



SIDRA
INSTITUTE

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FORWARD	3
RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION	5
IN NUMBERS	7
THE YEAR IN PUBLICATIONS	8
THE YEAR IN PROJECTS	13
THE YEAR IN PARTNERS	16
PARTICIPATION IN EXTERNAL EVENTS	17



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FORWARD

I am pleased to present the SIDRA Annual Report 2025, which highlights the Institute's work and achievements during the year. The report reflects our continued efforts in research, policy analysis, programme implementation, and engagement with partners and stakeholders across Somalia.

The year 2025 was also an important milestone for SIDRA as the Institute marked ten years since its establishment in 2015. This milestone provided an opportunity to reflect on the progress made over the past decade and the role SIDRA has played in producing research, informing policy discussions, and supporting development initiatives in Somalia.

Over the past decade, SIDRA has continued to expand its portfolio of research and development work, both in terms of thematic areas and partnerships. Each year, the Institute has welcomed new partners and taken on new areas of work, reflecting the growing confidence in SIDRA's research capacity, technical expertise and ability to deliver quality assignments. 2025 was no exception, with new partnerships and engagements, including our work with the World Bank, alongside continued collaboration with existing partners.

During the year, SIDRA implemented research and development programmes addressing a range of issues affecting Somalia. Our work covered areas including governance, peace and security, social and economic development, gender, health, education and institutional development. We also continued to provide research and technical support to government institutions, development partners and other stakeholders.

At the same time, 2025 presented a number of challenges for SIDRA and the wider development sector. Changes in donor priorities, reduced and uncertain development funding, increased competition for available opportunities, and shorter project cycles affected the operating environment for research and development organisations. We also faced practical challenges related to data availability, fieldwork, programme implementation and maintaining adequate institutional capacity.

These challenges required SIDRA to be more careful in how we manage our resources, plan our programmes and pursue new opportunities. They have also reinforced the importance of maintaining strong internal systems, ensuring quality in our research and programme delivery, and keeping our work relevant to Somalia's changing needs.

Looking ahead, SIDRA will focus on consolidating the progress made over the past ten years while strengthening the Institute for the years ahead. Our priorities include improving the quality and relevance of our research, increasing the use of evidence in policy and decision-making, strengthening existing partnerships, developing new partnerships, diversifying funding sources, and investing further in our institutional and technical capacity. The need for credible local research and evidence remains significant. SIDRA will continue to contribute by producing independent and relevant research, supporting informed policy dialogue, and working with government, development partners, academic institutions and other stakeholders to address Somalia's development challenges.

As we mark ten years of SIDRA's work, we are encouraged by the progress made and by the continued growth of our portfolio and partnerships. The addition of new partners such as the World Bank in 2025 is an important indication of the confidence placed in SIDRA's capabilities. We look forward to building on this foundation, strengthening our partnerships and expanding the contribution SIDRA makes to research, policy and development in Somalia.

Salim Said Salim

Executive Director

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

In 2025, SIDRA continued to advance its commitment to generating evidence, knowledge and practical policy solutions that respond to Somalia's evolving development challenges. Guided by its mission to contribute to peace and state-building, poverty reduction, and social and economic transformation, the Institute's research agenda remained grounded in local realities and focused on producing knowledge that could inform policy, practice and public debate. The publications produced during the year reflected SIDRA's three main thematic areas—Good Governance and Rule of Law; Inclusion, Gender and Women's Empowerment; and Socio-economic Development—while also demonstrating the Institute's ability to respond to emerging policy issues of national importance.

One of the strongest features of SIDRA's research agenda in 2025 was its focus on timely policy questions affecting governance and public institutions. Through its policy brief, *Imposing Written Exams for Somalia's Human Rights Commission: What Justifies this Method?*, SIDRA examined legal and procedural concerns surrounding the selection of members of Somalia's Independent National Human Rights Commission. The publication contributed to an important national debate by considering whether recruitment procedures were consistent with the legal and institutional standards required for a credible and independent human rights body. This work reflected SIDRA's continuing interest in the rule of law, accountable institutions and evidence-based public policy.

During the year, SIDRA's research agenda also responded to the changing international aid environment and its implications for Somalia. The policy brief, *The USAID Funding Freeze and Its Implications for Humanitarian Aid in Somalia: A Wake-Up Call for Aid Dependency*, examined the potential consequences of changes in international assistance and highlighted the vulnerability created by heavy dependence on external humanitarian funding. The publication connected an immediate policy development with longer-term questions about aid dependency, national resilience and the need for more sustainable approaches to development financing. This reflected SIDRA's broader socio-economic research priorities, particularly its interest in poverty reduction, resilience and sustainable development.

Education and human development remained another important area of knowledge production in 2025. Through *From Failure to Flourish: Why Traditional Education Fails Short and How Conscious Discipline Can Transform It?*, SIDRA explored challenges within traditional approaches to education and considered alternative ways of improving learning environments and student well-being. The publication reflected the Institute's continuing focus on education and the development of inclusive approaches that respond to the social and emotional realities affecting children's learning. It also demonstrated how research and policy analysis can contribute to practical discussions among educators, policymakers and communities.

Health research featured prominently in SIDRA's publications during the year. The Institute published *Strengthening Somalia's Mental Health Workforce: A Case Study of Puntland*, contributing evidence to discussions on health systems, human resources and access to mental health services. The study reflected SIDRA's growing engagement with health as a development priority and the importance of strengthening local capacity to respond to the needs of communities.

SIDRA's health and inclusion agenda was further reflected in the academic publication, *Upholding the Right to Health in Contexts of Displacement: A Whole-of-Route Policy Analysis in South Africa, Kenya, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo*. The publication examined the barriers that displaced populations face in accessing health services and highlighted the importance of inclusive, rights-based and migration-sensitive health systems. By contributing to a comparative academic study that included Somalia, SIDRA continued to connect locally relevant research with wider regional and international knowledge production.

The Institute also maintained an interest in the relationship between knowledge, innovation and national development. Its research study, *The Impact of a Knowledge-Based Economy on Nation-Rebuilding: A Case Study of Somalia*, explored the role that knowledge, skills and innovation can play in supporting Somalia's reconstruction and long-term development. This work aligned closely with SIDRA's commitment to socio-economic transformation and reinforced the importance of investing in human capital and knowledge systems as foundations for sustainable progress.

As Somalia's digital transformation accelerated, SIDRA also expanded its policy engagement into emerging areas of national concern. The publication *Cybersecurity in Somalia: Current Landscape, Risks, and Opportunities* examined the country's growing exposure to digital threats and the institutional, legal and technical gaps affecting cybersecurity governance. By addressing an emerging policy area with implications for government, business and citizens, the publication demonstrated SIDRA's responsiveness to new development and security challenges and its commitment to identifying practical opportunities for strengthening national resilience.

Taken together, SIDRA's publications in 2025 illustrate a research agenda that was both consistent with the Institute's established thematic priorities and responsive to emerging issues. Governance and the rule of law, education, health, displacement, economic transformation, humanitarian resilience and cybersecurity all featured in the Institute's knowledge production during the year. Rather than treating these issues as separate challenges, SIDRA's work recognized their interconnected nature and the need for policies that are informed by evidence and grounded in the Somali context.

Across all these areas, SIDRA continued to emphasize research that is rigorous, locally informed and relevant to decision-makers and communities. The Institute combined research and policy analysis with knowledge sharing and public engagement, seeking to ensure that findings could contribute beyond academic debate to practical policy discussions and development action. Through policy briefs, research studies, academic publications and public commentary, SIDRA continued to make evidence accessible to policymakers, practitioners, civil society and the wider public.

Overall, the Institute's research priorities and publications in 2025 reflected SIDRA's continued commitment to strengthening knowledge production as a foundation for development. By addressing both long-standing structural challenges and emerging national issues, SIDRA reinforced its role as an independent Somali institution contributing evidence, ideas and practical policy perspectives towards a more inclusive, peaceful and prosperous Somalia.

Ahmed Said

Director of Research

In

NUMBERS

20

Staff

15

Senior Fellows

4

Policy Briefs

2

Research Papers

1

Papers in Academic Journal

3

Partners

22.K

Social Media Followers

30

Media Mentions

www.sidrainstitute.org

18.5K

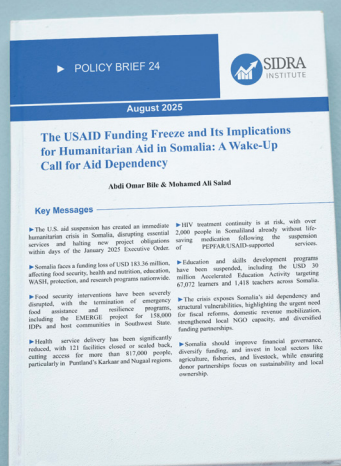
Unique Website Visits

THE YEAR IN PUBLICATIONS

In 2025, SIDRA continued to strengthen its role as a Somali institution for independent research, policy analysis and knowledge production. Building on its expertise across good governance and rule of law, inclusion and women's empowerment, and socio-economic development, the Institute produced a diverse range of policy briefs, research studies and academic publications addressing both long-standing development challenges and emerging issues of national importance.

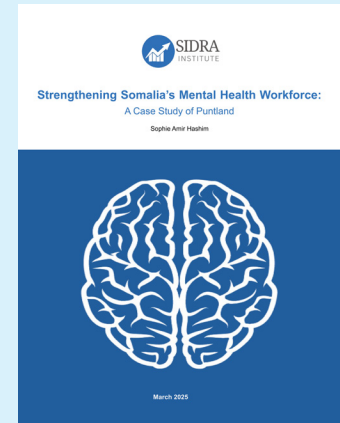
As always, SIDRA's publications are at the heart of its commitment to generating evidence, ideas and practical solutions that can inform policy and contribute to Somalia's development. From timely policy briefs responding to pressing national debates to in-depth research studies examining complex social and economic challenges, our knowledge products seek to connect rigorous research with practical action.

In the pages that follow, we present a selection of SIDRA's key publications from 2025, reflecting the breadth of our research agenda and our continued commitment to producing locally grounded knowledge for a more inclusive, peaceful and prosperous Somalia.



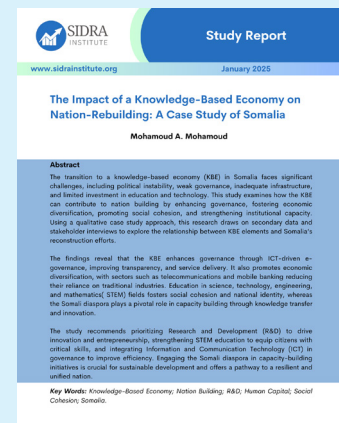
Strengthening Somalia's Mental Health Workforce: A Case Study of Puntland

This qualitative study examined the barriers to developing the mental health workforce in Puntland, Somalia, based on semi-structured interviews with nine mental health professionals. It found that severe infrastructure gaps, limited specialized training opportunities, inadequate funding, government inaction, and widespread stigma continue to hinder the growth of the sector and access to quality mental health services. The study highlights the need for stronger government policies and long-term investment in mental health education, workforce development, and the integration of psychiatric services into the wider healthcare system, alongside public awareness efforts to reduce stigma and improve acceptance of mental health care.



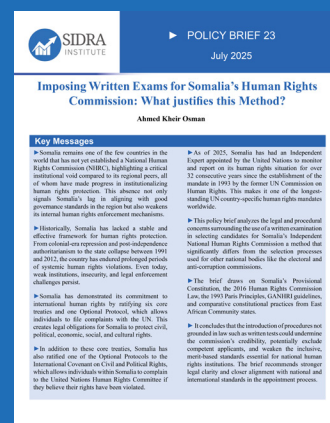
The Impact of a Knowledge-Based Economy on Nation-Rebuilding: A Case Study of Somalia

This study examines how a knowledge-based economy can support nation building in Somalia. It finds that investment in education, technology, innovation, and human skills can improve governance, diversify the economy, strengthen institutions, and support social cohesion, while the Somali diaspora can contribute through knowledge and skills transfer. The study recommends greater investment in research, STEM education, ICT, and diaspora engagement to support Somalia's long-term development.



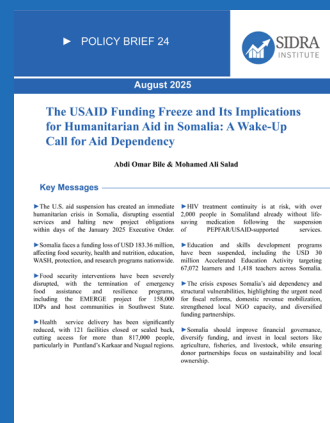
Imposing Written Exams for Somalia's Human Rights Commission: What justifies this Method?

This qualitative study examined the barriers to developing the mental health workforce in Puntland, Somalia, based on semi-structured interviews with nine mental health professionals. It found that severe infrastructure gaps, limited specialized training opportunities, inadequate funding, government inaction, and widespread stigma continue to hinder the growth of the sector and access to quality mental health services. The study highlights the need for stronger government policies and long-term investment in mental health education, workforce development, and the integration of psychiatric services into the wider healthcare system, alongside public awareness efforts to reduce stigma and improve acceptance of mental health care.



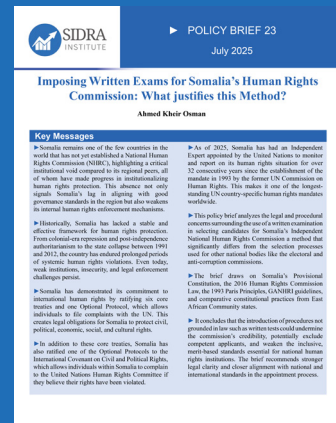
The USAID Funding Freeze and Its Implications for Humanitarian Aid in Somalia: A Wake-Up Call for Aid Dependency

The U.S. foreign aid suspension in January 2025 caused major disruptions to humanitarian and development programs worldwide, with particularly serious consequences for aid-dependent countries such as Somalia. The freeze affected essential services, including healthcare, nutrition, food security, education, and protection, while also causing job losses and uncertainty among NGOs. In response, SIDRA Institute produced this policy brief to highlight the impact of the funding freeze on vulnerable communities, employment, economic development, and Somalia's broader dependence on foreign aid.



From Failure to Flourish: Why Traditional Education Fails Short and How Conscious Discipline Can Transform It?

This policy brief calls for the introduction of Conscious Discipline in Somalia's education system to create safer, more supportive learning environments. It highlights how hunger, trauma, insecurity, and punitive discipline practices affect children's learning and behaviour, and proposes a relationship-based approach that promotes emotional security, self-regulation, and positive connections. The brief recommends integrating the approach into education policy, teacher training, and community engagement to improve learning outcomes and build a more inclusive and resilient education system.



Cybersecurity in Somalia: Current Landscape, Risks, and Opportunities

This policy brief examines Somalia's rapid digital transformation and the growing cybersecurity risks accompanying increased internet connectivity and digital services. While digital technologies are creating new opportunities for economic growth, communication, and access to services, Somalia remains vulnerable to cybercrime due to weak legal frameworks, limited technical infrastructure, shortages of skilled professionals, and the absence of a coordinated national cybersecurity system. The brief assesses the country's emerging cyber threats and current response efforts and provides actionable recommendations to strengthen cybersecurity governance, build national capacity, and enhance Somalia's overall digital resilience.



Upholding the Right to Health in Contexts of Displacement: A Whole-of-Route Policy Analysis in South Africa, Kenya, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo

This policy brief calls for the introduction of Conscious Discipline in Somalia's education system to create safer, more supportive learning environments. It highlights how hunger, trauma, insecurity, and punitive discipline practices affect children's learning and behaviour, and proposes a relationship-based approach that promotes emotional security, self-regulation, and positive connections. The brief recommends integrating the approach into education policy, teacher training, and community engagement to improve learning outcomes and build a more inclusive and resilient education system.



THE YEAR IN PROJECTS

Despite a decline in development funding for Somalia in 2025, as donors reduced their financial commitments, SIDRA continued to implement a diverse portfolio of projects for both government and non-governmental organizations. These included multi-year programmes as well as shorter-term assignments implemented over several months, demonstrating the Institute's ability to adapt to changing funding conditions while continuing to deliver development interventions.

Through its project implementation work, SIDRA provides its partners with clear and practical frameworks for the effective use of human, material and financial resources. The Institute also supports partners in tracking and documenting progress and achievements through measurable indicators, ensuring that project implementation remains focused on results, accountability and learning.

SIDRA places particular emphasis on documenting lessons learned and best practices from the programmes it implements for clients and partners. These experiences help inform future programming and strengthen the effectiveness of ongoing interventions. The Institute uses a range of approaches, methodologies and tools throughout the project cycle, including project and programme design, implementation, monitoring and results follow-up.

Despite the challenging funding environment, SIDRA's continued project implementation in 2025 reflected the importance of flexible, locally rooted institutions in sustaining development activities and responding to evolving priorities. The following section highlights two of SIDRA's most significant project implementation initiatives during the year.



HEALTH ALLIANCE FOR DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT AND ACTION (HADDA)

In 2025, SIDRA continued its contribution to the Health Alliance for Digital Development and Action (HADDA) programme, a multi-year health system strengthening initiative implemented in collaboration with SPIDER, the Federal and State Ministries of Health, and other partners. The programme aims to strengthen the capacity of healthcare workers and decision-makers to use digital tools and health information to improve the planning, management and delivery of quality, accessible and equitable healthcare in Somalia. The programme is implemented across Banaadir, Galmudug and Puntland.

SIDRA played a central role in leading the programme's Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) and research components. Through systematic data collection, analysis and continuous learning, SIDRA supported the programme in tracking progress, identifying implementation challenges and generating evidence to inform timely decision-making and adaptation. This approach ensured that monitoring went beyond measuring activities and results, contributing directly to improved programme implementation and learning.

A key area of progress during the programme was the strengthening of governance and coordination mechanisms for Somalia's health information system. SIDRA contributed to technical coordination structures that brought together government institutions, development partners and implementing organizations to support alignment and oversight of digital health initiatives. These mechanisms helped promote coordination, reduce duplication and support the harmonization of health information management efforts across the country.

The programme also supported Somalia's transition towards more effective digital health systems through the development and rollout of the RAAD Electronic Health Record (EHR) system. SIDRA's research and assessment work contributed to the programme's learning and scale-up process, including an end-user assessment that examined the system's usability, acceptability and readiness for wider implementation. By 2025, more than 80 healthcare facilities had adopted the RAAD EHR system, with its reach expanding beyond the initial programme areas.

Through its involvement in HADDA, SIDRA continued to demonstrate the value of locally led research, monitoring and learning in strengthening development programmes. The Institute's contribution helped ensure that evidence and lessons from implementation informed programme decisions, while supporting broader efforts



INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE CONSULTANCY FOR NIRA

In 2025, SIDRA Institute, in partnership with Laasfort Consultancy, supported the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) through an institutional development and governance consultancy funded by the World Bank under the Somalia Capacity Advancement, Livelihood and Entrepreneurship through Digital Uplift Project (SCALED-UP). The assignment focused on strengthening NIRA's institutional, operational and governance capacity and supporting the Authority to establish stronger systems, clearer procedures and more effective mechanisms for delivering its mandate.

The assignment began with a comprehensive assessment of NIRA's institutional and governance framework, combining document review, stakeholder consultations, field observations, process mapping and data analysis. The assessment examined how the Authority's legal and policy frameworks were translated into practice and identified gaps affecting procedures, coordination, organizational structure, data management and institutional performance. Consultations with NIRA staff and external stakeholders, visits to registration centres and observation of mobile registration operations provided practical insight into the Authority's operational environment.

Based on the assessment findings, SIDRA and Laasfort supported the development of a package of institutional reform instruments. These included a review of NIRA's organizational structure, with recommendations to clarify responsibilities, reporting lines, coordination and staffing; the development and revision of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to promote consistent, legally grounded and data-protection-compliant practices; and the development of a Board Charter to strengthen governance, oversight and accountability. A Service Charter was also developed to define service standards, institutional and citizen responsibilities, timelines, feedback mechanisms and accountability commitments.

The assignment further strengthened NIRA's Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) framework, with recommendations to improve performance tracking, reporting, evidence-based decision-making and organizational learning. SIDRA and Laasfort also provided MEAL training and developed a phased reform implementation roadmap to guide the sequencing of institutional improvements. Together, these outputs provided NIRA with practical tools to strengthen internal coordination, service delivery, accountability, data protection and organizational performance.

The engagement strengthened SIDRA's role as a technical partner in Somalia's public-sector institutional reform. It demonstrated SIDRA's capacity to combine research, institutional assessment and practical policy support to help public institutions translate evidence and analysis into workable systems and reforms. It also contributed to SIDRA's growing portfolio of partnerships with national institutions and international development partners working to strengthen governance and institutional capacity in Somalia.

THE YEAR IN PARTNERS



PARTICIPATION IN EXTERNAL EVENTS

Senior management, SIDRA researchers, and staff participated in various externally organized events held by our partners in Somalia and abroad. These events covered a range of topics and provided opportunities for knowledge sharing, networking, and strengthening collaboration. Below are some of the key events in which SIDRA's senior management, researchers, and staff participated in 2025.



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Garowe, Puntland, Somalia

