UPSHIFT Innovative Programme for Young People and Adolescents-Somalia

Programme Assessment – Final Report

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UPSHIFT Innovative Programme for Young People and Adolescents-Somalia

Programme Assessment – Final Report

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Acknowledgment

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ABBREVIATION

Abbreviation	Full Name
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
CCWTL	Children in Conflict with the Law
CP	Child Protection
FCDO	Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office
FGDS	Focused Group Discussions
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IDPS	Internally Displaced Persons
IPS	Implementing Partners
KII	Key Informant Interviews
KIIS	Key Informant Interviews
MAWDAFA	Ministry of Women Affairs and Family Development
MESAF	Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family
MOJCRAR	Ministry of Justice, Constitution, Religious Affairs, and Rehabilitation
MOLYS	Ministry of Labor and Youth Services
MOU	Memoranda of understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RA	Research Assistant
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UK	United Kingdoms
UNICEF	United Nations Fund for Children
WAAPO	Women's Action Advocacy Progress Organisation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This final report summarises the main findings of the effectiveness and efficiency assessment of the UPSHIFT Innovation Programme, which aims to empower up to 500 young people in Somalia to identify and design solutions to challenges that their communities face and provide youth with alternatives to risky behaviour including crime, recruitment into armed groups, and migration. The assessment sampled 121 (26%) young beneficiaries out of 472 total programme beneficiaries, ensuring a representative sample with significant participation of females (62.8%). The survey and qualitative interviews offer in-depth insights into the programme's outcomes, design, and implementation processes.

To ensure a thorough understanding of the program's implementation across the country, the assessment covered all seven districts where the program was implemented across Somaliland and Puntland, including both urban and semi-urban areas. These districts were: Hargeisa, Borama, Burao, and Gebiley in Somaliland and Garowe, Qardho, and Bossaaso in Puntland.

UPSHIFT Programme Implemented Districts:
Red Dots Mark Survey Locations and Geospatial Points
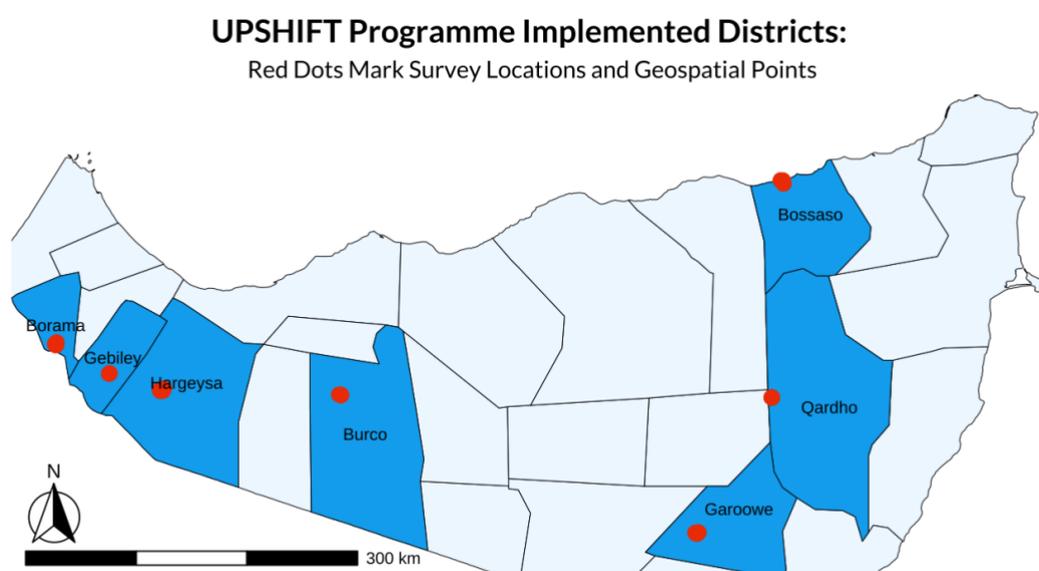
Key Findings

1. The Programme effectively targeted its intended demographic, with higher representation of female beneficiaries (62.8%). The majority of respondents were young people aged between 19-26 (81%) followed by adolescents under 19 years (14.9%) and smaller proportion of older youth participants that were above 27 years at the time of data collection.

2. Educational attainment varied, with 39% having completed university studies, predominantly males. Over 81% of respondents were single, and over 70% did not have primary household responsibilities. However, 64% of those with responsibilities were young and adolescent girls actively contributing to their families.

3. The UPSHIFT Programme's inclusive design and outreach strategies, including partnerships with local NGOs and government agencies, facilitated the enrolment of 472 young beneficiaries, exceeding gender targets with 62.3% female participants.

4. Vocational training in Puntland, supported by experienced trainers and digital job fairs, resulted in successful employment outcomes. The six-month training duration in

Puntland was a significant success factor, allowing for comprehensive skill acquisition and effective trainee engagement. This underscores the importance of a well-structured and sufficiently lengthy training period for maximising impact.

5. The Somaliland life and vocational skills training program offered a wide range of courses, including both traditional skills like tailoring and cooking, and modern skills like computer programming and coding; social media marketing; and graphic design, reflecting the diverse economic landscape and participant preferences.

6. The entrepreneurship component was highly relevant, enrolling 236 young people and adolescents out of the targeted 500 across two regions, with 63.3% being female. This component provided comprehensive boot camp training, equipping participants with essential entrepreneurial skills, such as financial management and marketing, enabling them to address local social challenges effectively.

7. The entrepreneurship program component has demonstrated remarkable success in fostering entrepreneurial growth of beneficiaries, with 83% of its incubated businesses remaining operational. Women-led ventures within the program exhibit higher profitability, generating 41 cents in profit for every dollar of revenue, compared to 18 cents for their male counterparts, and have a slightly higher survival rate of 84% compared to 81% for their male counterparts

8. The Programme's adaptability to changing political environments was evident in Puntland, where Horn Vision facilitated boot camps during the election period. This ensured continuous support for youth participants despite external challenges, with 29.9% securing employment or internships immediately after graduation.

9. A majority (over 50%) of participants reported financial improvements following the program, indicating its potential impact on livelihoods. However, significant regional disparities emerged, with Somaliland participants experiencing slightly higher financial gains (54.8%) than Puntland participants (47.2%). This discrepancy was partly attributed to Puntland's later start of its UPSHIFT life skills component. Additionally, a notable gender disparity in employment outcomes, with females accounting for only 30% of those who secured jobs, underscores the need for targeted support for female participants to maximize the program's benefits.

10. The life skills component of the program effectively equipped and prepared participants for employment or self-employment, with a vast majority (95.5%) acknowledging its benefits. While immediate employment or internship rates were promising at 29.9%, the short timeframe between graduation and data collection suggests the potential for even higher rates over time. However, a significant gender disparity in employment outcomes emerged, with male participants having significantly higher employment or internship rates (60.9%) than female participants (13.6%).

11. The gender disparity observed among life skills beneficiaries' employability highlights the pervasive gender inequality in Somalia, where the country is ranked 164 out of 166 countries in the gender equality index, and only 22% of all females older than 15 years actively participate in the labour force[1].

12. While most respondents found the $2,000 seed funding sufficient, stakeholders indicated it needed to be more generally adequate for local start-up needs due to high

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[1] https://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2023-24_HDR/HDR23-24_Statistical_Annex_GII_Table.xlsx

living costs. Some participants had to supplement the funding with additional family resources.

13. A significant portion (64%) of the seed funding was allocated towards essential operational expenses, such as inventory, supplies, and rent, demonstrating prudent use of resources to sustain business operations.

Key Recommendations
- To reduce gender disparities in in life skills component beneficiaries' employment outcomes, consider addressing structural barriers and providing job search assistance and specialised training tailored to the needs of female participants.
- Consider increasing the seed funding amount to match local economic conditions and living costs better, ensuring the sustainability of start-ups.
- Implement continuous monitoring to track the programme's long-term impact and identify areas for further improvement, especially in regions with lower immediate employment outcomes.
- To strengthen local ownership and facilitate knowledge sharing, consider establishing a central hub for partners, including private and public institutions relevant to youth empowerment.
- Expand partnerships with the private sector, academia, and international organisations to gain insights and address systemic barriers.
- Strengthen outreach to marginalised groups, especially in Somaliland, and extend collaboration with local governments to facilitate business incubation and ensure programme sustainability.
- Expand the use of digital platforms for job fairs and market connections to facilitate better employment outcomes and market integration for trainees.
- Ensure training programmes are sufficiently long to maximise skill acquisition and preparedness for employment or self-employment.
- Connect participants with potential employers and mentors to facilitate job opportunities. Organise pitching and networking events to create market access.
- Optimise seed funding to facilitate access to additional funding sources such as microfinance. Consider utilising shared workspaces or incubators to reduce rental expenses and encourage collaboration.
- Monitoring and evaluation are necessary to track long-term impacts, particularly in regions with lower immediate employment outcomes. This will help understand the Programme's sustained effects and inform future interventions.

Finally, the assessment emphasises how the UPSHIFT Programme has effectively empowered young people in Somaliland and Puntland through skill development, entrepreneurship, and employment support. Despite some challenges, the Programme's inclusive design, strategic partnerships, and comprehensive training approaches have significantly impacted participants' lives. Implementing the recommended strategies can further enhance the Programme's effectiveness and ensure sustained positive outcomes for the youth in Somalia.

DAN & DEEGAAN SHOP

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the final assessment of the UPSHIFT Innovation Programme's design and operational processes, focusing on its relevance to Somalia's context and alignment with key national development strategies. The assessment aimed to evaluate various aspects, including the program's responsiveness to the priorities of its beneficiaries, the internal coherence of its Theory of Change (ToC) with UNICEF's strategic approach to child protection in Somalia, and the synergies with other interventions. The findings are intended to help UNICEF and its partners improve the delivery of future UPSHIFT Innovation versions.

Various sources of evidence and insights were used to evaluate the cost-effectiveness and operational efficiency of the programme's delivery processes. This included programme documentation such as financial reports, partnership agreements, and memoranda of understanding (MoUs). Interviews with key stakeholders, including UNICEF staff, implementing partners (IPs), and government representatives, provided further insights into the effectiveness of these partnerships in leveraging resources and minimising duplication of efforts.

The review also explored outreach plans, selection criteria, and beneficiary databases to understand the strategies for targeting and recruiting beneficiaries. This analysis aimed to determine how these aspects contributed to the recruitment process's efficiency and effectiveness and identify any challenges or best practices in engaging the intended population. Data for this analysis were collected through interviews with programme staff and beneficiaries.

Furthermore, the assessment considered how the programme aligns with and complements other relevant UNICEF initiatives and Somalia's national development strategies and policies. Feedback from programme beneficiaries was gathered to understand their experiences with the programme delivery process, the effectiveness of the selection process in targeting marginalised populations, and to identify successful aspects of the programme and areas needing improvement.

The findings of the assessment are presented in four main areas as per the Terms of Reference (ToR):

- Design and Operational Process: This section evaluates the relevance of the programme's design to the Somali context and its alignment with national development strategies. It also assesses the coherence of the program's Theory of Change with UNICEF's strategic approach and the synergies with other interventions.
- Quality of Programme Implementation: This part examines the efficiency and effectiveness of the program's implementation, including resource utilisation, partnership cost-effectiveness, and the strategies for targeting and recruiting beneficiaries.
- Results at the Beneficiary Level: This section presents the program's outcomes from the beneficiaries' perspective, highlighting their experiences and the program's impact on their lives.

- Existing Opportunities and Measures to Sustain Gains and Key Lessons Learned: This final section identifies opportunities to sustain the program's gains and shares lessons learned from its implementation, providing recommendations for future improvements.

1.1. Programme Context

Somalia has faced over 30 years of insecurity and has ongoing conflict with non-state armed actors. This has created a poverty trap with nearly half of the population living in extreme poverty and with less than $1 per day[2] and impacted the economic development in large parts of the country, including some areas of Puntland and Somaliland that still lack stable governance and security despite recent progress.[3] High rates of poverty and unemployment plague the country, especially among youth populations, with youth unemployment estimated at around 70%[4]. Somalia's economy relies heavily on livestock, remittances, and international assistance, with 43.4% and 20% of GDP based on livestock and remittances from abroad, respectively[5]. Innovation, technology, and other contemporary business sectors are all lagging behind and have marginal contributions to the GDP.

The challenging economic and security environment has created significant protection concerns for Somali adolescents and youth. High rates of migration both internally and outside of Somalia due to few opportunities expose youth to risks of trafficking, exploitation, and abuse. Approximately 10% of Somali girls are married before the age of 18[6], and the practice of female genital mutilation remains widespread[7]. Forced recruitment of children by al-Shabaab and other armed groups also continues to be a systemic issue where legal and justice systems often lack the training and resources to support youth in conflict with the law for successful alternative solutions and reintegration with society, limiting their prosperity[8].

Marginalised minority groups face additional discrimination and barriers to education and employment opportunities. Displaced populations concentrated in urban areas grapple with high rates of poverty and minimal economic opportunities. Young women, especially those from minority clans, have much less access to resources and support programs compared to their male counterparts. Environmental factors like recurrent droughts, floods, and desertification exacerbated by climate change also contribute to economic instability and displacement in many communities for young entrepreneurs to access bank loans. Financial

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[2] Bach, Jean-Nicolas. *Routledge Handbook of the Horn of Africa*. Routledge, 2022. http://books.google.ie/books?id=K2JkEAAAQBAJ&pg=PA301&dq=Somalia:+an+overview+of+poverty,+vulnerability+and+financing&hl=&cd=1&source=gbs_api.

[3] Global Conflict Tracker. "Conflict With Al-Shabaab in Somalia | Global Conflict Tracker," n.d. https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/al-shabab-somalia.

[4] https://heritageinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Final-Final-Youth-Unemployment-Report-April-10-English-Version.pdf. Published April 10, 2022. Accessed March 6, 2024.

[5] MoPIED. "Somali National Development Plan 9-2020-2024." *Ministry of Planning*, 5 Jan. 2020, mop.gov.so/somali-national-development-plan-9-2020-2024.

[6] Somali Adolescents and Youth: Boom or Gloom?" UNFPA Somalia, 17 Dec. 2019, *https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Youth%20Report.pdf*

[7] United Nations Children's Fund, and Geeta Rao Gupta. "Female genital mutilation/cutting: a statistical overview and exploration of the dynamics of change." *Reproductive Health Matters* (2013): 184-190.

[8] Regilme, S. S. J. F., & Spoldi, E. (2021, March 16). Children in Armed Conflict: A Human Rights Crisis in Somalia. Global Jurist. https://doi.org/10.1515/gj-2020-0083

literacy education is also extremely low, further hindering business development among youth populations.

Launched in 2018, the UPSHIFT Innovative Livelihoods Programme, a collaboration between UNICEF and the Spanish organisation DOT, aims to empower young individuals, particularly those from marginalised groups such as minority and rural communities, persons with disabilities, out-of-school youth, return migrants, survivors of gender-based violence, and youth in conflict with the law. As part of UNICEF's 2021-2025 Country Programme, the Programme endeavours to make Somalia safer by encouraging adolescents to become change agents. The initiative, which has benefitted from partnerships with the Basque Government and funding from the UK's FCDO and Denmark's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, concluded its pilot phase in December 2020, positively impacting 441 participants through a process that included submitting business ideas, attending innovation boot camps, grouping by social issues, and competing for awards on Youth Challenge Day.

1.2. Programme Objectives

Building upon the successful impact and feedback of UPSHIFT's innovative Livelihoods Programme pilot phase concluded in December 2020, the UPSHIFT Programme extended support to 650 underprivileged young people and adolescents in Somalia, approximately (60% girls and 40% boys) in vulnerable situations, with special emphasis on young survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and young people in conflict with the law to identify and design solutions to challenges that their communities face and provide youth with alternatives to crime, recruitment into armed groups and migration. The following two specific objectives guide the programme implementation:

- To empower youth (and marginalised groups) to understand community challenges and design and build impactful solutions through products or services.

- To foster further entrepreneurial culture and self-employment for adolescents and youth by providing the skills required for establishing their social enterprises.

1.3. Assessment Objectives, Purpose, and Scope

Scope and Purpose

The primary goal of this assessment was to comprehensively examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the UPSHIFT Programme in achieving its intended outcomes and impact on the targeted adolescents and youth in specific areas. The assessment aimed to investigate the program's delivery strategies, implementation quality, and the immediate changes experienced by the beneficiaries. It also aimed to identify the program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges encountered during the implementation process and any external factors that may have influenced achieving objectives and delivering outputs. The assessment utilised various methods, including interviews with Programme stakeholders, surveys for the beneficiaries, and extensive analysis of Programme documentation, to gather data and provide a comprehensive assessment of the Programme's performance.

The assessment focused on two main outcomes. Firstly, it aimed to investigate how the programme performed in equipping adolescents and young people in vulnerable situations with innovative skills and abilities. This is done to help them with their socio-labour insertion while also protecting them from the risk of violence, abuse, and exploitation. Secondly, the assessment scrutinises the programme's success in helping adolescents and young adults establish companies and start-ups with the overall goal of designing solutions that can address the challenges faced by their respective communities.

The assessment also examined UNICEF's Upshift programmatic management and adaptation approach, focusing on the effectiveness of programme implementation, analysis of achieved outcomes from beneficiaries perspectives, and identification of opportunities and actions to maintain the program's progress. Furthermore, the assessment pinpointed lessons learned for future enhancements. The assessment team assessed the Programme's effectiveness and efficiency to determine its relevance to the needs and priorities of Somali adolescents and youth. For sustainability, UNICEF's efforts to enhance partner capacity in Puntland and Somaliland was examined.

The assessment covered eight districts across Somaliland and Puntland, including urban and semi-urban areas. In Somaliland, the focus was on five districts: Hargeisa, Berbera, Borama, Burao, and Gebiley. In Puntland, this includes Garowe, Qardho, and Bossaaso. The assessment targeted programme implementation from January 2022 to December 2023, providing a comprehensive analysis of the UPSHIFT programme's implementation, progress, and impact over a significant duration.

1.4. Assessment Objectives

The assessment aimed to ascertain the programme's design, implementation, and impact and provide valuable insights and recommendations for future considerations and long-term sustainability. The assessment will focus on the following specific objectives:

1. Assess the programme's design and operational processes and identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement to support its effective rollout by UNICEF's programme team and NGO partners.
2. Assessing the quality of programme implementation and providing insights and recommendations to development partners, donors, and ministries to enhance the programme's effectiveness and efficiency.
3. Examining the programme's results at the beneficiary level, assessing its impact on the lives of the targeted population and the extent to which it has achieved its intended outcomes.
4. Identify existing opportunities and measures to sustain the programme's gains, provide strategic fundraising and continued donor support recommendations, and strengthen the evidence base for the programme's effectiveness.
5. To document key lessons learned throughout the programme's implementation, contributing to UNICEF and partner's knowledge management on innovative approaches to child protection and serving as a template for future programs and interventions in the sector.

Assessment Criteria and Questions

The assessment was guided by the terms and conditions outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR). The process adhered to five key aspects, serving as the main data collection, analysis, and inferences framework. These aspects provided a comprehensive structure for evaluating the programme and informed the questions in the data collection instruments. The four main areas agreed upon for assessment and the overarching questions were as follows:

- **Design and Operational Processes:** This assessment dimension assessed how well the programme design aligned with Somalia's specific context and needs. It examined how the ToC aligned with UNICEF's strategic approach to child protection and identified synergies between the UPSHIFT programme and other relevant interventions. Additionally, it assessed the effectiveness of resource and asset utilisation during the design and operational phases.
- **Quality of Programme Implementation**: This investigated the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme's implementation strategies. It ascertained the cost-effectiveness of the partnerships established for programme delivery and examined how well the beneficiary targeting and recruitment strategies worked. Furthermore, it assessed the program's alignment with existing national initiatives and strategies, ensuring coherence and integration within the broader development framework.
- **Results of the Programme at the Beneficiary Level:** This criterion focused on the programme's outcomes and impacts on its beneficiaries. It explored beneficiaries' perceptions of various aspects of the programme delivery process, including communication, application, selection, training, grant receipt, and mentoring. The assessment aimed to identify challenges and success stories from the beneficiaries' experiences, providing a comprehensive understanding of the program's effectiveness from their perspective.
- **Existing Opportunities and Measures to Sustain the Program's Gains:** The assessment identified existing opportunities to sustain the program's gains and proposed measures to ensure the long-term sustainability of its outcomes. It examined how the programme could leverage existing resources and partnerships to enhance sustainability, providing its benefits would continue positively impacting the target populations.
- **Key Lessons Learned:** This criterion identified lessons from the program's design, implementation, and outcomes. By highlighting best practices and successful strategies, it aimed to inform future iterations of the UPSHIFT programme and similar initiatives. The lessons learned were intended to guide improvements and ensure the program's effectiveness in other contexts.

2. Methods

2.1. Assessment Design

The assessment integrated both formative and summative elements. The summative approach assessed the Programme's overall impact, effectiveness, and progress towards achieving programmatic goals and objectives. By thoroughly investigating the Programme's outcomes and effects, this approach provided the programme team with a clear understanding of the Programme's performance and the extent to which it had fulfilled its commitments. This aspect of the assessment ensured transparency and accountability, enabling informed decision-making and allocation of resources based on tangible results.

While the summative approach assessed the Programme's success, the formative component focused on documenting and analysing the lessons learned during the Programme's implementation. This aimed to identify the Programme's strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. It utilised these insights to guide the Programme team in making necessary adjustments to enhance its effectiveness and increase its chances of success. The findings were expected to assist the Programme in responding to changing circumstances or unforeseen challenges. Finally, the final report provided actionable recommendations based on the insights gathered during the assessment process.

During the design and operational process, the assessment team assessed several areas, including the programme's relevance to the Somalia context, the priorities of programme beneficiaries, the alignment with key national development strategies, and the internal coherence of the Theory of Change (ToC) with UNICEF's strategic approach to child protection in Somalia, as well as synergies with other interventions.

Under this pillar, the assessment team also examined the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme's operational process in ensuring the delivery of programme targets. To ensure that the findings and recommendations accurately reflected important aspects, including gender, equity, and human rights, the team incorporated gender, equity, and human rights perspectives across all assessment criteria and questions throughout the assessment process.

2.2. Sampling Procedures

The sampling was based on the beneficiaries list provided by the partner, which showed that the UPSHIFT programme benefited 236 young individuals between 15 and 23 years old. Among these, 133 were female (71 in Somaliland and 62 in Puntland), and 103 were male (65 in Somaliland and 38 in Puntland). The assessment adopted a stratified sampling approach to ensure inclusivity and representativeness, targeting 30% to 40% of each group. The assessment selected 60 beneficiaries for Somaliland, while 61 were included in Puntland. The following table provides further details on geographical and gender distribution of sampled beneficiaries

location/gender	Female	Male	Total
Puntland	54% (33)	46% (28)	100% (61)
Somaliland	72% (43)	28% (17)	100% (60)
Overall	63% (76)	37% (45)	100% (121)

The sample beneficiaries were extracted from the program's beneficiary list using a simple random sampling technique with computer assistance. This approach ensured an unbiased

and impartial selection process, allowing for equal representation opportunities for all beneficiaries within each group.

By targeting a proportional number of girls/young women to the beneficiary's size of each gender, the assessment considered diverse perspectives and insights. This stratified sampling approach ensured the assessment reflected the program's impact across different contexts and demographic groups. The collected data contributed to a robust and well-rounded understanding of the program, informing recommendations for further enhancement and sustainability of the UPSHIFT program.

2.3. Data Management and Field Work

Data collection in each district was conducted over three days with the support of the implementing partners Women's Action Advocacy Progress Organisation (WAAPO) in Somaliland and Horn Vision in Puntland. The first two days were designated for survey data collection, while the third day was allocated for qualitative data collection methods, including:

- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with key stakeholders, including the partners, WAAPO, Horn Vision, and local government officials involved in the programme implementation and beneficiary selection process.
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with direct beneficiaries were facilitated in all the target areas.

This approach allowed for a comprehensive data collection process, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to gather rich and diverse insights. By dedicating specific days for each data collection method and ensuring a consistent approach across the three districts, the enumerators efficiently gathered the necessary information to inform the assessment of the Scaling-up UPSHIFT Innovative Livelihoods Programme.

As part of *the Scaling-up UPSHIFT Innovative Livelihoods Programme for Young People and Adolescents through enhancing Life skills, Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Somalia (Upshift Programme) assessment, SomTrust have conducted extensive data collection and fieldwork in each of the programme target locations*. The data collection exercise employed diverse tools and techniques, including a structured survey administered with programme youth and adolescent beneficiaries, KII with programme partners and other key stakeholders, including government officials and local community committees and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with beneficiaries as well to gather qualitative insights on the programme's implementation.

The Programme's local partners in each region played an important role during the data collection exercise, including community mobilisation and engagement efforts and providing a comfortable and safe space for administering different data collection tools. The following sections provide further details on collected data, participants of each data collection method, and the key findings that emerged.

Data Collection in Puntland

The assessment was conducted in all three Puntland programme locations: Qardho, Bossaso and Garowe. The survey targeted 61 participants selected from the Programme beneficiary list through a stratified random sampling technique. 54% of the respondents were young females. Regarding the Programme activities the respondents participated in, 58% were part of the vocational and life-skills training, whereas the remaining (42%) benefited from the entrepreneurship training.
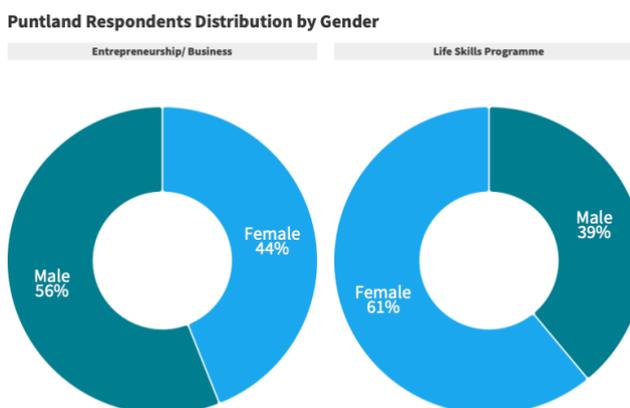
Figure 1: Puntland Respondents by Gender

Additionally, qualitative data was collected in all three locations, including 13 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) conducted with key stakeholders, government officials, and Programme partners. These interviews provided valuable insights that supported the triangulation of data analysis and strengthened the quantitative data analysis and discussion. Two FGD sessions were also facilitated in Garowe and Qardho, each targeting specificity beneficiaries disaggregated by gender. A total of 18 participants took part in these sessions. The table below provides details of the respondents in the assessment in Puntland.

Table 1 Survey Respondents in Puntland

Location /gender	Female	Male	Total
Bosaso	36% (5)	64% (9)	100% (14)
Garowe	58% (7)	42% (5)	100% (12)
Qardho	60% (21)	40% (14)	100% (35)
Total	54% (33)	46% (28)	100% (61)

Data Collection in Somaliland

The assessment targeted 60 survey respondents in Somaliland selected from the UPSHIFT Programme youth and adolescent beneficiaries, including the Entrepreneurship / Business Skills and Life Skills Programme components.73% were female.

The assessment also collected qualitative data from key informants, Programme staff, and community members. Focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with Programme beneficiaries in Hargeisa. A total of 11 beneficiaries

Figure 2: Somaliland Respondents Breakdown by Gender

participated in two sessions, with six females and 5 males in different groups. The table below provides details of all key informant interviews (KIIs) and FGD sessions that were carried out.

Table 2 Participants in KII in Somaliland

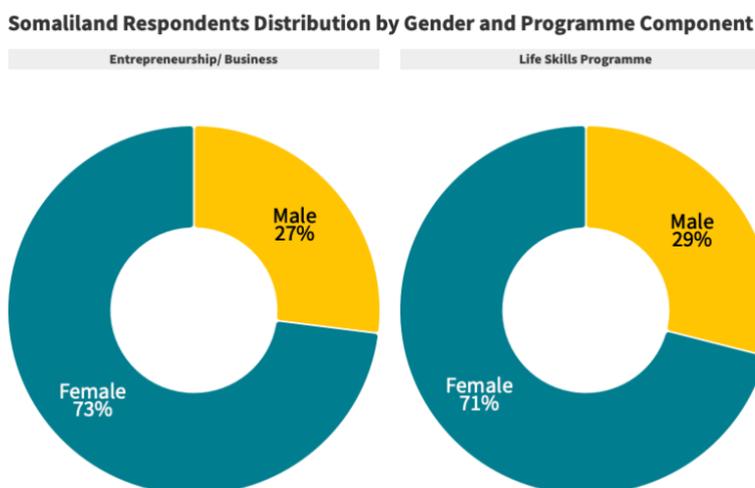| SN	Location	Represented Organization	Interviewee Title	Gender
1	Hargeisa	WAAPO	Programmes Manager	Male
2	Hargeisa	MESAF	Programme Coordinator	Male
3	Hargeisa	Community Committee- Statehouse	Member	Female
4	Hargeisa	Community Committee- Sheikh Nur	Chairperson	Female
5	Burao	WAAPO	Head office	Female
6	Burao	Local Government	Social Service Delivery dept. director	Male
7	Burao	Regional Office	MESAF Regional Officer	Male
8	Gabilay	Local Government	Social Service Delivery Dept. Director	Male
9	Borama	Regional Office	MESAF Regional Officer	Male
10	Borama	WAAPO	Head- Office	Female
11	Borama	Community Committee	Member	Female
12	Borama	Community Committee	Member	Female

2.4. Quality Control and Data Management

The UPSHIFT Innovation Programme assessment employed robust quality control and data management, ensuring ethical, accurate, and reliable data. The following are key steps and features integrated:

Protocol	Description
Rigorous Quality Assurance Plan	A comprehensive quality assurance plan was developed, addressing the specific challenges of data collection from young people and vulnerable community members. This plan outlined procedures for each phase of the assessment, from design and recruitment to data management and analysis.
Experienced and Trained Team	The data collection team consisted of experienced enumerators. The team was also diverse, and gender matched, ensuring appropriate representation for all targeted stakeholders.
Local Knowledge and Translation	Enumerators were recruited from the local areas, ensuring contextual knowledge and dialect expertise. All interviews were audio recorded and meticulously transcribed and translated, with quality checks conducted by both the team lead and MEAL expert.
Training and Supervision	All enumerators received a comprehensive online training, covering, project objectives, methodology, tools, and ethical considerations. The Meal expert conducted direct observations of interviews, providing feedback, noting limitations, and ensuring adherence to quality standards.
Survey Piloting and Translation	To ensure the enumerators were comfortable administrating the survey forms, each enumerator was instructed to practice on the form and submit 5 practice forms as a minimum. In addition, to ensure questions were thoroughly understood by both the interviewer and the participant the tool was translated into Somali for ease comprehension.

Statistical Testing and Data Cleaning	Both the MEAL expert and the team lead conducted statistical tests to identify outliers and anomalies, ensuring data integrity and accuracy. A thorough data cleaning process was implemented to correct errors and omissions, improving data quality and confidence in the findings.
Data Management Software and Protocols	The consultants employed a suite of data management software to streamline data entry, cleaning, and analysis. Where KOBO collect was used for data collection and storage, through API the survey data was connected into R programming language for descriptive analysis and visualisations as well as statistical testing. Both row data and cleaning and analysis codes are readily available for client handover.
Quality Review of Qualitative Interviews	Senior team members listened to all audio recordings of qualitative interviews to verify quality, ensuring depth of responses, appropriate prompting, and ethical considerations.
Coding of Qualitative Data	Qualitative data was systematically coded using NVivo software, allowing for thematic analysis and identification of key patterns and insights.
Secure Data Storage and Access	A strict data storage and access policy was implemented, ensuring data security and integrity. Only authorized individuals had access to the data, and data was backed up and archived according to established protocols.

2.5. Data Analysis

The qualitative data were systematically coded using NVivo software. An inductive and deductive thematic analysis cycle was employed. Initially, a codebook was developed based on key themes and reflections on the programme's two main results. Open coding was also used to capture emergent concepts beyond the predefined themes.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) recommended investigator triangulation, which was implemented in the analysis of the transcripts to ensure reliability and validity. This involved multiple investigators cross-verifying the coding and thematic interpretations. Visual mappings, nodes, text queries, and sentiment analysis were conducted in NVivo to assess the relationships between themes and deepen the understanding of qualitative insights.

Quantitative data analysis was performed using R programming to handle large-scale data wrangling, modelling, and visualisation. Descriptive statistics were calculated to measure skill development indicators and to detail the number of businesses operationalised by the programme participants. Comparative analyses were conducted across different participant demographics and geographical areas to identify significant differences in programme results. These analyses helped highlight the program's strengths, weaknesses, and contextual variances.

Custom tables and data visualisations were created to communicate meaningful metrics and trends clearly and effectively. These visualisations played a crucial role in presenting the quantitative findings in an accessible and comprehensible manner. In addition to NVivo coding, the analysis team used R to conduct text analysis on critical documents and written qualitative data. Techniques such as word frequency analysis, semantic network analysis,

sentiment analysis, and topic modelling were employed. These text-mining techniques reinforced the qualitative insights and provided additional triangulation opportunities with the quantitative findings.

3. Findings and Analysis

3.1. Respondents Demography

The survey sampled 121 young and adolescent participants, representing 26% of the 472 total beneficiaries of the UPSHIFT Programme's two outputs, providing a representative sample for the assessment findings. In addition, the data collection maintained a representative proportion in each region, where 60 respondents were selected from Somaliland's programme locations, while the remaining 61 were from Puntland. Most respondents were females, accounting for 62.8% of the total respondents. This aligns with the Programme's target policy of focusing on young and adolescent females, who comprise around 60% of the beneficiaries. The proportion of females in the sample was a bit higher in Somaliland (72%), whereas Puntland's was around 54%.

The data collection was primarily focused on young people and adolescents, which aligns with the age group the Programme aimed to benefit. The largest group of respondents, accounting for a significant 45% of the total, falls in the 23–26-year age range. The second largest group, representing 36% of the total, is those aged 19-22. This data underscores the Programme's impact on these crucial age groups. Please refer to the table below for more detailed information.

Table 3 Gender and Age of the Respondents

Age Group / Gender	Female	Male	Total
15–18 years old	9.9% (12)	5.0% (6)	14.9% (18)
19–22 years old	22.3% (27)	14.0% (17)	36.4% (44)
23–26 years old	29.8% (36)	14.9% (18)	44.6% (54)
27+ years old	0.8% (1)	3.3% (4)	4.1% (5)
Total	**62.8% (76)**	**37.2% (45)**	**100.0% (121)**

Education level was another factor the survey focused on to assess the participant's background and whether they met the educational background criteria of the programme. The findings show that 39% of the respondents completed university studies, with males being more advantaged than females (47%). Also, male participants have higher attendance in secondary schooling than girls (40%). On the other hand, the only level of education for adolescents and young girls that was greater than the males was in the primary (29%).

Interestingly, all surveyed male participants in Somaliland had at least a secondary education qualification. During an interview with Programme staff and partners, it was clarified that while the entrepreneurship programme was open to all, certain conditions had to be met, such as being a minority, living in an internally displaced persons (IDP) setting, or having a disability, in addition to being a young person. It should also be noted that this sample only represents 26% of the beneficiaries, so the findings may only partially reflect part of the population.

The findings regarding marital status reveal over 81% of respondents were single and not currently in a marital relationship at the time of data collection. Additionally, it was observed that more than 70% of respondents did not have primary household responsibilities. However, around a quarter of the respondents, representing a substantial portion, assumed crucial responsibilities, including providing for their families. Notably, 64% of those with household

responsibilities are young and adolescent girls actively managing households or contributing to family income. Their involvement in the programme is particularly significant, as highlighted during focus group discussions with female adolescents, showcasing a vital opportunity for them to continue contributing to their families' well-being through participation in the program.

3.2. Design and Operational Processes

The assessment focused on factors that significantly influenced the Programme's design and operational process and how that might have contributed to its success and impact. It investigated the partnership model, engagement with prospective trainees, outreach efforts, mobilisation strategies used to ensure the specific targets of beneficiaries are selected, and the processes used to select the trainees.

The UPSHIFT Programme is found to have employed an inclusive design approach and a comprehensive outreach and selection strategy involving diverse stakeholders, which led to the enrollment of 472 young and adolescent beneficiaries, over 62.3% of whom were female.

The findings underscore a seamless alignment between the Programme's implementation and partnerships with UNICEF's Country Programme Strategy (2021-25). From its inception, the Programme was strategically designed to contribute to UNICEF's vision, particularly by empowering adolescents and young people to catalyse positive change, fostering safer communities in Somalia. Qualitative and quantitative data confirm a notable surge in innovative thinking and entrepreneurship among the youth. Through establishing start-ups and job creation initiatives, young people's proactive endeavours prove this to improve economic conditions for themselves and their families. The Programme's impact is evident in these transformative efforts, reflecting its pivotal role in shaping a brighter future for Somalia's youth.
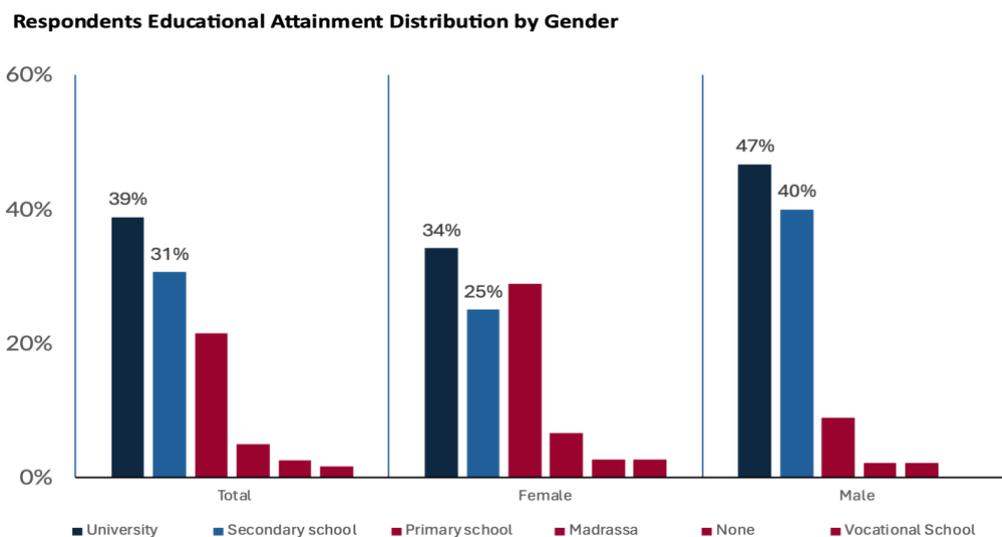

Respondents Educational Attainment Distribution by Gender

Figure 1: Education background of the Respondents.

The findings underscore the critical role played by lessons learned and best practices from the pilot phase of the UPSHIFT Programme. Both government officials and partners affirm that insights learned from the initial phase laid a solid foundation for this subsequent implementation, facilitating a more focused approach aimed at maximising impact while mitigating key challenges encountered previously. However, it's noteworthy that despite the success of the pilot phase, a notable shift occurred in partnerships for this phase. These insights from the first phase revealed a strong desire among young Somalis to improve their economic conditions and an innate entrepreneurial spirit waiting to be activated. The information from this phase also emphasised that selecting group members from the same geographical area ensured cohesion and sustainability while aligning youth expectations with available resources, which proved crucial for success. Overall, the pilot phase showcased UPSHIFT's significant impact on young people's lives and its potential for fostering economic stability and social resilience in Somalia.

The assessment highlighted partnership as a crucial factor contributing to the success of Programme design and operations. Utilising UNICEF's existing partnerships to harness sufficient capacity and influence for innovative Programmes emerged as a key element of success. Prioritising established, performing relationships over merely selecting from a broader pool of local NGOs indicates the effectiveness of UNICEF's partner establishment process under this Programme. It draws on partners with a proven track record of successful programme implementation.

Interviews with representatives from partner organisations and government institutions unanimously underscored the uniqueness of UPSHIFT's design, particularly regarding skills development, access to finance, and partnerships with government agencies and training centres. They emphasised that this innovative approach mutually reinforced the programme's goal of positively impacting young and adolescent people.

WAAPO, a longstanding partner of UNICEF and a participant in the Programme's pilot phase, was selected to lead the implementation in Somaliland. WAAPO's presence and operations in Somaliland since 1997 provided a significant impetus for UPSHIFT. Similarly, Horn Vision, with its longstanding partnership with UNICEF and operational history in the region, was chosen in Puntland. This enduring partnership and track record of successful collaboration demonstrates UNICEF's adeptness in promoting and nurturing relationships with partner organisations that have been thoroughly tested and proven over time.

Working closely with government institutions emerged as another crucial element to consider. The Programme prioritised engaging line ministries, ensuring full collaboration and participation across all components. In Puntland, the Ministry of Justice, Constitution, Religious Affairs, and Rehabilitation (MOJCRAR) led the selection process for 30 participants identified as being in contact with the law. Additionally, the Ministry of Labor and Youth Services (MoLYS) facilitated the selection of 15 young people and adolescents out of school, 5 returnees, 1 individual with disabilities, 8 from impoverished families, and 1 participant from a rural background. This underscores the enhanced role of government and ensures its active support for the Programme, thereby enhancing sustainability and local ownership.

"MESAF played an important role in the Programme from the start, contributing to its design and ensuring it meets the needs of Somaliland's youth, especially vulnerable groups. We actively participated in beneficiary selection, targeting returnees, GBV survivors, and minorities. During pitching, the Ministry ensured final selection solely based on the strength of business ideas, regardless of background." - Child Protection Focal Point, MESAF Somaliland.

The involvement of an external resource organisation, DOT, added significant value to the project's design and operational processes. In an interview with DOT staff who closely collaborated with the local partners in both locations, it was highlighted that DOT's contributions were instrumental in designing and delivering the training during the initial stages. This support greatly benefited the local partners by equipping them with the knowledge and expertise necessary to empower young adolescents effectively. Blanco from DOT expressed:

"The partnership model adopted by the UPSHIFT programme brought diverse opportunities and resources essential in successfully empowering these young adolescents. It was a wise decision to involve myriad beneficiaries, which also necessitated engaging varied partners capable of providing relevant knowledge and skills tailored to the Somali context."

Outreach and Selection Process

The selection process of the participants, underpinned by the Programme's strategy to target a diverse group of young people and adolescents in the target locations, is suitable for Somalia. Though the findings show that the selection has not entirely focused on this vision, there have been important efforts to ensure that the most vulnerable and needy groups are included. There were participants selected from minority groups: people with disabilities, internally displaced communities in rural backgrounds, youth out of school, children in conflict with the law, survivors of GBV and those either returned or at risk of trafficking.

By partnering with community committees in IDPs and vulnerable neighbourhoods, both partners were able to carry out the identification and invitation of the most vulnerable youth with innovative ideas to participate in boot camps. The line ministries in each region also participated and were part of the selection committees. They used regional job site[9] and their organisational website to disseminate information about the application call and provide equal opportunities for all interested individuals. This approach facilitated broader outreach and inclusivity, ensuring no eligible youth were left behind.

While word-of-mouth emerged as the primary method of informing prospective applicants in both regions, accounting for 57.4% in Puntland and 51.7% in Somaliland, there were notable differences in other approaches. Puntland showed a more substantial reliance on social media, with 24.6% utilising this platform, while Somaliland prioritised community mobilisers, contributing to 31.7% of outreach efforts. Additionally, traditional media platforms like radio and TV played a significant role in Somaliland, constituting 10% of outreach efforts. Refer

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[9] https://somalijobs.com/courses/Training/3450033875933601/Fursado-Tababarro-iyo-Maalgelinta-Ganacsiyo-yaryar

Programme Outreach Channels Distribution

Breakdown by location

Legend: ■ Social Media ■ Radio/TV ■ Word of Mouth ■ Community Mobilizers

Location	Social Media	Radio/TV	Word of Mouth	Community Mobilizers
Somaliland	6.7%	10%	51.7%	31.7%
Puntland	24.6%		57.4%	18%
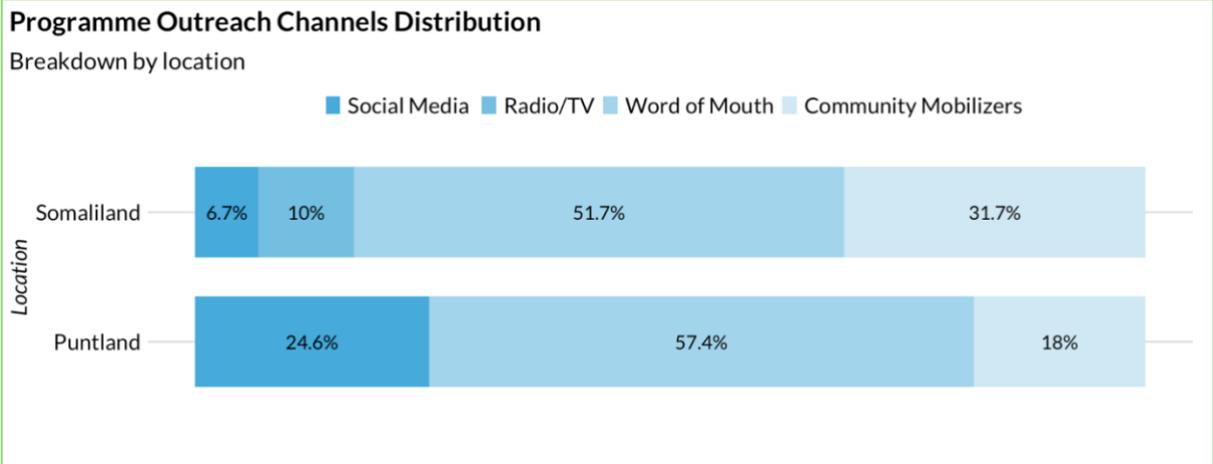
Chart 3 Communication channels for reaching applicants.

In Puntland, the selection process focused on individuals residing in IDP camps, predominantly inhabited by minorities and displaced communities from regions such as Southwest State. Partner staff affirmed that while there was no explicit mention of minorities, the targeted IDPs comprised individuals who had fled conflict, insecurity, and droughts in the West State of Somalia. Additionally, the life skills course specifically targeted young people rescued from trafficking or deemed to be at risk of trafficking in Puntland.

Life Skills Programme Component: Puntland Beneficiaries Disaggregated by Vulnerability

- with special need, 1%
- Children in conflict with law, 30%
- GBV Survivors, 40%
- rural, 1%
- under poverty living families, 8%
- returnees, 5%
- out of school, 15%

Chart 4 Beneficiaries in Puntland by vulnerabilities.

In Somaliland, a significant portion, accounting for over 29% of the total beneficiaries, were survivors of GBV. Additionally, a substantial number of beneficiaries were drawn from internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, where most of the youth faced compounded vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities included not only GBV but also encompassed disabilities, involvement in conflict-related activities, susceptibility to trafficking, and stark poverty. The selection of beneficiaries from such contexts underscores the program's commitment to reaching those most in need and addressing the complex layers of marginalisation and adversity faced by vulnerable youth populations in Somaliland.
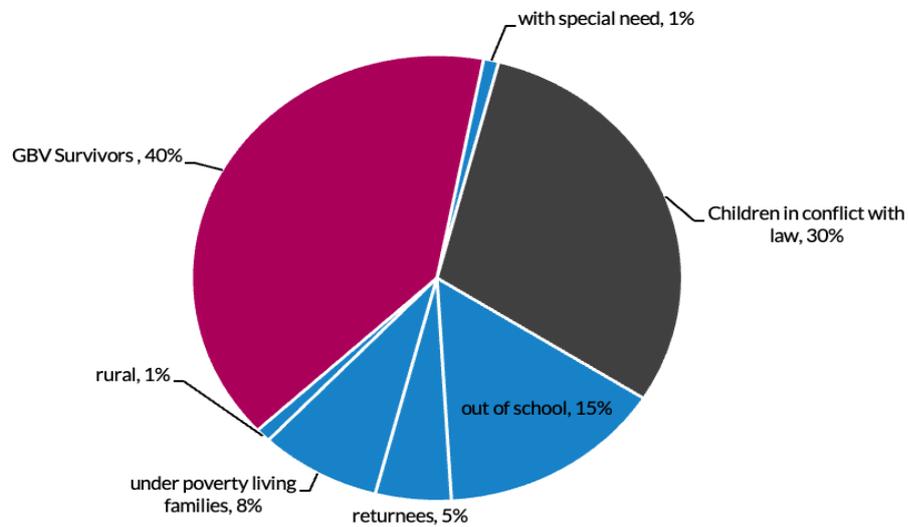
Life Skills Component: Somaliland Beneficiaries Disaggregated by Vulnerability
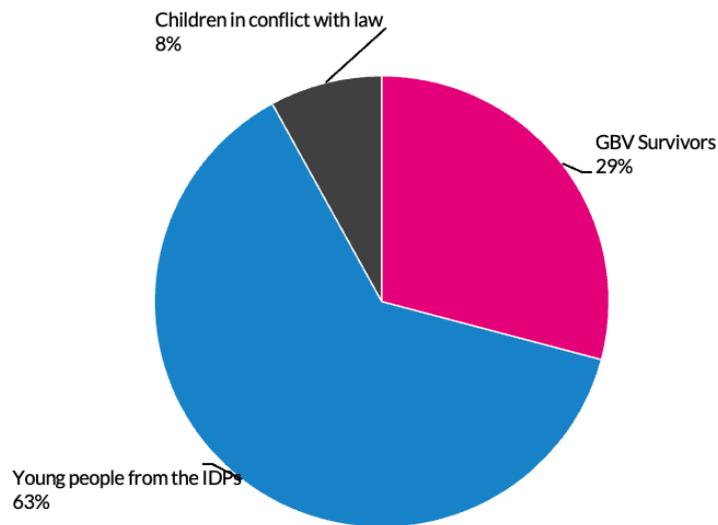
Chart 5 Beneficiaries in Somaliland by vulnerabilities.

In Somaliland, WAAPO, a staunch advocate for survivors of GBV, played an essential role in the Programme by providing shelter. A significant number of participants in both entrepreneurship and life skills training were survivors of GBV. The Programme team specifically targeted young people who had experienced rape, sexual abuse, physical violence, and domestic violence. Among the participants were four young girls from minority backgrounds who had also endured GBV. Additionally, young people with disabilities were actively included in the training, offering them a transformative opportunity to rebuild their lives. As affirmed by the Programme team, these individuals gained invaluable skills and entrepreneurial knowledge, enabling them to initiate businesses and generate income to support themselves and their families.

Similarly, the outreach approach to life and vocational skills opportunities differed significantly between the two regions, reflecting the Programme's adaptability to local contexts. In Somaliland, the Programme primarily focused on Hargeisa, with a small cohort of 16 beneficiaries from Borama selected for a specialised cosmetology (make-up and henna) course. Unlike the entrepreneurship and business component, outreach for life and vocational skills adopted a more open approach, targeting the public while prioritising participants from disadvantaged urban communities. In contrast, the Puntland life and vocational skills component is solely concentrated in Qardho, where Horn Vision engages community

committees to identify and select potential beneficiaries, ensuring targeted outreach to those most in need.

Trainees' Satisfaction with the Quality of Training and Bootcamp Sessions Attended

Breakdown Gender
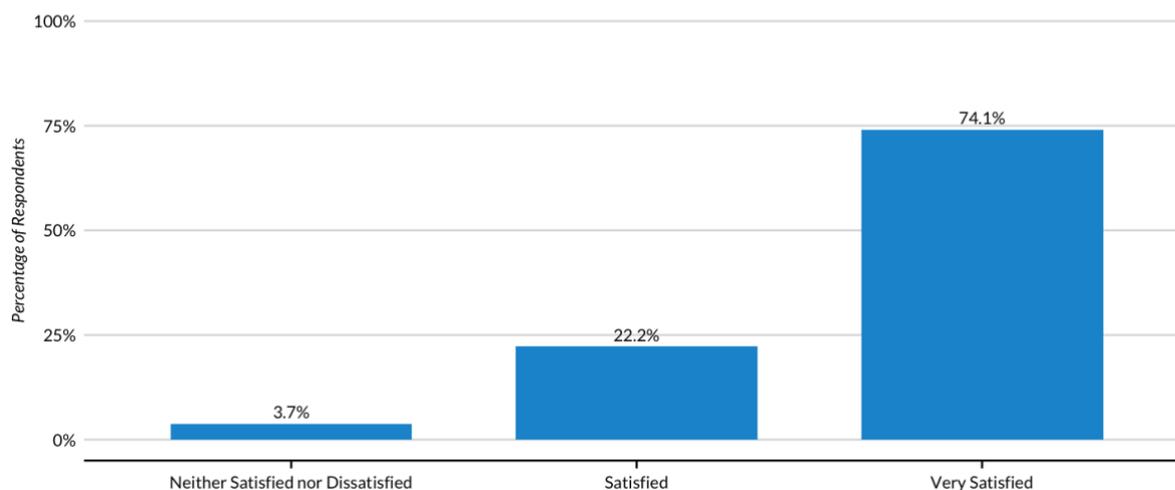
The assessment also tried to understand the beneficiaries' experience in the selection process. The survey included questions about how the applicants felt about the application process. As a result, the findings show that 74.1% were satisfied with the selection process and reported that they had thoroughly understood the instructions and application materials. Disaggregating the data by location, Somaliland respondents reported a higher satisfaction rate at 88.3%, compared to 62.3% among Puntland respondents. Further breaking down the data across genders, the assessment found no particular difference in satisfaction levels between female (73.7%) and male (77.8%) participants. This suggests the selection process was perceived as equitable and accessible by both genders. The application feedback and response time also contributed to the higher satisfaction rates in both regions, as captured by the following table:

Table 4 Application Process period

Location/ Decision Time	2 to 4 weeks	Less than 2 weeks	More than One Month	Total
Puntland	24.6% (15)	59.0% (36)	16.4% (10)	100.0% (61)
Somaliland	15.0% (9)	68.3% (41)	16.7% (10)	100.0% (60)
Total	**19.8% (24)**	**63.6% (77)**	**16.5% (20)**	**100.0% (121)**

The assessment scrutinised the suitability of selected applicants and assessed whether the Programme reached the intended demographic. By examining the trainees' retrospective employment history and work experiences at the Programme's inception, the assessment aimed to gauge the adherence to selection criteria and the prioritisation of individuals facing unemployment, poverty, and social disadvantages, including those from minority backgrounds.

Respondents Work Experience at Project Entry
Breakdown Gender
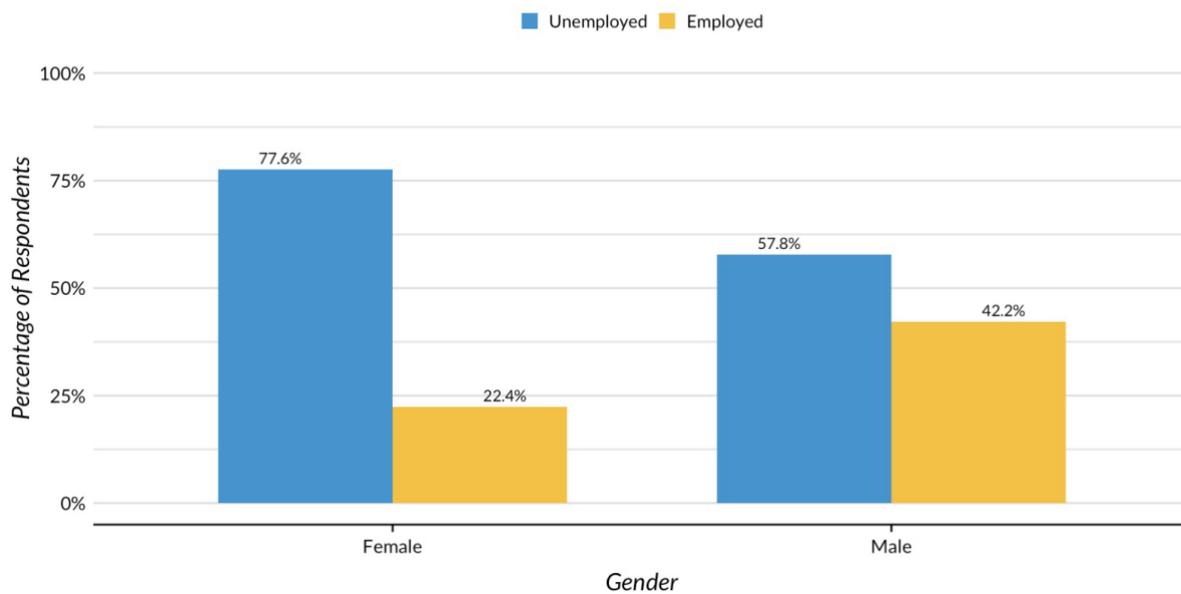
Chart 6 Prior work experience of the Respondents.

Analysis of the trainees' employment history revealed that over 70% lacked prior work experience, underscoring the Programme's successful targeting of young people and adolescents in need of opportunities for socioeconomic advancement. Additionally, a breakdown by gender illustrated a higher prevalence of unemployment among females, reaching 76%. Furthermore, respondents from Puntland and Somaliland reported minimal income before programme enrolment, with median monthly earnings averaging approximately $40 and $20, respectively.

This multidimensional approach to applicant selection effectively aligned with the Programme's targeting policy, resulting in a successful design and implementation. Using such a methodological framework enhanced Programme efficacy and fostered inclusivity, thereby contributing to the program's success in empowering vulnerable youth and adolescents. Through this process, the Programme recruited 472 young and adolescent beneficiaries who participated in the different components of the UPSHIFT Programme.

"*Throughout the selection process, especially during the interview phase, we took great care to ensure applicants belonged to one of the vulnerable groups prioritised by the Programme. These encompassed marginalised communities, individuals experiencing economic adversity, persons with disabilities, out-of-school youth, those involved in the justice system, returnees, and survivors of gender-based violence."* - Horn Vision Upshift Coordinator, Qardho, Puntland.

Table 5 Total beneficiaries of the UPSHIFT in Puntland & Somaliland

Programme Component/Location	Puntland		Somaliland		Total
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Life and Vocational Skills	67	33	107	58	265
Business & entrepreneurship	55	34	76	42	207
Total	122	67	183	100	472

The table indicates that approximately 65% of the beneficiaries were young and adolescent females. Findings about Somaliland showed a higher proportion of female participation in the Programme, accounting for 60% of the total beneficiaries in Somaliland. This translates to more than 38% of the overall trainees, compared to 25.9% in Puntland. The regional disparity in gender representation may be influenced by the socioeconomic context and target locations. In Puntland, the Programme specifically focused on engaging participants from IDP camps predominantly populated by individuals displaced from the Southwest State of Somalia. Societal norms and cultural barriers may have restricted access to information about women's activities within these settings, limiting their visibility and participation in community circles. Consequently, this may have resulted in a higher dissemination of information to males within the community, potentially contributing to the observed gender disparity in programme participation within the broader context of pre-existing and ongoing gender disparity in Somalia. Equally, in Somaliland, the participation of survivors of GBV in the programme may have contributed to the higher proportion of females, as many GBV survivors are young females.

Finally, the Programme's design and operational processes are strongly congruent with global gender mainstreaming and empowerment principles, facilitating increased opportunities for young and adolescent females. Moreover, it surpasses the Programme's strategic goals by engaging over 60% females across all components. The deliberate selection process, which considers not only gender but also other vulnerabilities that exacerbate marginalisation among young females, such as GBV, emerges as a pivotal success factor for the UPSHIFT Programme.

3.3. Quality of Programme Implementation

The Programme designed its primary delivery modalities based on two key components: empowering young and adolescent individuals with essential life skills and fostering entrepreneurial knowledge and opportunities. The first component concentrated on delivering comprehensive training in innovative livelihoods and vocational skills, aiming to equip participants with the knowledge and practical capabilities required to navigate the economic landscape and pursue sustainable livelihoods. Meanwhile, the second component revolved around business incubation and support, offering seed funding, networking opportunities, and business development services to aid aspiring entrepreneurs in launching and expanding their ventures.

The assessment findings show that the Programme's approach enabled the partners to be flexible and focused on equipping participants with essential skills. Additionally, it provided a robust support system to help them translate those skills into successful businesses.

Life and Vocational Skills Component

This component benefited 265 young and adolescent trainees (174 females, and 91 males). The assessment findings highlight the significant relevance of this component within the context of Somalia. This is more so when considering how young people confront a multitude of challenges, including unemployment, poverty, entrenched social norms, human trafficking, economic stagnation, and violence, including insecurity and conflict. In such a complex environment, the findings underscore the importance of providing life and vocational skills training as it offers tangible pathways for empowerment and socioeconomic mobility.

In Puntland, the Programme focused on gender-specific vocational training. Male participants received training in electricity skills, catering to the area's demand for electricians. Female participants were offered tailoring, makeup artistry, and home cooking courses, equipping them with skills relevant to potential career paths or home-based businesses.

Gender-specific vocational training in Puntland
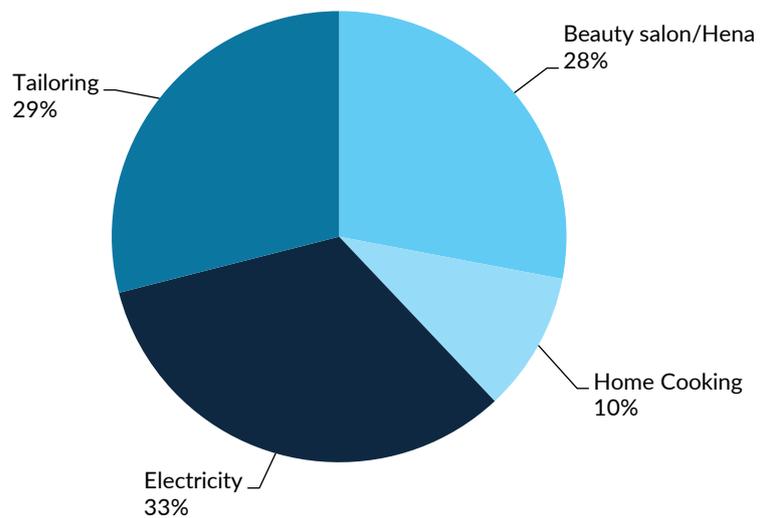
Chart 7 Gender-specific vocational training in Puntland.

The assessment found that employing experienced trainers already engaged in Puntland imparted practical skills and knowledge and facilitated valuable connections with the local private sector. During FGDs with training the graduates, successful employment outcomes were attributed to the support and market connections provided by their trainers, who had prior engagements with employers. This collaboration was made possible through the local partner's utilisation of digital platforms for job fairs, which identified a solid vocational training centre in Qardho as the training provider. Subsequently, a comprehensive framework agreement was established with the centre, tailored to meet specific criteria for training participants.

The framework agreement encompassed several crucial elements to ensure vocational training delivery and mentoring effectiveness. This included a detailed work plan outlining the methodology for training delivery, a clear course timetable, and schedules for all training

activities. Furthermore, a meticulously crafted curriculum for four training courses was developed, ensuring alignment with industry standards and addressing the unique needs of the local context. Each vocational training course was supported by dedicated manuals, providing trainees with comprehensive learning materials and resources to enhance their skill development.

Moreover, the Qardho Vocational Training Centre consistently submitted monthly progress reports to maintain transparency and facilitate effective monitoring. These reports meticulously documented training activities monitored trainees' attendance records, identified encountered challenges, and proposed recommendations for improvement. This structured approach ensured the vocational training programme was closely monitored and continuously adapted to optimise participant outcomes. Emphasising this, the Horn Vision PC said: *"As the coordinators of the Upshift Programme, we continuously monitored the training centre's educational standards, diligently collected pertinent data, and offered technical assistance. This support extended to covering fees and providing living allowances for the participating youth."*

One significant finding from the assessment was that the duration of the training, spanning six months, emerged as an important success factor. This extended timeframe allowed the training provider to engage with the trainees effectively and deliver comprehensive, in-depth training sessions. The six-month duration facilitated the provision of solid training, enabling participants to acquire and internalise essential skills and knowledge effectively. This finding underscores the importance of a well-structured and sufficiently lengthy training period in maximising the impact and success of skills development programs.

On the other hand, in Somaliland, the life and vocational skills training presented a diverse array of courses, reflecting the intricate economic environment and the participants' preferences. These encompassed beauty salon skills, henna application, basic computer literacy, English language proficiency, tailoring, cooking, introduction to business concepts, traditional dance, coding, graphic design, and social media marketing. This wide-ranging selection empowered participants to choose paths that resonated with their aspirations and addressed the demands of the local market.

"We aimed to create opportunities for young individuals from underprivileged backgrounds, which led us to adopt a more flexible approach in the selection process for the life skills program. Our primary focus was identifying genuine interest in the chosen field and a foundational level of knowledge to build upon. For instance, for disciplines like graphic design or coding, computer proficiency was sufficient to qualify." WAAPO Programme Manager

Additionally, the training courses offered in Somaliland were notably diverse, emphasising the cultivation of life skills over trade-specific vocational training seen in Puntland. In Somaliland, the curriculum encompassed various courses such as social media marketing, coding, graphic design, home cooking, beauty salon/henna application, business introduction, traditional dance, English language proficiency, and basic computer skills. As per the interviews with the local partner staff, this range of training aimed to cater to the participants' broader economic landscape and varied interests, providing skills applicable across multiple sectors and livelihood opportunities.

Also, unlike the vocational training approach in Puntland, the Programme in Somaliland took a different route. Instead of collaborating with an existing vocational training centre, WAAPO, the local implementing partner, chose to engage individual facilitators to conduct the training sessions. These sessions were held at WAAPO's dedicated training facility, except for a makeup course offered to 16 beneficiaries in Borama city. While the study did not precisely appraise the impact of this difference in training approaches, it is essential to acknowledge and understand potential variations in effects. Special consideration should be given to contextual challenges and market dynamics variations, which could influence the effectiveness of the training programs in different regions.

Business and Entrepreneurship Component

The UPSHIFT program's business and entrepreneurship component has showcased remarkable relevance and impact in meeting the aspirations and requirements of young Somalis. Enrolling 236 youth participants (131 females and 76 males) across Somaliland and Puntland underscores the program's extensive reach and tangible influence within the community.

The assessment highlights this component as very relevant and well-suited to the needs of the target population, which confronts considerable hurdles like unemployment, resource constraints, and social adversities. Through comprehensive boot camp training and accompanying grants, the programme effectively equips participants with essential skills, knowledge, and resources, empowering them to achieve self-sufficiency and make meaningful contributions to their communities.

The program's delivery model demonstrated a well-structured and adaptable approach tailored to the local context. Implementing partners, including Horn Vision and WAAPO, underwent collective training by Dot in Hargeisa to support the boot camps in their respective regions. Training materials were customised to match the participants' comprehension levels, covering diverse topics ranging from identifying local needs to developing innovative business solutions and acquiring essential entrepreneurial skills like financial management and marketing.

"The Upshift Programme stands out for its unique approach to linking social issues with youth innovation. Throughout the selection process, we carefully assessed how proposed projects aimed to use limited resources to address local social challenges. An excellent illustration of this approach is the food venture initiative launched in Borama."—Child Protection Focal Point, MESAF.

The programme's ability to adjust to the changing political environment and overcome challenges, exemplified by Horn Vision's facilitation of boot camps in Garowe and Bossaso during the election period, underscores its effectiveness and dedication to meeting the needs of the communities it serves. Emphasising the impact of this political dispute in Puntland, the Horn Vision PM said,

"Amidst the election dispute in Puntland, external resource organisations faced constraints when visiting the region. Horn Vision stepped up to the challenge, taking full responsibility for delivering the boot camp training. We successfully organised two 5-day training sessions, one in Garowe and another in Bossaso. Despite the challenging political climate, our efforts ensured the programme reached youth participants across the region." Horn vision coordinator

To assess this component further, considering the beneficiaries' perspective, the assessment focused on the appropriateness of the language used. All sample participants unanimously agreed that instructors employed appropriate techniques and training delivery and that the language was relevant to their educational background.

"*The programme delivery was very inclusive. The instructors and the curriculum took into account that we all came from different educational backgrounds, and they used a lot of visual aids to make sure everyone could understand the concepts. Plus, they taught everything in Somali, which was a game-changer.* " Focus Group Discussion participant, Hargeisa

Furthermore, this component included seed funding provided to young beneficiaries for incubating and scaling up innovative solutions. This financial support has empowered young entrepreneurs to overcome initial barriers to entry, such as a lack of capital, and transform their ideas into viable businesses. Consequently, numerous participants have successfully launched ventures that address pressing social issues and generate sustainable income for themselves and their communities.

The component also provided mentorship sessions to young beneficiaries. These sessions were delivered by experienced mentors who offered invaluable advice, guidance, and networking opportunities, helping participants navigate the complexities of starting and running a business. To assess this component aspect, the survey assessed how helpful beneficiaries sought mentorship, with 85% of all respondents reporting helpful or helpful sessions.

Beneficiaries Perceptions of Mentorship Sessions of Business and Entreprenuarship Component
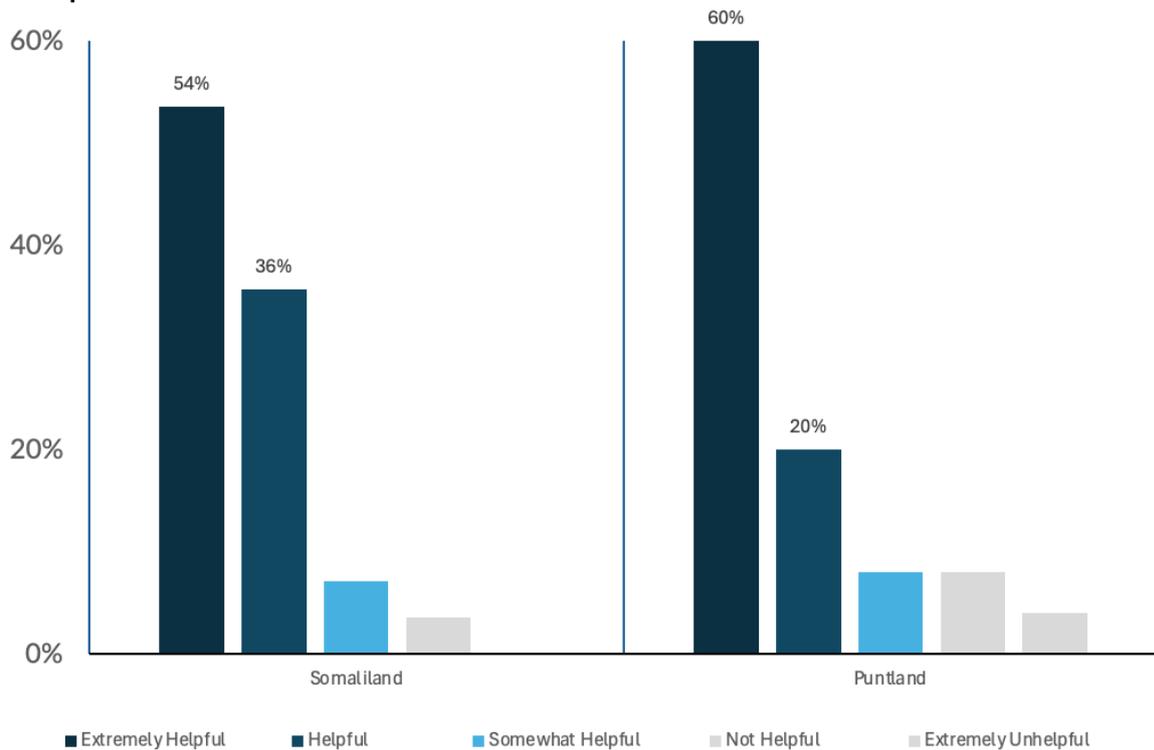
In summary, the Bootcamps within UPSHIFT provided young entrepreneurs essential training, mentorship, and networking opportunities. These activities offered access to crucial tools and platforms. Moreover, Bootcamps served as vital networking opportunities, fostering interest and refining business ideas among participants. Presenting their models to peers and mentors allowed start-ups to validate their concepts and adapt as needed, gaining insights into local market dynamics. Additionally, Bootcamp activities facilitated the development of pitching decks for participating businesses. These decks were then considered for inclusion in intensive training and mentorship programs, providing valuable skills and knowledge across various aspects of entrepreneurship.

3.4.   Result of the Programme at Beneficiary Level

The assessment used surveys and FGDs at the beneficiary level to gather data and insights on the program's impact and perspectives. The findings revealed high satisfaction and perceived benefits among the respondents. For '**Result 1'**, focusing on the life skills component, 95.5% of the respondents reported that the programme had positively impacted their situation.

Satisfaction with the program's delivery model and its relevance to participants' needs were even higher in **'Result 2'**, centring on the social innovation and entrepreneurship program. The subsequent sections will detail each result, providing deeper insights into the programme's overall impact.

Was the Life Skills Component beneficial and tailored to your specific needs?
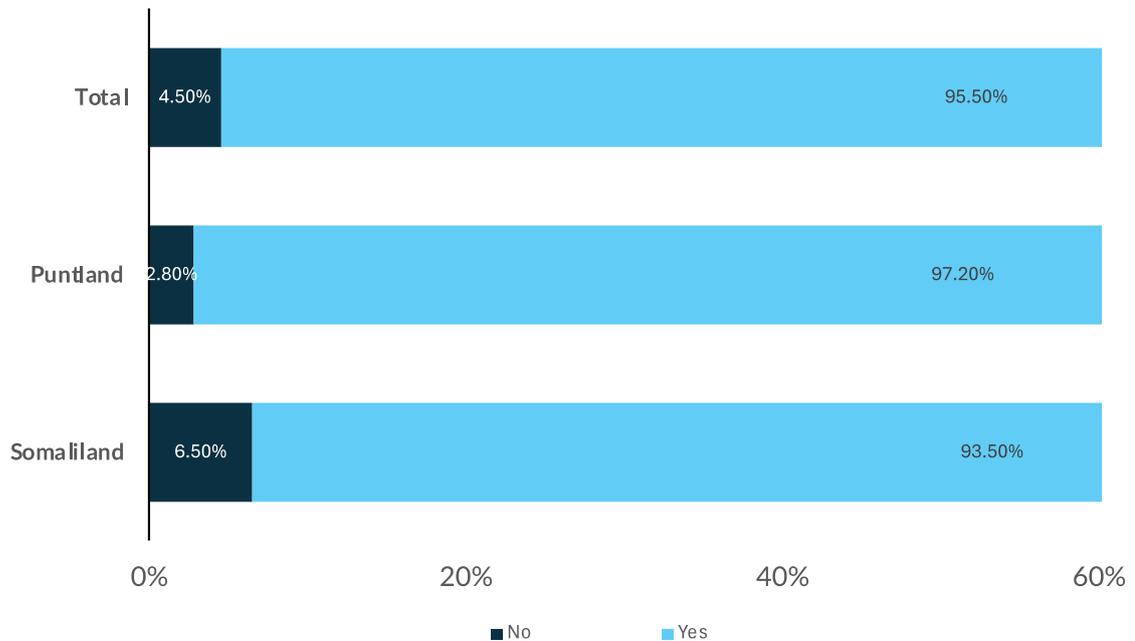
Result 1: Life Skills Components

> *Adolescents and young people in vulnerable situations have acquired innovative skills and abilities for entrepreneurship and their socio-labour insertion, thus protecting themselves from the risk of violence, abuse and exploitation.*

The assessment findings demonstrate the programme has effectively yielded positive outcomes for its beneficiaries in both the Puntland and Somaliland regions under this result. The assessment further highlights a remarkable 95.5% of respondents acknowledging the programme's benefit to their circumstances. Upon closer examination of the regional distribution, the data indicates an even greater satisfaction level among Puntland participants, with 97.2% affirming the programme's benefits compared to 93.5% in Somaliland.

To further scrutinise the program's immediate outcomes regarding this result, the survey focused on participants' level of preparedness for employment or self-employment. The findings are encouraging, with most respondents feeling either "Well Prepared" (50.7%), "Prepared" (23.9%), or "Very Prepared" (20.9%) – a clear indication of the effectiveness of the training provided. Only a tiny fraction expressed feeling "Slightly Prepared" (3%) or "Not Prepared at all" (1.5%), underscoring the program's success in equipping most of its participants with the requisite skills and confidence to pursue their employment or entrepreneurial aspirations.

Chart 8 Employment Status of the Respondents after Graduation

25% of previously unemployed secured job after the programme intervention.
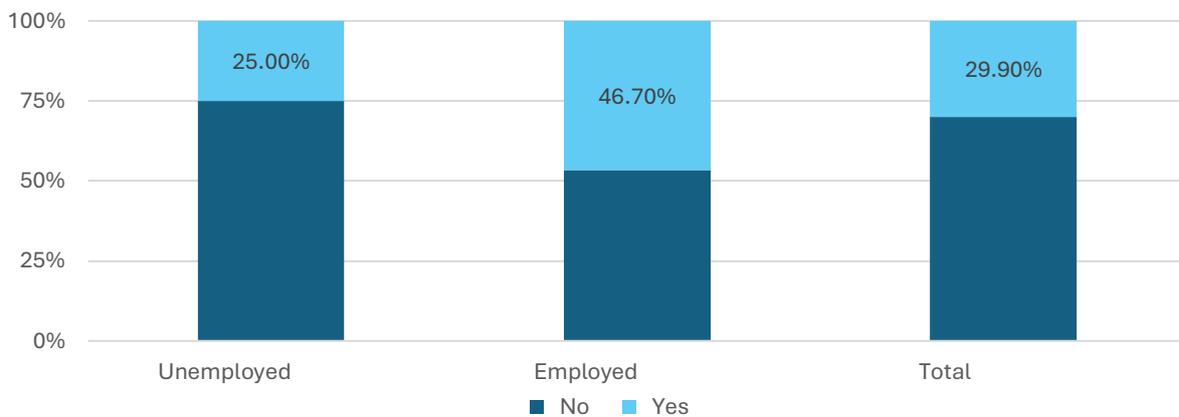
The survey also examined changes in participants' employment status post-program, yielding similarly positive results. Overall, 29.9% of respondents reported securing an internship or employment immediately after graduation. In Puntland, facilitators actively engaged trainees by introducing them to the market, potential clients, and providing on-the-job training. In Somaliland, the program's success in employment rates can be attributed to the unique ICT skills acquired by trainees, including programming languages, coding, and graphical design.

Breaking down the data by location, 27.8% of Puntland participants and 32.3% of Somaliland participants were able to secure immediate jobs or internships, showcasing the program's effectiveness in facilitating the transition from training to the job market. However, it is important to note, based on qualitative data, that the window period between the graduation of the respondents and data collection was minimal. This underscores the suitability of the training, as these graduates were able to swiftly enter the job market despite being fresh graduates.

Despite the programme's success, a significant gender disparity in employment outcomes was observed. Male participants secured employment or internships at a significantly higher rate (60.9%) than female participants (13.6%). This disparity highlights the urgent need to address structural barriers affecting employment status in intervention regions beyond programme support. It also sheds light on the challenges females often face in their job search and access to employment opportunities. Potential strategies to address this disparity include offering job search assistance and providing specialised training tailored to the needs of female participants.

Further analysis of the survey results revealed that participants who acquired skills in specific areas, such as electricity, beauty salon and henna artistry, English language, and traditional dance, were more likely to secure employment or internships than those with other skills. This insight can be invaluable in informing future programme design and targeted skill development efforts.

However, some life skills trainees in both locations had graduated just before the data collection began. This temporal mismatch could account for the relatively low number of

graduates securing employment. However, conducting a subsequent assessment later could yield more promising results. With additional time for recent graduates to actively seek and secure job opportunities, a follow-up assessment holds the potential to provide a more accurate depiction of their post-training outcomes and successes.

Also, the interval between the graduation of life skills trainees and the commencement of data collection was relatively brief, spanning only 2-3 months. This tight timeframe may have influenced the outcomes observed, where Somaliland exhibited a slightly higher rate of trainees securing employment post-program. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of trainees in Somaliland remained unemployed at the time of the interviews, with nearly half falling into this category. This underscores the necessity for ongoing monitoring and evaluation to track the longer-term impact of the programme and identify areas for further enhancement in both regions.

Also, the assessment sought to explore the financial impact of these trainings, investigating whether programme participants had observed any positive changes in their financial situation due to their enhanced skills. Survey results indicate a significant effect on the financial well-being of participants, with 50.7% reporting a noticeable improvement after completing the programme. However, a regional disparity is evident, with 54.8% of participants in Somaliland experiencing financial gains compared to 47.2% in Puntland. The following quote sheds light on the underlying reasons for this geographical discrepancy. *"Our implementation in Qardho, Puntland, started later than in Somaliland. The conclusion of the Upshift life skills component in the district was in February 2024." -KII from a local partner in Puntland, Horn Vision.*

Beneficiaries Financial Outlook Post Upshift Programme

Breakdown by Gender
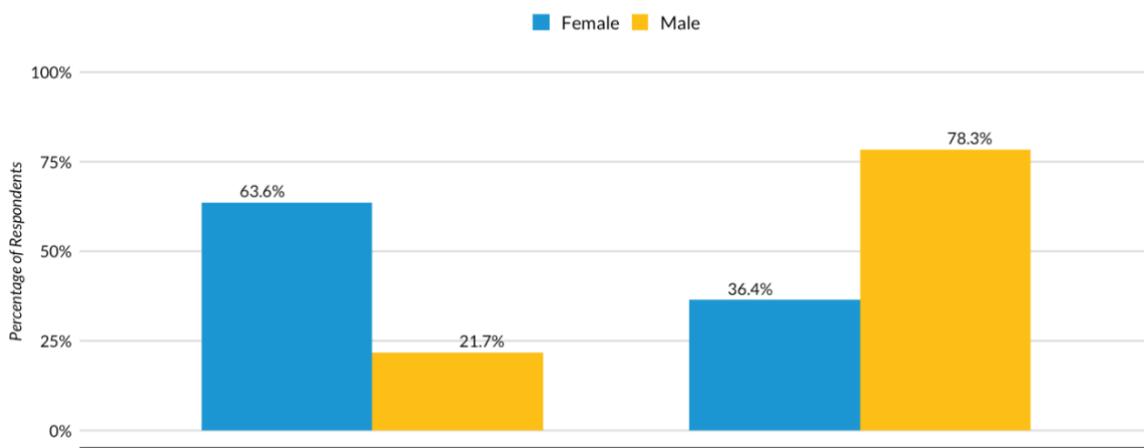
Chart 9 Financial Improvements of the UPSHIF trainees.

Qualitative insights from programme beneficiaries provide additional context on the financial impact: A female participant who attended the English training said, *"My financial situation hasn't changed much; I attribute this to learning a language rather than a hands-on skill. However, I've acquired valuable language skills that will be an asset for future opportunities and personal growth."*

The assessment also examined the programme's economic impact by comparing the monthly incomes of life and vocational skills beneficiaries before and after the intervention. This comparison is crucial to the assessment. Encouragingly, the results demonstrated a modest yet significant improvement in financial well-being.

Life-Skills Component: Distribution of Respondent's Monthly Income Before and After Upshift Programme

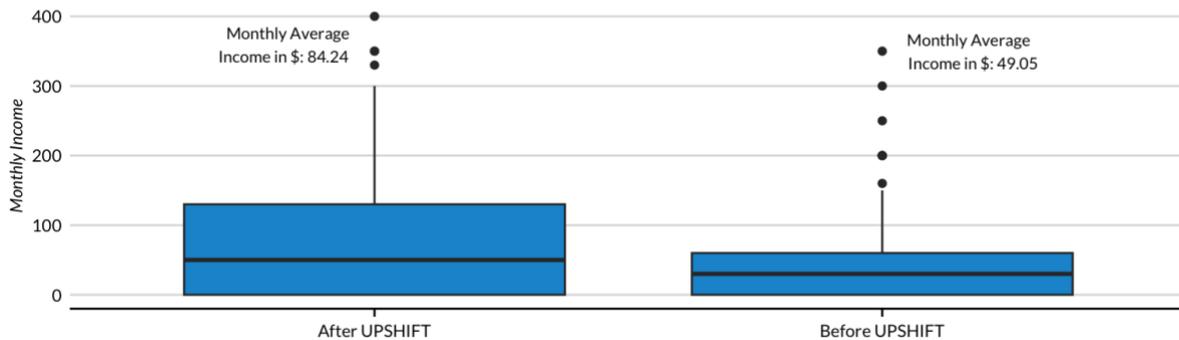The monthly average income increased by $35.19 from $49 noted at the beginning of the programme

Chart 10 Distribution of Respondents' Monthly Income before and after the Programme

Before the intervention, beneficiaries had an average monthly income of **$49.** While this may seem surprising as the programme targeted the most vulnerable population segments, it's important to note that the majority of participants indicated their income before joining the programme came from allowances provided by family members or part-time roles. This suggests that, despite having some income, these beneficiaries still faced economic challenges and sought additional opportunities for growth and empowerment. After participating in the programme, this figure increased to **$84.24**. This significant rise indicates a tangible improvement in their economic status. It suggests that the programme successfully bolstered the income-generating capabilities of participants in life and vocational skills training, promoting financial stability and growth within the beneficiary community.

"I left the school at a very early stage. But this program gave me hope and a second chance. Now, I'm proud to say that I have a diploma in electrical maintenance. The program not only provided me with the knowledge and skills I needed but also equipped me with the essential tools of the trade, like screwdrivers, wire strippers, and testers. This, combined with the ongoing mentorship and support from our instructors, made all the difference in helping me access the job market and find employment in my field. I'm so grateful for this opportunity and the doors it has opened for me." Life skills graduate, Qardho

Data from KIIs also reflect communal sentiments supporting the Programme's profound impact on young people in the community, particularly in fostering innovative and life skills opportunities. Findings from interviews with duty bearers, children, and partner staff further reiterate this notion, revealing a consistently positive outlook toward the UPSHIFT Programme. A government official in Puntland echoed this sentiment, stating, *"I believe the Programme has provided equal access and opportunities for many young people in our community who have faced numerous struggles to make a living. The fact that it targeted young people in IDP camps and those with disabilities demonstrates its inclusivity."*

Result 2: Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Adolescents and young adults establish companies and start-ups incubated through the social innovation and entrepreneurship programme aimed at designing solutions/ responding/providing solutions to challenges facing their communities.

As a result of this programme component, 48 new businesses were created through start-up incubation through social innovation. In Puntland, 15 businesses were established, with 7 in Garowe and 8 in Bossaso, whereas 33 businesses in Somaliland are further categorised in the chart below.

33 Start-Ups were Incubated Through The Social Innovation Component of UPSHIFT Programme in Somaliland

Breakdown by District and Type of Business
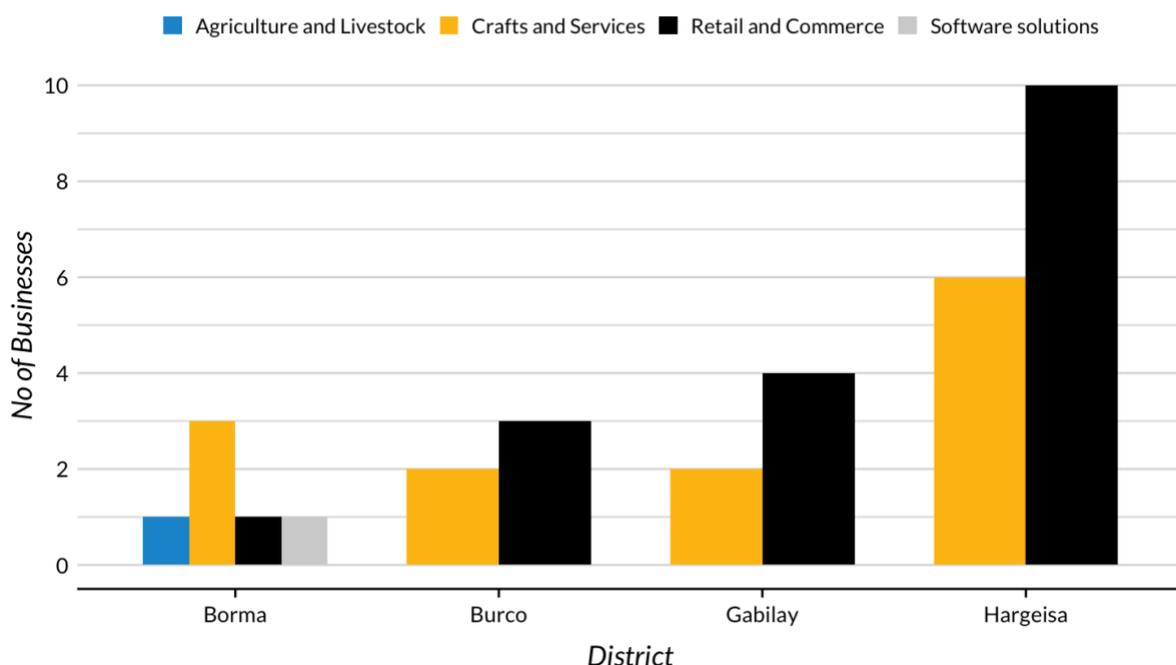
Chart 11 Start-Ups Established in the UPSHIFT Programme

Following the initial training and boot camp seminars, business groups were formed, aided by the program's distribution of start-up funding amounting to $2000 per venture. To gauge the impact of this financial support, the survey posed questions regarding the sufficiency of the grants or business funding provided by the UPSHIFT program. The findings revealed that most respondents (35 out of 54) deemed the $2,000 grant "Sufficient" to meet their business needs. However, 13 respondents expressed that the funding fell short, labelling it "Insufficient", while six considered it "Somewhat sufficient".

While feedback from programme participants indicated that the seed funding was generally considered adequate, discussions with programme partners and stakeholders unveiled a different perspective. According to consultations, it became apparent that the $2,000 grant amount fell short of the typical seed funding required for successful start-ups in the local context. Emphasising this, a Child Protection Coordinator from MESAF Somaliland said,

"While $2,000 is a substantial amount that can kickstart a business, the rising cost of living in our country presents a challenge. Rent alone can consume a significant portion of that money, overwhelming young entrepreneurs. Some have had to rely on additional funds from their families to sustain their businesses,"

The analysis of how beneficiaries utilised the grants they received from the programme reveals that a notable portion, approximately 64%, was allocated towards covering essential operational expenses of their businesses. These expenses primarily included costs related to inventory, supplies, and rent.

Business Prioritized Supply and Rent for Establishing and Maintaining Their Operations
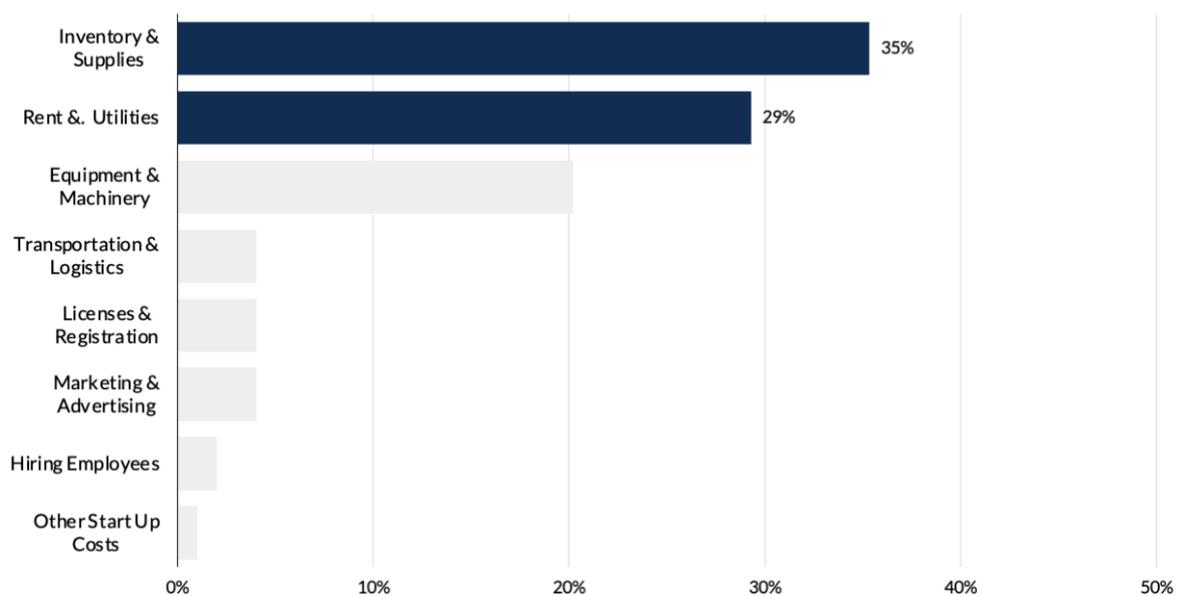
Chart 12 How the respondents used the Grants.

While allocating most funds toward basic operational expenses is understandable, it prompts questions regarding utilising the remaining 36% of the grant to address other critical business requirements. Launching and growing a successful venture necessitates investment in various areas beyond operational costs, including equipment, marketing, hiring, and strategic business development.

Despite the higher expense rates encountered and reported by the majority of business and entrepreneurship component beneficiaries, 83% of businesses assessed are still operating with a slightly higher survival rate of female-operated businesses 84% compared to 81% for male-run businesses.

Profit Margins Breakdown by Gender of Business Owners
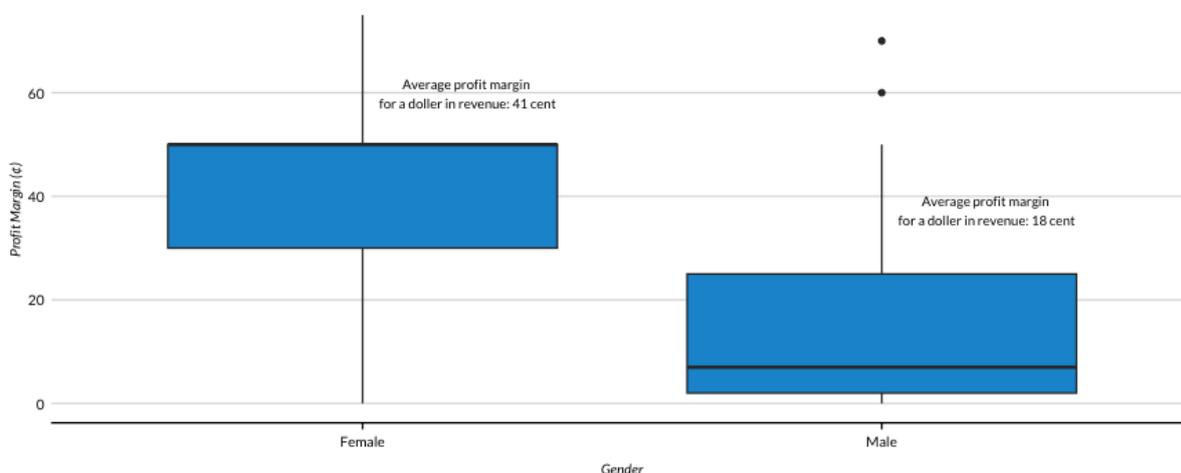
Beyond survival, the assessment examined whether operational businesses are making a profit and posed a simple question for business owners: "If you take your total revenue and subtract all your expenses, and then divide that profit by your total revenue, what percentage would that be?". The results of this question show that the majority (93%) of all operational businesses have a profit margin higher than 0%, indicating they have successfully surpassed the break-even point.

Disaggregating the profit margin data by gender, the assessment notes a gender disparity in profitability scales and finds that women-led businesses are generating 41 cents in profit for every dollar of revenue. In stark contrast, their male counterparts are achieving a mere 18 cents in profit per dollar of revenue. This difference highlights the remarkable success and profitability of female entrepreneurs in this domain compared to the employability rates discussed in the above sections of this report.

Further assessment of factors such as grant sufficiency and external variables like conflict and instability in both Garowe and Las 'Anood and fire in markets in Hargeisa and Bossaso sheds light on additional challenges impacting business operations. These challenges include loss of infrastructure or inventory due to fire crises, disruptions in transportation and logistics stemming from conflict and instability, reduced consumer spending and market demand due to economic uncertainty, and difficulties in attracting and retaining talent due to safety concerns.

These compounded and complex challenges were particularly more pronounced in Puntland, where 5 of 15 businesses are currently non-operational. The following captures underlaying factors that contributed to the higher percentages of non-operational businesses in Puntland

The Puntland businesses [entrepreneurship and business component beneficiaries] have been affected by several challenges, including the conflicts that occurred in the Garoowe and the 'Election' uncertainty, which have impacted their work and even their presence in the city for a prolonged period. Additionally, Ramadan affected the groups, especially those involved in the organic fruit business, as their daily customers significantly decreased because people mostly broke their fast at home. The Bosaso [youth groups] were most impacted by the summer season, when people generally leave the city, and the heat of the summer affected

their businesses, such as those involved in the chicken trade." Horn Vision Programme Coordinator

Table 6 Business supported by the UPSHIFT Programme

Location	Operational Groups	Non-Operational Groups
Bossaso	1. Barwaaqo Group	1. Walaalaha House Cleaning
	2. Dandeegaan Group	2. Wada Jir Group
	3. Isku tashi Group	3. Iftin Youth Group
	4. Fatxulkhayr Group	
	5. Halgan Group	
Garowe	1. Ilays Media	1. Himilo Group
	2. Xigsin Group	2. Qubays Body Scrub Group
	3. Macsaro Group	
	4. Warda Decoration Group	
	5. Tusmo Online Market	

3.5.   Existing Opportunities and Measures to Sustain Impact

Building upon the extensive data collection and analysis through surveys, FGDs, and KIIs, the assessment underscores the transformative impact of the UPSHIFT programme on the lives of young and adolescent beneficiaries in Puntland and Somaliland. The programme's multifaceted approach, encompassing life skills training and entrepreneurship development, has been instrumental in addressing the complex challenges youth in these regions face, including unemployment, poverty, gender disparities, and social marginalisation.

The findings reveal a high level of satisfaction among participants, with over 95% acknowledging the program's benefits and reporting enhanced skills readiness for employment or self-employment. Moreover, a notable improvement in financial well-being is evident, with participants experiencing a substantial increase in their average monthly income post-intervention.

Despite these positive outcomes, the assessment also identifies areas for further improvement and sustainability. The observed gender disparity in employment outcomes highlights the need for targeted interventions to support female participants in accessing job opportunities and overcoming structural barriers. Additionally, the relatively short timeframe between graduation and data collection underscores the importance of conducting follow-up assessments to capture more comprehensive and accurate insights into long-term impacts and trajectories.

Several measures are recommended to sustain the gains achieved by the program. These include:

1. **Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implementing regular assessments to track beneficiaries' progress beyond the programme duration and identify areas for refinement and enhancement.

2. **Tailored Support for Female Participants:** Designing specialised training and mentorship programs to address female participants' unique challenges in accessing employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.
3. **Partnership Development:** Strengthen partnerships with local vocational training centres, businesses, and government agencies to expand participants' access to resources, networks, and market opportunities.
4. **Skill Diversification:** Continuously update and diversify the training courses to align with emerging market demands and opportunities.
5. **Community Engagement:** Engaging local communities and stakeholders in programme design and implementation to ensure relevance, ownership, and sustainability.

By implementing these measures and leveraging the insights from the assessment, the UPSHIFT programme can effectively sustain its impact, empower young people in Puntland and Somaliland to realise their full potential and contribute to sustainable development in their communities. Your continued support and involvement are crucial in this journey.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

The assessment findings indicate a high level of satisfaction among beneficiaries, with the majority reporting significant benefits from participating in the programme. From improved skills to enhanced employment prospects and financial well-being, the UPSHIFT PROGRAMME has positively impacted the lives of young people and adolescents in Somalia. This underscores the importance of tailored interventions that address vulnerable populations' specific needs and challenges.

The success of the UPSHIFT PROGRAMME can be attributed to effective partnerships and collaboration between various stakeholders, including government institutions, training centres, and external resource organisations. These partnerships have facilitated the pooling of expertise, resources, and support, enabling the programme to leverage diverse perspectives and capabilities in achieving its objectives. Moving forward, sustaining and strengthening these partnerships will be crucial for ensuring the continued success and impact of the programme.

Also, the findings recognise that external factors such as conflict, instability, and crises have posed significant challenges to the operationality of businesses supported by the programme. These challenges include infrastructure damage, disruptions in transportation and logistics, reduced consumer spending, and difficulties in attracting and retaining talent due to safety concerns. Addressing these complex and interconnected issues requires a multifaceted approach considering immediate interventions and long-term systemic changes.

4.1. Key Lessons Learned

There are quite several lessons pertinent to this second phase of the UPSHIFT. One important aspect is involving the government and building on the gains made in the pilot phase.

- **Contextual Adaptation:** The success of youth empowerment programs hinges on their ability to adapt interventions to the local context, considering socioeconomic dynamics, cultural norms, and regional disparities.
- **Partnership and Collaboration:** Strong partnerships with local vocational training centres, businesses, and government agencies enhance programme sustainability and enable beneficiaries to access resources, networks, and market opportunities.
- **Diversified Skill Development:** Offering diverse training courses tailored to market demands and participants' interests increases the program's relevance and empowers beneficiaries to pursue diverse livelihood opportunities.
- Impact Assessment: The assessment findings underscore the importance of conducting impact assessments to bridge the gap caused by the limited time between participants' graduation and data collection. This approach will enable data triangulation using additional metrics to measure how young people utilise the new skills and knowledge acquired to impact their lives and those of other young individuals.

4.2. Recommendations

The UPSHIFT programme assessment has identified several areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. Based on the findings, we propose recommendations to enhance the program's design, operational processes, project management, and implementation. These recommendations aim to ensure the program's continued success, sustainability, and positive impact on beneficiaries.

- **Design and Operational Process**
  - The programme's inclusive design approach, involving diverse stakeholders, has been a key factor in its success. Considering this finding, we recommend continuing this inclusive approach and adopting similar local partnerships for the programme's roll-out in the Banadir Region.
  - Expanding the partnership's scale while leveraging existing successful partnerships is essential; the programme should explore collaborations with new partners, including private sector actors like financial agencies, academic institutions, and international organisations. This partnership can bring new perspectives and insights to the programme, such as insights into the graduates' market absorption and addressing systematic and institutional barriers that programme beneficiaries encounter.
  - Strengthen outreach efforts to reach marginalised groups and ensure equitable representation of all targeted groups during the selection process, especially more inclusion of children in conflict with the law and GBV survivors. This is particularly needed in the Somaliland component, considering the active and ongoing conflicts in Sool and Sanag regions.
  - Extend collaboration with government institutions. Building on the successful engagement with ministries in Puntland and Somaliland, the programme should further extend collaboration to Local Governments of Programme locations to facilitate smoother business incubation establishment. LGs provide licencing to businesses and spearhead local economic development aspects of the national economy; hence, exploring opportunities to further integrate the programme with government strategies and priorities could ensure long-term sustainability and local ownership of the programme.
- **Project Management**
  - Implement a more robust and sustainable programme monitoring system to track programme progress and identify factors causing delays in advance. Additionally, it enhances local partners' monitoring and evaluation capacities to establish a solid evidence base and database for programme decision-making. This will allow for implementing corrective interventions and potentially prevent further business closures, particularly in Puntland, where 5 of 15 newly established businesses are no longer operational.
  - Consider developing a stronger coordination and cross-learning hub for the partners in the various target locations to enhance local ownership, networking, and learning from context-specific challenges and opportunities.
- **Project Implementation**
  - While the seed funding of $2,000 provided to each business group has enabled young entrepreneurs to launch their ventures, the assessment findings indicate that around (64%) of this funding is spent on rent and supplies, leaving limited

resources for business operations and other critical business components. We recommend that the seed funding be utilised more effectively.

  o To introduce and provide more training to young people and adolescents on accessing Alternative/ additional funding options, such as tiered grants or access to microfinance, to supplement the initial seed funding. This could give participants more resources to invest in their business growth without relying solely on the initial $2,000.

  o Local Programme partners collaborating with government line ministries should explore the feasibility of establishing shared workspaces or incubators where multiple businesses can operate, reducing individual rent burdens and fostering further collaboration among the beneficiaries.

- **Life Skills Component**
  o Facilitate Market Linkages and Partnerships: Strengthen the program's efforts to connect participants with potential employers and mentors to facilitate market linkages and fast-tracked employment opportunities. This could involve organising pitch events, facilitating networking opportunities, and leveraging the program's partnerships to create market access channels for the young, skilled graduates.

4.3. Conclusion

The UPSHIFT Programme has successfully empowered youth in Puntland and Somaliland through comprehensive skills development and entrepreneurship training. By engaging experienced trainers and leveraging digital platforms, the programme facilitated valuable connections with the local private sector, leading to employment outcomes. The programme's adoption of diverse and flexible training in Puntland and Somaliland effectively catered to each region's unique economic landscapes and participant preferences.

Despite some challenges, such as regional disparities in financial impact and gender disparities in employment outcomes, the programme's adaptability and contextual sensitivity have been commendable. The six-month training duration in Puntland was particularly effective, and the entrepreneurship component across both regions significantly improved participants' preparedness for employment and self-employment.

While the seed funding was generally adequate, rising living costs highlight the need for potentially more significant grants to ensure business sustainability. Continuous monitoring and follow-up assessments will be crucial in understanding the long-term impacts and refining future interventions. By addressing structural barriers and enhancing support for female participants, the UPSHIFT Programme can further maximise its positive impact, fostering economic empowerment and resilience among Somali youth.

5. Annexe

5.1. Assessment Matrix

Assessment Pillars	Code	Major Questions	Minor Questions	Data Collection methods
Design and operational processes. **Quality of the implementation**	AQ1	How was the targeting of the beneficiaries done?	To what extent the intervention design considered cultural, or accessibility factors to ensure inclusive recruitment?	Desk Review including partners documents such as MOUs and other Programme documents. KII with programme staff Survey with the beneficiaries. FGD with beneficiaries
			What were the key factors or considerations that influenced the recruitment process and the selection of beneficiaries?	Desk Review, KII programme team, and with partner organizations
	AQ2	How cost effective are the partnership that have been put in place to implement the programme?	How did the intervention design expand on existing and relevant UNICEF's programmes such as COTM	Desk review: reviewing partnership agreemtns, MOUs, and financial records KII with stakeholder involved in the partnership
	AQ3	How cost effective are the delivery process of the UPSHIFT?	To what extent do the interventions meet the needs of the targeted populations in the implementation areas?	Survey, KII with partner and non-partner stakeholders, Desk Review of programme documents.
Result of the Programme at beneficiaries' level **Existing Opportunities and measures to sustain the gains on the programme.**	AQ4	How are the interventions in the different components of the pogramme responding to the needs of the in the implementation areas?	How effective are the partnerships in implementing the Programme?	Programme financial reports and budget, MOUs, and other programme reports
			To what extent do programme management and partnerships support efficient programme implementation and result achievement	

Key lessons learnt.	AQ5	How do UPSHIFT beneficiaries perceive and experience programme delivery, including communication, application, selection, training, receipt of grants, and mentoring?	How satisfied are beneficiaries with the communication process of the programme? Were the application and selection process transparent and accessible? How affective were the training and mentoring components of the programme? Were there any challenges faced during the grant receipt process?	KII, Survey, FGD with beneficiaries
	AQ6	To what extent is the selection targeting the marginal populations as laid out in the proposal?	What criteria were used for selecting beneficiaries? How effectively did the selection process target the marginal populations? Were there any challenges or barriers faced in targeting the intended populatio	Desk Review, KII programme team, and with partner organisations
	AQ7	Which aspects of the programme were successful, and which areas require improvement?	What were the successes and achievements of the programme? What challenges or obstacles were encountered during programme implementation? Were there any unexpected outcomes or unintended consequences?	Beneficiaries survey, KII, FGDs, Desk Review
	AQ8	What aspects would need re-designing for scale-up?	Which programme components or interventions have shown the most impact and would benefit from scale up? What changes or adjustments would be necessary to scale up the programme effectively?	Beneficiaries survey, KII, FGDs, Desk Review

			Are there any logistical, financial, or institutional challenges to consider for sacle up?	

5.2. Beneficiaries Survey Form

Questions	Choices
Prior Experience and Incomes	
Kindly tell us about your prior work experience or occupation?	Text
Could you please tell us your main sources of income before joining the programme?	Employment
	Self-employment/Business
	Family & remittance
	No income
	Others, specify
What was your average monthly income before joining the UPSHIFT Programme?	Integer
Mobilization and Announcements	
How did you learn about the UPSHIFT Programme?	Friends/ Family
	Community Mobilizers
	Social media
	Radio/ TV
	Community events
	Contacted by the Programme staff
	Others
Why did you choose to join the UPSHIFT Programme?	It was free
	To gain entrepreneurial skills
	To start my business
	To support my existing business
	To access funding/resources
	Inspired by previous participants' success
	To gain knowledge to build confidence and leadership
	Possible job opportunities
	Others, specify
How was the programme application process?	Very easy
	Somewhat easy
	Neutral

	Somewhat difficult
	Very difficult
Which part of the application process did you find most challenging?	Filling the Forms
	Vulnerability Statement
	Interview Process
	Others, specify
Selection and Recruitment Process	
How would you describe the selection and recruitment process	Text
How was the selection and recruitment process?	Very clear
	Somewhat clear
	Neutral
	Somewhat unclear
	Very unclear
How long did it take to receive the final decision after submitting your application?	Less than 2 weeks
	2-4 weeks
	4-6 weeks
	More than 6 weeks
What could have made the selection process better?	Clearer instructions
	Faster Processing time
	More communication from the team
	Easier application process
	Nothing
Training and Bootcamp	
In general, how satisfied you with the quality of the training are and bootcamp sessions you've participated?	Very satisfied
	Somewhat satisfied
	Neutral
	Somewhat dissatisfied
	Very dissatisfied
Which of the component of the bootcamp sessions did you find most valuable?	Feel
	Envision
	Make
	Revelation
Were the instructors knowledgeable and effective in their delivery?	Yes
	No

	If no, what areas do you think needed further improvements?
Was the language of instruction appropriate for you and for other youth?	Yes
	No
	If No, elaborate a bit more
Have the sessions prepared you for the practical challenges of employment& entrepreneurship?	Yes
	No
	If no, why?
In your teams, did you face challenges in terms of team building, conflict resolution, role, and responsibilities, or interacting with other team members?	Yes,
	No,
	If yes, what are some of the key ones?
How did you manage to get along with your team members?	Text
What do you think about the sufficiency and accessibility of the grants or business funding provided by the UPSHIFT program?	Text
Grants	
Has your group secured grants from the Upshift Programme	Yes
	No
	If no, what do you think prevented you getting the funds?
If yes, was it sufficient to finance your business idea?	Very sufficient
	Somewhat sufficient
	insufficient
	Very insufficient
How did you allocate the funds provided by the program?	Rent and utilities.
	Equipment and machinery
	Inventory and supplies.
	Licenses, permits, registration fees
	Hiring employees
	Technology and software
	Transportation and logistics
	Marketing and advertising
	Other start-up costs, pls specify
Did you encounter any expenses that were not covered by the funding and were unexpected?	Yes
	No
	If yes, list some of those

How helpful was the mentoring and monitoring support provided by the programmeover the 6-month period?	Extremely helpful Very helpful Somewhat helpful Not helpful
Which aspect and component of the mentoring did you find most valuable	Business planning and strategy Financial management guidance Technical skills training Motivational coaching and encouragement
Contextual challenges	
Is your business still operating?	Yes No, what happened?
Has the Covid-19 affected your business or prevented you from getting employment?	Yes, No, If yes, in what ways?
did the Hargeisa and Bossaso market fires affect your business or employment opportunities?	Yes, No, If yes, in what ways? And at what scale?
Were your business or employment opportunities affected by the conflict in Las Anod, droughts or tribal disputes in your community?	Text
How did the level of funding impact your ability to achieve your start-up's goals?	Text
Overall and Financial impact	
How has the business/startup or provided kit impacted your household income?	Significantly increased. Moderately increased No change Decreased Please explain (text)
Did such impact changed your standard of living	Yes No Please explain (text)
How has your involvement in the youth Upshift programmeand starting your business impacted your overall quality of life?	significantly enhanced. Moderately enhanced Slightly enhanced No impact Negatively impacted

5.3. Key Informants Interview Guide

Programme Team		
Phase	Specific Questions	Remarks
General	Can you tell me about your role in the programme, when did you join the team, and what's your level of involvement in the programme?	
Inception	How did you make sure the programme remained relevant to the needs of the beneficiaries? And relevant policies and strategies? • Has there been any beneficiaries' needs assessment conducted? • What strategies were employed to raise awareness of the UPSHIFT programme among the target youth populations, particularly those who are most marginalized? • What criteria were used to select participants for the UPSHIFT programme, and how are these criteria communicated to potential applicants? How did you ensured that one segment is not over dominating the beneficiaries? • How is the curriculum for the innovation bootcamp developed? was it tailored to address the specific social, educational, and economic challenges faced by Somali youth? • Have there been any modification in the design and operational processes since the inception of the program? If so, could you please specify in which ways these improvements have been implemented?	
Implementation	How did the programme handle complaints and feedback from selection process? How did you measure the training contents and sessions successes? What quality assurance mechanisms the programme adapted to ensure knowledge transfer? - Was the material been translated, contextualized, dispatched? Was pre and post assessments carried out? - Did the programme collected feedback from participants to enhance the programme, specially the bootcamp quality? If yes how was the feedback integrated into the programme implementation? - How does the programme maintain a high standard of mentorship and accompaniment during the six-month implementation phase?	
Monitoring and Assessment	What are the key indicators used to measure the success of the programme at the beneficiary level? How did you measure if how the programme impacted the livelihoods, entrepreneurship, and life skills of the participants? Can you share any success stories or testimonials from the beneficiaries regarding the outcomes of the UPSHIFT program?	
Redesign	What opportunities have been identified that could enhance the sustainability of the program's gains? • What strategies are currently in place or planned to ensure that the program's benefits continue for participants beyond the immediate implementation phase? • How does the programme foster relationships with local businesses, financial institutions, and community leaders to support the long-term success of the participants? • How does the programme ensured local partners has the means and capacity to continue upshift support long post UNICEF support? • What have been the most significant lessons learned during the implementation of the UPSHIFT program? What was the main challenges faced during the programme delivery and how these were overcome?	

5.4. Focus Group Discussion Guide

General Information

Complete before the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) begins		
Date:		
Name of facilitator:		
Name of notetaker:		
Name of interpreter:		
Province/district:		
Community:		
Respondent details		
Number of respondents:	Female: Male:	Total:
Respondent age group:		
Type of group (e.g. girls with specific needs):		

Introduction:

Welcome to this FGD, which is part of the final assessment of the UPSHIFT Programme in Somalia. Your participation is crucial in shaping the future of youth programs in the country. Your insights will remain confidential, and you can withdraw from the discussion anytime. Before we begin, please note that your participation is entirely voluntary. You can withdraw from it anytime if you feel uncomfortable or wish to stop participating. Your decision to participate or withdraw will not affect your relationship with the UPSHIFT Programme or any other organisation.

I also want to confirm that you understand you are not being paid for participation.

- The discussion will take around 1 hour.
- Do you have any additional questions about the group discussion?
- Please confirm that you want to participate in this group discussion.

Ground Rules

- Only one person must speak at a time.
- Please share your views when you have time. There are many of you in the group, and we must hear each of your views.
- There are no right or wrong answers in this discussion. We want to understand your opinions, preferences, and concerns and respect all participants' views.
- You don't need to agree with what others in the group say, but we must respect all opinions.

- Please silence your mobile phones before we begin.

Questions
General Theme
1. What do you know about the UPSHIFT programme?
2. What are the groups considered most in need to participate in the UPSHIFT?
   - **Probe:**
     - Do you think other young people should be included but have been left out? Can you give any specific examples?

Mobilisation, Targeting and Selection
1. How would you describe the UPSHIFT application process?
2. Do you think the application process was easy and smooth?
3. Can you describe UPSHIFT's selection and recruitment process? How long did it take to receive a decision after submitting your application?
4. What suggestions do you have for improving the selection process?

Training and Bootcamp
5. Tell us about the quality of the training you attended during the programme.
   a. **Probe:**
      i. Were you satisfied with the quality of the training and boot camp sessions?
      ii. What specific aspects of the boot camp did you find most valuable?
      iii. Were the instructors effective in delivering the training sessions?
6. Did you find the language used during the sessions appropriate and inclusive?
   a. Probe: Were there youth with disabilities in the boot camp? What should ensure that young people with disabilities also benefit from these opportunities?
7. What are the main challenges in teamwork and collaboration during the boot camp?
   a. Have you shared these challenges with the facilitators, and what was their feedback?

Grants and Employment Opportunities
8. What areas do you think the UPSHIFT Programme impacted employment opportunities for young people in your community?
   a. **Probe**
      i. How sustainable are these changes?
9. How did the grants provided by UPSHIFT contribute to the sustainability of your business?
   a. What were the primary factors that hindered or aided your business in utilising the grant provided to you?

10. Have you encountered any challenges in sustaining the business initiated through UPSHIFT grants?
    a. Give specific examples.
11. How can the UPSHIFT Programme further support the sustainability of young people's businesses beyond the initial funding period?

Conclusion:
Thank you for your valuable insights and contributions to this assessment. Your feedback will help improve youth programs and initiatives in Somalia. Please feel free to share any additional comments or suggestions. Your participation is greatly appreciated, and your responses will remain confidential.

5.5. Stakeholder List

Programme Stakeholder	Title and Name	Telephone and Email	Interview Method
UNICEF			
Somalia Country Office			e-Meeting
Child Protection Office			e-Meeting
UPSHIF Programme Officers			In- Person
Partners			
NAGAAD			In- Person
Horn Vision			In- Person
WAAPO			In- Person
Government officials and Line Ministries			
Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family (Somaliland)			In- Person
MOWDAFA (Puntland)			In- Person
Ministry of Youth Affairs (Puntland)			In- Person
Other Stakeholders			
Community leaders			In- Person
Privite Sector Partners			In- Person

Businesses List

District	Type of Business	Business Name
Borma	Retail and Commerce	Rugsan Cafeteria
Borma	Software solutions	Som Technology
Borma	Agriculture and Livestock	Maandeeq Company
Borma	Crafts and Services	Tayosan Make Up
Borma	Crafts and Services	Heegsan Group
Borma	Crafts and Services	Bella Skincare
Burco	Crafts and Services	Midnimo Collection
Burco	Crafts and Services	Bedria Beauty Salon
Burco	Retail and Commerce	Golden Ice Cream And Soft Foods
Burco	Retail and Commerce	Maandeeq Small Shop And Booshari
Burco	Retail and Commerce	Najah Clothes/Aragsan Style
Hargeisa	Retail and Commerce	Kaah Creative Agency
Hargeisa	Retail and Commerce	Lalays Boutique
Hargeisa	Retail and Commerce	Beersan
Hargeisa	Retail and Commerce	Simad Development Agency (Ladies Gallery)
Hargeisa	Retail and Commerce	Kava Creative Agency
Hargeisa	Crafts and Services	Somaliland Training Women Center
Hargeisa	Retail and Commerce	Sidiiq Shop
Hargeisa	Retail and Commerce	Bilic Dumar
Hargeisa	Retail and Commerce	Barwaqo Boshari
Hargeisa	Crafts and Services	Barwaaqo Tailor Shop
Gabilay	Retail and Commerce	Golden Fruits
Gabilay	Crafts and Services	Modern Barbershop
Gabilay	Retail and Commerce	Adeegsame

Gabilay	Retail and Commerce	Matanaha(Dharka Dumarka/ Photographer)
Gabilay	Crafts and Services	Qabeeye Bajaj
Gabilay	Retail and Commerce	Hormood Cafeteria
Hargeisa	Retail and Commerce	Bilic Wadan
Hargeisa	Retail and Commerce	Fresh Mart
Hargeisa	Crafts and Services	Friendship Snacks
Hargeisa	Crafts and Services	Sunny Sweets
Hargeisa	Crafts and Services	Anfac Mooto
Hargeisa	Crafts and Services	Farsamo Hub
Garoowe	Crafts and Services	Macsaro Team
Garoowe	Crafts and Services	Xigsin Group
Garoowe	Crafts and Services	Qubeys Body Scrub
Garoowe	Retail and Commerce	organic fruits & Juice
Garoowe	Crafts and Services	Ilays Media
Garoowe	Crafts and Services	Tusmo Digital Market
Garoowe	Crafts and Services	Warda Decoration
BOSAASO	Crafts and Services	Walaalaha Cleaning Houses
BOSAASO	Agriculture and Livestock	Iftin Boultry
BOSAASO	Agriculture and Livestock	Isku Tashi Group
BOSAASO	Agriculture and Livestock	Halgan Group
BOSAASO	Agriculture and Livestock	Barwaaqo Group
BOSAASO	Crafts and Services	Wadajir Group
BOSAASO	Crafts and Services	Dan deegaan Group
BOSAASO	Crafts and Services	Fatxulkhayr Group

* Climate sensitive businesses are highlighted with blue