either enable or counter exclusion. However, it does mean that there is limited scope for direct comparisons between the findings in 2021 and the findings in this study.

# Methodology

The team reviewed SDC records concerning its current portfolio of interventions and identified a sub-set of projects with the following characteristics:

- The intervention was active in an area where minorities were known to be present.
- The intervention was sufficiently localized that a clear link between Swiss Implementing Partner (IP) activities and the benefits reaching specific groups could be made.
- The project location was sufficiently secure for fieldwork to be conducted without undue risk.
- There was a diversity in terms of geography and type of project intervention.
- The results could be communicated without undue risks to minority-led partner organizations in the event that findings surfaced any concerns.

On this basis, the following locations/projects were identified as suitable for the study:

1. Baidoa, cash for food and resilience support for IDPs;
2. Bakool, cash for food and resilience support; and

3. Puntland, organizing participation in local government influencing and decision making.

A fourth site was provisionally identified, but work was stopped when it became clear that it did not fully meet the agreed criteria.

The Swiss IP in each location was requested to supply lists of beneficiaries, identifying the minorities within them. All IPs sent lists of beneficiaries, but none were able to identify minorities among them. One partner asserted that their reach to minorities was 30%, but the evidence base for this was not clear.

For Baidoa and Bakool, a purposive sample was created by identifying project/beneficiary locations which were known to include members of minority communities.<sup>8</sup> In Baidoa 170 interviews were completed, and in Bakool 187 interviews were conducted, all using Kobo software to compile results. Questions concerned whether the household had indeed benefitted, what they had spent the support on and how they felt treated by the IP team. Due to the fact that there has been some evidence that minorities are less aware of or willing to use feedback mechanisms, they were also asked about this. Finally, they were asked for characteristics of their household, including whether they were of minority or majority clan heritage, whether households included members with disabilities or were female headed, and the recent nutritional status of children within the household.

For the Puntland local government participation project, we carried out interviews with a random sample of beneficiaries (95) and asked questions about the number of meetings they had attended, as well as whether they had been present in order to listen or express their views.

The team carried out a full review of the SDC portfolio materials concerning the degree to which minorities were included in the contextual analysis, risk assessments, results matrices, and monitoring and evaluation systems.

The resulting data was then analysed, and each IP team was interviewed about their understanding of minority inclusion in their work, their understanding of SDC requirements and their reasoning for their choices in terms of which data to capture and report, and how to do this.

## Map of Somalia



Map data: Google Maps, 2025.



## Study limitations

The study did not seek to comment on whether the support to minorities was proportionate – the lack of any recent census or other demographic data concerning population numbers generally, and minority population numbers in particular, makes this close to impossible in Somalia.

The study should not be taken to be representative of all actors delivering aid in Somalia. The Swiss are known to be leaders in paying attention to minority inclusion, and it is likely that their IPs may be more attuned and attentive to the issue than would be typical. As mentioned above due to the use of different methods the findings of 2021 and the findings of this study are not directly comparable. Nonetheless, it is possible to draw some conclusions about apparent trends or direction of travel.

## Findings

We present our findings in four sections: firstly, findings at the level of impacts for communities; secondly, findings for IPs; and thirdly, findings for SDC and, to a large extent, other donors operational in Somalia. Finally, we compare the findings from the 2021 study to those of this round.

# Findings

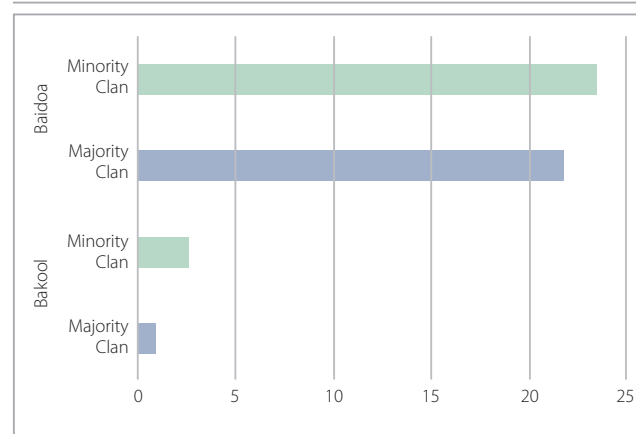
## Findings: Impacts for communities

**Most projects had reached minorities with reasonable proportions participating.** As noted below, this was achieved without any specific agreed targets for IPs, nor a requirement for them to submit disaggregated data. It was also achieved without IPs having any systematic internal way to track this. It was largely achieved by knowledgeable IP staff (see also below) identifying settlements with primarily or exclusively minority residents and including them in their lists of beneficiaries. Due to continuing social discrimination (e.g. a widespread ban on intermarriage, as well as the fact that members of major clans may not be willing to eat or share water sources with minorities), minorities tend not to live in mixed settlements with majority clans.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, this informal method of identifying minorities works reasonably well and is certainly better than not doing so at all.

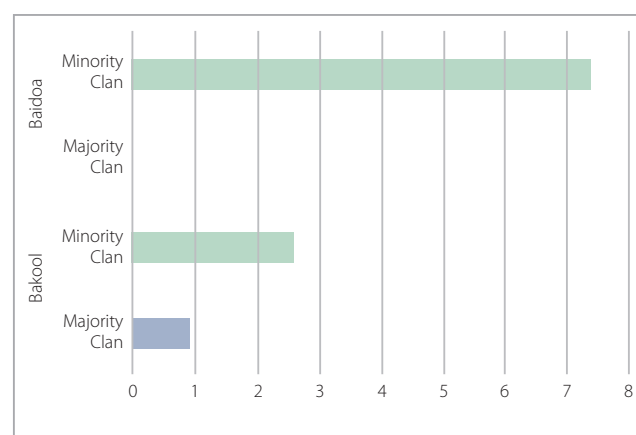
Those on the beneficiary lists supplied to us, **mostly agreed that they had benefitted** (those denying receipt/participation varied from 1% Puntland, 6% Bakool and 7.6% Baidoa). A longstanding issue in Somalia is the diversion of aid which has been distributed to needy households. This might take the form of a payment of rent to a landowner or his representative to be allowed to stay on a piece of land, together with payment for the services by humanitarian actors (which are provided free of charge) to those people in that location e.g. water, sanitation and food aid. In some instances households have not option but to share part of what they have received with “gatekeepers” even if they are not receiving wider services and are not paying any form of rent. Overall payments to gatekeepers for rent were very low in Baidoa (1.2% overall; 0.86% for majority households and 2.56% for minority households). (This might be related to the fact that Baidoa was one area chosen for the research that informed the PDAD report and thus the topic has been widely discussed in that locality with the Federal Member State Parliament even discussing a law against the practice). In Bakool rates were significantly higher (22.6% overall; 21.8% for majority households and 23.5% for minority households). Payment of rent from support intended to address serious hunger in households is a source of longstanding debate within the Somalia aid sector. As the figures above show, in both Baidoa and

Bakool, minority households were more likely to be using the cash for food money to pay rent to a gatekeeper, although the difference was only 2% which may not be statistically significant given the low sample numbers. Only in Bakool were beneficiaries paying gatekeepers for anything other than rent. Worryingly this was not the case for majority clan beneficiaries (none of whom reported it), but 7% of minority households reported this. It seems that local actors still hold more sway over minorities and are able to remove some of what has been given to them, in a way which is not the case for majorities.

**Graph 1A:** Chart Percentage of beneficiaries who reported paying rent to a gatekeeper from food assistance support



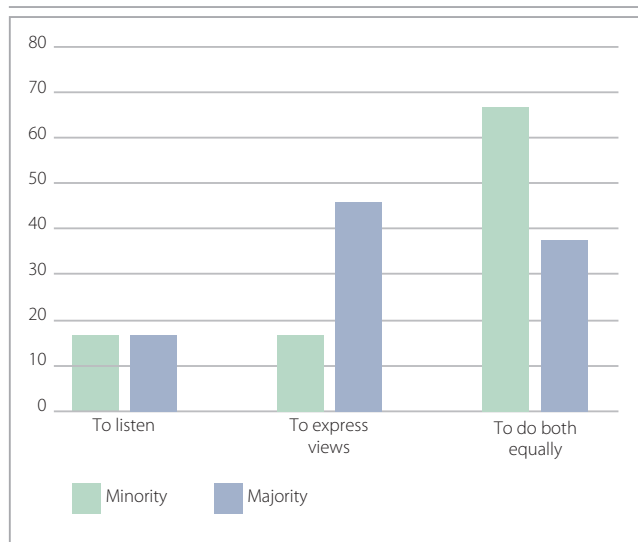
**Graph 1B:** Percentage of beneficiaries who reported paying a proportion of food assistance support to a gatekeeper for something other than rent



In the Puntland consultations, minorities were equally likely to say that they had attended the event(s) primarily to listen but less likely to say that they had attended primarily to express their opinion (45% of majority female participants and 17% of female minorities said this; for all participants 38% of majorities attended to express opinions, and 21% of minorities did so). This difference is worrying and suggests different levels of comfort in expressing opinions in public for the two groups.

More than half of beneficiaries were aware of feedback mechanisms in all cases (over 70% Baidoa and Bakool; over 60% Puntland).

**Graph 2:** Beneficiaries main intention when attending a meeting



## Findings: lessons for IPs

Staff in two projects demonstrated a strong understanding of minority communities and minority exclusion in Somalia overall as well as a good knowledge of minorities in their area. They were, for example, able to name locations where specific minorities were found, describe specific aspects of their ways of life which are distinct from major clans (and which are not common knowledge) and recall ways in which minorities had been historically excluded or are still excluded today.

Despite this sound knowledge base, most IPs were not able to supply data disaggregated by minority or which identified minority households. As described above, IPs primarily identified minorities by whole community or settlement and not by household or individual. (And as discussed above on page 8, this did work acceptably well). This was related to a continuing reluctance to ask any individual to identify their clan background. It is difficult to be critical of any teams working in highly insecure remote locations, and it is understandable that they err on the side

of caution. Nonetheless, our minority-led partners were able to ask the question about minority status with only 3% of interviewees across all of our sample being unwilling to reply and no other negative security or relationship ramifications. In Somalia there are compelling reasons why minority identity and minority exclusion remain an unspoken topic at the local level, including concern about triggering conflict or revealing less than good practice in aid distribution. However, in the long run, the interests of equity and reaching the furthest behind will best be served if IPs can be encouraged to address the topic explicitly, test out new methods and increasingly normalize the issue and the practice of asking such questions of beneficiaries at least, if not all those they interact with.

Almost all beneficiaries felt that they had been treated with respect, and no significant differences were recorded on this point between minorities and majorities. Minority households were as likely as majority households to know how to give feedback to IPs, and there was no evidence that minorities were inhibited from doing so.

Given the strong local knowledge of field staff and success in reaching minorities, also given Swiss public interest in the issue, it was surprising to see a low level of attention to ethnic minority inclusion in the reports submitted by consortium lead partners. Some contained questionable statements that read like ‘lip service’, while some were entirely silent about ethnic minorities.

This was picked up by third-party monitors on at least one occasion, and comments concerning the lack of detail were brought to SDC’s attention. In at least one case an IP became aware of this through feedback to staff from the third-party monitors, although it was not clear that it resulted in any change in practice by the person or team who were responsible for generating or finalizing the reports.

### Third Party Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (TPME&L) & Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) in Somalia:

*The project didn’t keep any LNOB [leave no one behind] data, and there seems to be a misunderstanding between minorities, disadvantaged groups, and LNOB among both the implementing partner staff and the community elders, especially the village development committees who are the heart of the beneficiary registration.*

## Findings for SDC and other donors in Somalia

SDC had communicated to its IPs the findings of the previous minority inclusion study and the importance of addressing minority exclusion in projects. Everyone we spoke to knew that minority inclusion mattered to the Swiss – although exactly what that meant was less clear. SDC was not the sole source of information, and references were made to the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and the 2023 UN PDAD report as having highlighted minority exclusion.

Despite being aware that minorities mattered, most IPs were unclear about exactly what was meant by the term. Many equated it to inclusion very generally, encompassing also women and people with disabilities. Whilst, of course gender equality and disability inclusion are extremely important in Somalia, each discrimination factor is associated with different mechanisms and barriers which need specific interventions if they are to be successfully addressed. Each also has its own level of political sensitivity. Thus, conflating all disadvantage factors under one term is not the most helpful approach when the aim is to reach the most vulnerable in society. It also runs the risk that one of these will be addressed, with the view that ‘the box has been ticked’, leaving those affected by other grounds of exclusion, yet again, behind.

Linked to this, some IPs expressed sentiments to the effect that managing competing LNOB priorities of gender, disability and ethnic minorities was challenging for them.

In project documents, attention to minorities was largely confined to sections with a heading like ‘Inclusion’,

and the issue was not mainstreamed, e.g. not appearing in risk assessments. Not only that, there were examples where, for instance a heading in a proposal would state ‘Gender, Minority and Disability Inclusion’, but the text below the heading would focus exclusively on women and people with disabilities, with no mention of how ethnic minorities would be included at all. Most importantly, no specific references were made to ethnic minorities in project matrices, which are known to motivate staff to focus on the specified and quantified results areas. We are not necessarily suggesting that numerical quotas are essential, rather that results can be qualified with statements such as ‘with evidence that clan minorities have been included at appropriate levels and in meaningful ways’ or similar. This would act as an important reminder to IP teams that they are expected to ensure and track minority inclusion and find ways to supply evidence that they have done so.

A final opportunity for SDC to monitor ethnic minority inclusion is via external and independent evaluations of projects. However, attention to ethnic minority inclusion in external evaluations appeared limited. From the two terms of reference (TORs) for external evaluations reviewed by the team, it seems that a standard template is used for drawing up them up. Admittedly, the sample size was very limited, and this may be at the level of Somalia or across SDC programmes globally. Nonetheless, tailoring TORs for external evaluations according to the context, including possible risk factors such as ethnic minority exclusion, should surely be important.

### Final [IP] Semi Annual Programme Report Submitted to: The Embassy of Switzerland (For Swiss Development Cooperation funding period 1st June 2020 to 31st March 2024)

#### 7.4. Vulnerable community members inclusion

*All segments of the community are equally involved in the implementation of the project with special attention given to marginalized groups such as households headed by women, orphans, and people with disabilities (PWD). These groups participate in the selection and supervision of activities, so they are equally engaged as other community groups. In El Afweyne, [IP] uses a disability mapping assessment report conducted by the Diversity Action Network (DAN) during beneficiary selection to ensure that people with disabilities are included in the project. A portion of 10-15%, the international*

*standard for allocating resources to people with disabilities, is applied to ensure their inclusion. In addition, quotas are given to specific groups like women, and their inclusion is ensured throughout the project implementation. The importance of including the most vulnerable groups, such as women and PWD, was highlighted to the village development committees during sensitization. This ensures that women and PWD can participate in community gatherings during project meetings, supervision, and monitoring. They are also included in different community committees and have a voice to raise their concerns. (2024, p. 24)*

### Third Party Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (TPME&L) & Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) in Somalia 2023

*In terms of gender disaggregation, the project framework was well articulated by providing equitable distribution of resources across project activities. Ideally, most implementing partners should adhere to the 30% composition, according to the 5-year Strategy for the formation of the community committees (e.g., village development committees, water user committees, etc.).*

*Accordingly, on the selection of the direct beneficiaries of the project, support to women is well represented and other activities, like VSLA, were covered predominantly by women. As result, women have significant representation. (May 2023, p. 3) (emphasis added)*

Table 5: Number of Beneficiaries trained in each district  
Total Number of Beneficiary (Good Agricultural Practice)

	Female	Male
Baidoa	387	453

(p. 19)

**Output 1.4: Vulnerable Populations supported to access marketable skills and livelihood opportunities**  
*This activity was not implemented in most of sampled villages. Only in Baidoa, [the IP] have reported to have trained 20 individuals (6 female and 14 male), all of which were part of the youth. The training covered mobile repairing, electricity, building and construction, tailoring, beauty salon and business enterprises development skills. (May 2023, p. 22)*

### Third Party Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (TPME&L) & Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) in Somalia

#### Cash Distribution Project

*The project didn't keep any LNOB data and there seems to be a misunderstanding between minorities, disadvantaged groups, and LNOB among both the implementing partner staff and the community elders especially the village development committees who are the heart of the beneficiary*

*registration. While it's vital to ensure consideration is made for both the minorities and disadvantaged groups, which most of the time have definite characteristics and are easy to identify, an effort must also be made to ensure the targeting process doesn't leave anyone behind. (October 2022, p. 4) (emphasis added)*

### Annual Programme Report submitted to: The Embassy of Switzerland (For Swiss Development Cooperation funding period 1st June 2020 to 30th September 2023)

#### 6.4. Vulnerable community members inclusion

*Vulnerable community members generally refer to those disadvantaged with compromised access to resources to meet their daily basic needs. These include but are not limited to vulnerable women, girls, boys and men who could be from minority clans, elderly, widowed, single women, people with disability and IDPs. (2024, p. 38)*

*In January 2023, [IP] and village development committees developed selection criteria for the Vocational Skills Training beneficiaries that were used to create awareness in the targeted sites mainly in*

*Peri-urban locations (Isha Bullausley and Howlwadag-Bullo Jameco) and Wadajir 2 IDP camp. The criteria included the ability to read and write, unemployed and vulnerable youths, willingness and commitment to the program until graduation, not enrolled in similar programs conducted by other stakeholders and trustworthy among other attributes. (p.13)*

*[IP] identified 25 (17 female and 8 male) persons living with disability who required enabling technologies to participate in livelihood activities supported by the programme. (2024, p. 13)*



Finally we compare the findings from the 2021 study to those of this round. As noted above, the results are not directly comparable as the methodology is different, although some indications of shifts can be cautiously

outlined. It is important to note that the Swiss have been very aware of minority exclusion since the publication of the 2021 report and these findings may not be representative of practice more widely across Somalia.

### 2021 Finding with comparable data

Primarily minority settlements had higher food insecurity.

Where identified as beneficiaries they were recruited in ways that were different

They were much less likely to be consulted or to attend community meetings

Minority settlement respondents were less likely to know how to complain, less likely to have made a complaint and where they had complained were more likely to report that no action had resulted

A majority of all sources (i.e., not just minorities) confirmed that they were aware of specific instances of aid diversion

### 2024 finding

There was no evidence of higher malnutrition in children in minority households

Implementing partners had used different methods in order to successfully identify and include minority households, this was a positive step.

They were equally likely to attend consultation or community meetings but felt less able to express opinions there

There was no difference between minority and majority interviewees as to their knowledge of or willingness to use complaint mechanisms

No majority households were paying part of their essential supplies for anything other than rent. Minority households in one area were significantly more likely to be doing so (7%).

# Conclusion

Overall, our results suggest that Swiss IPs are paying increased attention to minorities in their work in Somalia which is contributing to a reduction in the level of exclusion. IP teams appear to be more aware of the importance of tackling minority exclusion, and their reach to minorities is improving. However, minorities continue to pass on more of their humanitarian support, designed to be just sufficient to meet their essential needs, to gatekeepers.

IP teams still found it difficult to identify ethnic minorities by household and did so primarily by identifying whole settlements where ethnic minorities are known to live. This may not be a perfect solution but is an adequate work around, provided that ethnic minorities tend to live together in dedicated settlements and not intermixed with majority households. IPs continue to self-censor and avoid asking

direct questions regarding clan identity due to perceived sensitivity, i.e. not asking households to self-identify, and opting out of holding ethnic minority-only events. The risks of both seem to us to be overrated, based on our and others' experience of doing so without any issues.

The results suggest that attention paid to the provision of feedback mechanisms has improved minority communities' knowledge of, trust in and willingness to use them, at least for these IPs.

While many of these findings appear positive and reflect a clearly demonstrated commitment, there is nevertheless still room for improvement in the practice of SDC as well as that of Swiss IPs to guarantee that ethnic minority inclusion is delivered in a systematic and data driven manner.

# Recommendations

## Recommendations for all donors (and other actors) operating in Somalia

- Donors and agencies should find ways to clearly signal the way in which the term 'minority' is being used in discussions with IPs, e.g. 'clan minority', 'ethnic minority' or 'minority (as in the 0.5 in the 4.5 formula)'.
  - Donors and agencies should consider developing explicit guidance for IPs and staff in writing concerning their expectations and minimum guarantees concerning minority inclusion in programmes. This guidance should allow sufficient flexibility for IPs to take into account local contexts and sensitivities but should nonetheless clarify minimum standards of inclusion in practice as well as of monitoring and reporting on minority inclusion.
  - Donors should ensure that project proposals explicitly set out how ethnic minority inclusion will be achieved, how this will be tracked and what evidence of its success (or not) will be supplied. Minority (and other) inclusion should be mainstreamed in all aspects of project proposals and not relegated to one section. This should include mandatory text on all three disadvantage factors (gender, disability and ethnic minority). It should be mandatory that clear text on all three factors appears in project results matrices as well as narrative or descriptive passages.
  - Donors and agencies should ensure that third party monitoring and external evaluation TORs require explicit attention to ethnic minority identity and other inclusion/exclusion factors.
- Donors and agencies should sensitively encourage IPs and staff to increasingly test out asking individuals to share their minority or majority clan affiliation and encourage those that do so to share their experiences with others.
  - Donors should continue to ask questions about whether minority participants in meetings feel able to express themselves fully when in mixed groups and consider, as is already the case for women and girls, whether complementary ethnic minority-only conversations should be convened.
  - Donors and agencies should ensure that local teams include (collectively) members who speak and understand all local languages.
  - Donors should continue to question the degree to which it is acceptable for life saving support, such as cash for food, to be passed on to gatekeepers for rent or other services and should seek long term solutions to this.

## Recommendations for Swiss and Swiss IPs operating in Somalia

- The practice of identifying ethnic minorities at the level of community should be accepted but should be systematized so that the number, identity and feedback from such communities can be identified, monitored and reported with confidence. Residence in an ethnic minority settlement can thus be used as a proxy for minority identity in a context where IPs continue to identify objective risks in relation to asking direct questions about minority identity.

# Notes

- 1 Examples include the inclusion of a minority representative on the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) for the first time, a new round of eligibility assessments for the Somalia Humanitarian Fund which resulted in the approval of a second minority-led organization, and very strong attention to minorities in the strategy documents and action plans of most UN entities in Somalia.
- 2 Due to contested claims MRG maintains a list of minority-led organizations it has vetted.
- 3 The full text of the study was not published by the UN, but media reports indicated that levels of post-distribution aid diversion were as high as 30% in some places.
- 4 <https://minorityrights.org/resources/minority-inclusion-learning-review-of-the-ministry-of-foreign-affairs-of-switzerland-programmes-in-the-horn-of-africa/>
- 5 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/GuideMinoritiesDeclarationen.pdf>
- 6 In practice, over time, groups widely considered to be closely aligned with the four powerful clans have been awarded opportunities within the 0.5 quota. The best test currently of whether a group does fall within the 0.5 quota is whether intermarriage with the dominant clans is socially accepted. The groups for which this is not the case can be grouped into three sets: Bantu communities - Mushunguli, Kizigua (riverine farmers, originally based in the southern most regions of the country), Eyle and Awer (both traditionally hunter gatherers); coastal communities resulting from intermarriage of traders and colonizers along the Red Sea coastal strip - Bajans, Bravanese and Benadiris; and three occupational groups that traditionally undertook tasks that the major clan groups considered unclean or defiling, and who were (and still are) treated as low caste members of society - Gabooye, (also known as Mahdiban), Tumul and Yibir.
- 7 Examples include the inclusion of a minority representative on the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) for the first time, a new round of eligibility assessments for the Somalia Humanitarian Fund which resulted in the approval of a second minority-led organization and very strong attention to minorities in the strategy documents and action plans of most UN entities in Somalia.
- 8 A random sample could have risked inadvertently missing out any minority households purely by chance, which would have called the results into question. By starting with areas known to include minorities, if minorities were not included as beneficiaries, this would have been an effect of beneficiary selection.
- 9 There are very limited exceptions to this, for example in coastal urban areas where minorities (Benadiri and Bravans) were traditionally resident, owning land and locally dominant. Majority clan members have forced out many minority households from this valuable real estate, but some have managed to remain.