

The Role of Civil Society Organizations in SDGs Localization in Somalia

KEY POLICY MESSAGES:

1. Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and establishing multi-stakeholder partnerships are of paramount importance for achieving the targets of SDGs.
2. Localisation of SDGs aids the gathering, availability, accessibility and affordability of information and the disaggregation of data “by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in the national and local context” used to streamline SDGs policy formulation, planning, implementation and evaluation.
3. Due to insufficient institutional capacity in Somalia, there is a lack of appropriate and effective mechanisms to facilitate setting local SDGs agenda, development objectives, targets and indicators for SDGs localisation and implementation.
4. Civil society is universal in its existent and reach and is identified with diverse set of roles, characteristics and social objectives. Civil society plays key roles in localising SDGs by mobilising the local community to participate in the planning, implementation and monitoring of SDGs.
5. In Somalia, the role of the civil society in the localisation and implementation of SDGs need to be acknowledged and mainstreamed in the SDG planning, delivery and evaluation mechanisms including in the National Development Plan (NDP).
6. There is still a tendency in Somali government institutions to centralise power, decision making and resources. Civil society organisations can contribute to the localisation of development plans by fostering strong relationship with the local communities, obtaining accurate information to assess their needs and devising local, effective and sustainable interventions.
7. Civil society organisations need human, technical and financial resources to continue the delivery of vital services and to participate in the wider global partnerships to accomplish SDGs.
8. The technical and financial support of Somalia’s international development partners is crucial to build and strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations.
9. Somali Federal and State governments need to engage with civil society organisations as equal partners in national and local implementation and accountability processes and frameworks for SDGs and allow representation of civil society organisations in the high level national development forums.



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INTRODUCTION

Strong CSOs

After more than two decades of civil strife and state failure, Somalia is experiencing the emergence of strong civil society organisations linked by common interests and shared objectives.

NDP & SDGs

The Somalia National Development Plan (NDP 2017 – 2019) adopted the SDGs as its guiding framework for action and mainstreamed the goals in a number of sectors in the plan.

Call for Action

The urgent call of action to implement the SDGs demand the development of strategies and plans to help translate the goals into sustainable, affordable and effective development objectives and measurable outcomes at the national and local levels.

In 2015, the United Nations Member States adopted the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, commonly known as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Goals have been borne out of half a century of global initiatives to address wars, poverty, inequality and injustice. The nexus between the key themes of peace, development, human rights and the environment and the interdependence of nations and people of the world made it imperative for member states to commit to the shared vision of finding sustainable solutions to the challenges and threats to humankind and to the planet.

The emphasis on sustainability and global partnership become leitmotiv of every plan and programme to address these global challenges. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) cover 169 targets ranging from “the eradication of poverty, hunger and malnutrition, access to education, health and justice, ending of all forms of discrimination and achieving gender equality, promoting peaceful and inclusive societies and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels to conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources.”(1)

The urgent call of action to implement the SDGs demand the development of strategies and plans to help translate the goals into sustainable, affordable and effective development objectives and measurable outcomes at the national and local levels. While national governments focus on setting national agenda and establishing global partnerships to achieve SDGs, it is the local authorities, businesses and the civil society that play the most critical roles to localise and implement the SDGs.

In recent years, the civil society has taken the centre stage in the approaches to understand and assess key elements of the pressing socio-economic and development needs in local communities and the efforts to devise sustainable and effective solutions.

After more than two decades of civil strife and state failure, Somalia is experiencing the emergence of strong civil society organisations linked by common interests and shared objectives. This positive development is gaining wide support and is floated as a bastion of community cohesion against a repetition of the social breakdown that was seen when the military regime was ousted. Today civil society organisations deliver vital services to meet societal needs, contribute to the peace and state building efforts and empower communities to participate in the debates and decisions about all sectors of social, political and economic life.

The Somalia National Development Plan (NDP 2017 – 2019) adopted the SDGs as its guiding framework for action and mainstreamed the goals in a number of sectors in the plan. (2) It recognised the importance and relevance of SDGs in Somalia and outlined strategies to encourage partnership between government institutions, the private sector and the civil society. However, it neither featured localisation of the SDGs nor the key roles of the civil society in the achievement of SDGs in any of its sections.

This policy document outlines the crucial role of civil society in the efforts to localise and implement SDGs and provides practical recommendations to promote their active and greater participation in all phases of SDGs.

Box 1. The 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals



Source: UN Roadmap for Localising SDGs

LOCALISATION OF SDGS: ACHIEVING GLOBAL SDGS TARGETS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Localisation refers to the process in which the different segments of the local community get engaged, participate and contribute to social, economic and political debates and decision-making processes to achieve global targets. Localisation promotes the formulation, implementation, process ownership and monitoring strategies of development objectives at the local level. It involves the integration of locally assessed and set goals and priorities in the local and national development plans and ensures the mobilisation of

all stakeholders including the civil society groups to play key roles in awareness raising and advocacy, planning and implementation, sharing of knowledge and experience and monitoring and evaluation.

The UN Roadmap for Localising SDGs gives a powerful rationale for the localisation of SDGs. It describes localisation as “the process of taking into account sub-national contexts in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, from the setting of goals and targets, to determining the

Localisation
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A New Set of Goals

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Monitoring

Localisation promotes the formulation, implementation, process ownership and monitoring strategies of development objectives at the local level.

Streamlining SDGs

Localisation of SDGs aids the gathering, availability, accessibility and affordability of information and the disaggregation of data relevant in the national and local context” used to streamline SDGs policy formulation, planning, implementation and evaluation.

means of implementation and using indicators to measure and monitor progress.” The Roadmap stresses the importance of localisation that, “while SDGs are global, their achievement will depend on our ability to make them a reality in our cities and regions” and that “many of the investments to achieve the sustainable development goals will take place at the sub-national level and be led by local authorities.” (3)

Localisation is commonly understood as the role given to sub-national and local governments to implement a new set of goals either designed nationally by the central government or cooperatively developed with the local authorities. Whilst it is correct to indicate that national and local governments have specific service obligations, statutory duties, goals and targets, they do not necessarily have the exclusive responsibilities for localising and implementing development goals. Civil society and the private sector supplement the work of the public sector by providing public services voluntarily and through local authority service commissioning.

It is recognised that, due to the civic identity, cultural and societal diversity of the nations and people of the world, the successful implementation of development goals could only be realised with the full understanding and assessment of the local needs and expectations and the development of community owned, effective and sustainable local solutions in participatory consultative and decision-making processes. Effective partnerships among national and local governments, civil society, businesses and development partners is of paramount importance for the localisation and successful achievement of SDGs as well as the emergence of more resilient and cohesive local communities and community institutions.

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affordability of information and the disaggregation of data “by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in the national and local context” used to streamline SDGs policy formulation, planning, implementation and evaluation.

SIDRA issued policy recommendations for Localisation of SDGs in Somalia in 2016 and called for “effective institutional mechanisms to define local needs, identify corresponding goals and formulate strategies appropriate to the resource endowment.” (4) It proposed the development of SDGs Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Systems for Somalia and its necessary institutional and legal frameworks.

Establishing effective institutional mechanisms for SDGs require the concerted efforts, policy direction and leadership of national, regional and local governments and the active involvement and participation of all stakeholders such as civil society. SIDRA recommended effective capacity building for government institutions and civil society organisations and the promotion of good governance in public and private sectors of the society.

THE DEVELOPMENT DIMENSIONS OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society is recognised by leaders and policy makers of all sides of the political spectrum, the corporate world, academia, journalists and the general population in variety of definitions and uses. The shortest and most comprehensive description of civil society defines it as “a public space between the state, the market and the ordinary household, in which people can debate and tackle action.” (5)

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A Public Space

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Development Projects

The important role of civil society organisations in the localisation and successful implementation of development projects is increasingly recognised and supported.

Raising Awareness

Civil society, referred to as “forms of public communication”, plays a vital role in raising awareness about social, economic, and political issues as diverse as peace and reconciliation, education, health, human rights

not-for-profit organisations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations.” (6) Civil society, civil society groups and civil society organisations are used interchangeably in this policy brief.

Civil society is universal in its existence and reach and is identified with diverse set of roles, characteristics and social objectives that do not only distinguish them from public and private sectors, but which confer them a deferential place in the society. They are hailed as, inter alia, positive forces of social change and progress, forums of social deliberation, advocates of social justice, democracy and individual freedoms, voices for the poor and the disadvantaged and sometimes viable alternatives of the State and market driven initiatives to improve standards of living. (7) Civil society includes diverse range of groups and organisations such as youth and women groups, non-profit service providers, faith-based organisations, charities and non-governmental organisations, indigenous groups, advocacy groups and human rights campaigners, victim support groups and foundations.

Civil society is at forefront in the efforts to promote and protect human rights and individuals’ freedoms and lay a legitimate path for social movement that demands collective social responsibility, greater accountability and transparency and citizen’s rights to share power and resources.

The important role of civil society organisations in the localisation and successful implementation of development projects is increasingly recognised and supported. They are, as catalysts of change, best placed to support local communities to contribute to local initiatives and plans to translate the global SDGs into achievable objectives.

Civil society can, using innovative and dynamic localisation tools, contribute to the successful localisation and implementation of SDG through awareness raising and advocacy, participation in the planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN LOCALISATION OF SDGS

Civil society can, using innovative and dynamic localisation tools, contribute to the successful localisation and implementation of SDG through awareness raising and advocacy, participation in the planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Awareness raising and advocacy

Civil society, referred to as “forms of public communication”, plays a vital role in raising awareness about social, economic, and political issues as diverse as peace and reconciliation, education, health, human rights

and the right for access to justice to environmental degradation.(8) It occupies a very privileged position in the community to advocate and articulate local community needs and expectations, ensuring that local community perspectives are mainstreamed in national and regional SDGs planning, monitoring and reporting.

Civil society organisations provide information and education on wide variety of issues using divergent communication and dissemination channels such as community gatherings, debates, outreach awareness

Information & Education

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Community Knowledge

Civil society organisations contribute significantly to the localisation of SDGs by increasing local community knowledge and understanding about the importance and relevance of SDGs as well as the development objectives and targets.

Enabling Conditions

Enhanced civic capacity, as one of the key determinants of inclusive participatory processes, can contribute to the creation of enabling conditions for localising SDGs. Civil society organisations can take part in planning and policy formulations processes.

campaigns, radio, television and person to person verbal exchange of information. This awareness raising expands the citizen's participation and contribution to the debates and decision-making processes in the society.

Civil society organisations contribute significantly to the localisation of SDGs by increasing local community knowledge and understanding about the importance and relevance of SDGs as well as the development objectives and targets. They educate and train local communities to express their views, beliefs, concerns and alternative approaches, promote their rights and responsibilities and build public consensus and local ownership of the SDGs by resisting any top down approach of planning and implementation.

Civil society organisations speak on behalf of the local communities and prepare policy proposals and representations to influence the national and local policy making processes. They advocate for greater accountability and transparency by encouraging local communities to hold public bodies to account, organising public gatherings, forums and meetings.

Planning and Implementation of SDGs

In Somalia, civil society organisations have filled the vacuum of community organisation and service provision left by the collapse of the Somali State and plays an important role in providing vital services such as information and education, health, water and sanitation, disaster management, research and development and assistance to refugees and internally displaced people.

Enhanced civic capacity, as one of the key determinants of inclusive participatory processes, can contribute to the creation of enabling conditions for localising SDGs. Civil society organisations can take part in planning and policy formulations processes. Localisation of SDGs supports the principle of active participation of civil society in the process of setting local SDGs agenda and defining SDGs development plans, strategies and actions. Civil society participation in the planning and implementation of the SDGs improves accountability and transparency, information sharing and participatory decision making.

Whilst civil society organisations differ in their mission, size and activities, they take similar approaches to provide interventions and solutions to local problems and aim to bring about positive change and outcomes. Strengthening their capacity and governance structures improves community participation in the needs assessment, identification and planning of intervention priorities for SDGs

It is important to accommodate the participation of civil society organisations in the institutional planning processes of SDGs whether it is the inclusion of members of the civil society in the national and regional planning committees or engaging them in planning consultative forums. Civil society organisations must be accepted as equal partners in global, national and local frameworks to achieve SDGs and their perspectives accepted as the genuine reflection of the local population.

There are a number of ways civil society can contribute to the planning and implementation of the SDGs.

Community Needs

It is difficult to set priorities and plan interventions without the necessary knowledge and information about the local community. Civil society organisations can provide such vital information and data about the local community and their needs.

Data Collection

Localisation of SDGs calls for “the establishment of data collection systems at local and regional level” to gather, analyse and disseminate statistics and other socio-economic information.

SDGs Implementation

Civil society shares a responsibility in the monitoring and evaluation of SDGs implementation. Civil society, either working alone or with other stakeholders, can employ variety of monitoring and evaluation tools.

1. It is difficult to set priorities and plan interventions without the necessary knowledge and information about the local community. Civil society organisations can provide such vital information and data about the local community and their needs.
2. Civil society can bring rich and diverse knowledge and experiences to the planning process and at the same time provide legitimacy and high level of success to the implementation of the SDGs.
3. Civil society organisations deliver essential services such as education and health care services for local communities. They can support the localisation of SDGs by making these services available and accessible.
4. Civil society can contribute to the localisation of the Somali National Development Plan by engaging with local communities in the consultative, decision making, evaluation and validation processes.
5. Civil society can facilitate coherent multi-sectoral approach to planning and implementing SDGs by establishing multi-stakeholder partnerships and networks.

Monitoring and Evaluation of SDGs implementation progress

Localisation of SDGs entails the development of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) legal, organisational, policy and procedural framework that links across different institutional levels and stakeholder groups. Civil society encompasses wide range of stakeholders in the local community and its participation in the monitoring and evaluation of SDGs development objectives and strategies is very critical for ensuring that different ideas, perspectives and local community experiences are considered in setting consistent measure of change and improving oversight effectiveness and accountability.

Civil society groups can participate in the design of M&E processes and tools such as data collection, analysis and reporting, impact assessments exercises, stakeholder feedback processes and outcome indicators. Hence, civil society must be represented in all M&E mechanisms from M&E teams to validation and reporting processes.

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SDGs implementation. Civil society, either working alone or with other stakeholders, can employ variety of monitoring and evaluation tools such as observations, surveys, case studies, personal stories, focus groups and evaluation studies to measure progress and development outcomes. They can mobilise the local community to evaluate the outcome of SDGs development objectives and provide feedback.

Localisation of SDGs calls for “the establishment of data collection systems at local and regional level” to gather, analyse and disseminate statistics and other socio-economic information. Civil society organisations have access to the community and can employ wide range of community entry processes to gather information, learn and assess local community needs and plan specific interventions. They can help data disaggregation and analysis to address inequality and measure outcomes. They can use public feedback to assist in the oversight of the quality and accessibility of the publicly and privately provided services.

CONCLUSION

Stakeholders

The call of action for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2030 requires the concerted efforts of all the stakeholders, including civil society organisations, to work together and raise awareness about the importance and relevance of SDGs.

Services

Civil society organisations deliver vital services to meet societal needs and empower local communities

Evaluation

There is an urgent need to establish multi-stakeholder planning, localisation, implementation and evaluation mechanisms for SDGs.

National Development

Civil society organisations need to be represented in high level national development forums and National Development Plan committees.

The call of action for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2030 requires the concerted efforts of all the stakeholders, including civil society organisations, to work together and raise awareness about the importance and relevance of SDGs, to share knowledge and experience and adopt multisectoral approach to planning and implementation. There is a strong need to establish partnerships across multiple global, national and local stakeholders to realise SDGs development objectives.

Localisation of SDGs involves the development of mechanisms, tools, legal and organisational frameworks to translate the SDGs agenda into results and outcomes and the development and application of participatory planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation systems at the local level.

Civil society organisations deliver vital services to meet societal needs and empower local communities through awareness raising and advocacy, enabling them to participate and contribute to debates and decision-making process on SDGs. Civil society organisations can contribute to localising SDGs through awareness raising and advocacy and mobilising the local community to participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of SDGs activities.

Somali civil society organisations require technical and financial support to strengthen and transform their human, technological and institutional capacity in order to play greater role in the effective localisation and implementation of SDGs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Civil society organisation must create opportunities, spaces and platforms for engaging with local communities in order to strengthen community awareness, develop strong relationship, promote genuine dialogue and encourage policy commitment and ownership for SDGs.
2. There is an urgent need to establish multi-stakeholder planning, localisation, implementation and evaluation mechanisms for SDGs. The inclusion of the goals in Somali National Development Plan is not sufficient to remove the need for localisation of SDGs and cannot bring about the fundamental socio-economic and environmental shift needed to work towards achieving SDGs.
3. Civil society organisations must develop adequate capacity and resources to continue their pivotal role in society to deliver services effectively. Somalia international development partners must provide timely technical and financial assistance to civil society organisations in order to build and strengthen their capacity.
4. Civil society organisations need to establish strong network and partnership among themselves and with other stakeholders and collaborate to identify interventions that could make significant difference to the local community.
5. Civil society organisations need to be represented in high level national development forums and National Development Plan commit.

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About SIDRA

SIDRA is a registered independent, **non-profit** Research and Policy Analysis Think Tank based in Garowe, Puntland, Somalia.

Our Vision

Somalia in which social justice prevails and inclusive economic growth benefits all and improves the well being of all people.

Our Mission

A centre of development and research that generates relevant and original knowledge for dynamic policy environment support, institutional capacity development and alliance.

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