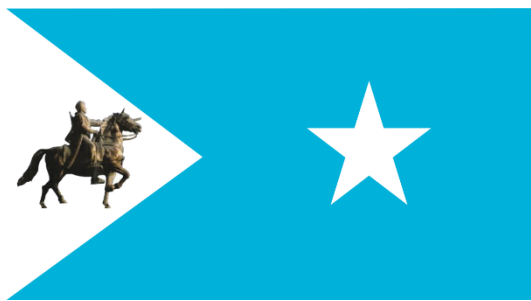


SSC-KHATUMO



NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

**Fostering Recovery, Humanitarian Support,
and Peacebuilding in Post-Conflict Setting**



Mercy-USA
Mercy-USA for Aid and Development



ALIGHT



care

G F A D O
GACAN-QABAD
HUMANITARIAN AID AND DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

December 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

On behalf of the SSC-Khatumo Administration, we extend our deepest gratitude to all who contributed to the SSC-Khatumo Needs Assessment Report. This pivotal report, aimed at fostering recovery, humanitarian support, and peacebuilding in our post-conflict SSC-Khatumo regions, is a testament to the power of collective effort and dedication. The insights and data compiled through this comprehensive assessment report are essential for guiding our collaborative accomplishments to effectively meet our communities' urgent needs.

We are greatly thankful for the expertise, commitment, and unwavering support of each individual and organization involved in this project. Your contributions have been instrumental in highlighting the critical issues facing SSC-Khatumo regions, enabling us to develop effective strategies for the journey ahead.

Special thanks are extended to the technical team members, whose careful planning, organization, implementation, and completion of this assessment report have been remarkable. Your hard work and dedication have been the backbone of this successful endeavour.

We are also vastly grateful to esteemed institutions, including ADRA, CARE, Mercy-USA, ALIGHT, and Gacan-Chabad, for their invaluable logistical support throughout the assessment process. Your support has been essential in facilitating the smooth implementation of this comprehensive assessment work.

Furthermore, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to all stakeholders, community representatives, youth, and women for their active participation and cooperation during the data-collection phase of the assessment. Your engagement and wisdom have been vital in ensuring the report's thoroughness and relevance.

As we move forward, we are eager to continue our partnership with each of you, translating the findings of this report into tangible actions and sustainable solutions for the betterment of our community. Through continued collaboration, we can achieve the lasting peace and development the SSC-Khatumo regions aspire to.

Once again, I thank everyone for his significant contributions and for standing with us in our commitment to the recovery, development, and peacebuilding efforts in SSC-Khatumo. Your dedication and support have set a solid foundation for our collective journey towards a brighter future for our communities.

Sincerely,
Ali Ige
Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs
SSC-Khatumo Administration

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ABBREVIATIONS

NGO
IDP
WASH
FSL
HEA
UN
FGD
KII
ADRA

Non-Governmental Organization

Internally Displaced Persons

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Food Security and Livelihoods

Health and Education Assistance

United Nations

Focus Group Discussion

Key Informant Interview

Adventist Development and Relief Agency

FORWARD

Following a nine-month-long Conflict and war crimes committed by Somaliland in the SSC-Khatumo regions, we are pleased to introduce the SSC-Khatumo Needs Assessment Report, a pivotal document that reflects our shared journey toward recovery, stability, and reconstruction.

This report provides insights into the challenges faced by our communities whose resilience was nothing short of a miracle; it also outlines future collaborative strategies to overcome these obstacles. The report serves as evidence of our collective dedication to supporting our traditionally disadvantaged communities and building a robust foundation for sustainable development in our region.

We highlight the importance of a unified strategy to address the intricate challenges within the SSC-Khatumo regions. The report serves as a call for enhanced collaboration and support at the federal level. We extend an invitation to the Federal Government of Somalia to engage closely with us, utilizing this report as a strategic guide for our joint efforts in humanitarian aid, infrastructure reconstruction, and peacebuilding initiatives.

The SSC-Khatumo Needs Assessment Report emphasizes the critical need for global partnerships and support. While the challenges ahead may seem daunting, they can be overcome through a collective effort that transcends borders. We urge our international partners including UN entities to review the current UN Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that undermined development and governance capacity of SSCK region; Given the new political and socio-economic realities on the ground and aspirations of SSCK communities, the 2023 SSCK Blue Revolution and thus Referendum paves the way to settle contestation claims by other Administrations. We believe it is time to join us in providing essential resources, expertise, and support to uplift our communities. Your support is instrumental in transforming the aspirations of our people into tangible outcomes, paving the way for a future marked by peace, stability, and prosperity.

The Office of Planning Development and International Cooperation (OPDIC) at SSC-Khatumo Administration is fully committed to coordinating and implementing the recommendations outlined in this report. We recognize the significance of open dialogue, collaboration, and partnership in achieving our objectives. Moving forward, we commit to engaging diligently with all stakeholders, both locally and internationally, to ensure the successful execution of the report's goals.

As we find ourselves at a critical juncture in our history, the decisions we make will shape the future of the SSC-Khatumo regions. Let us seize this opportunity with unwavering determination and optimism, working harmoniously to establish a brighter, more prosperous future for our communities.

Regards,

Abdirisak Yousuf M. (Hindi)
Office of Planning, Development, and International Cooperation (OPDIC)
SSC-Khatumo Administration.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The SSC-Khatumo regions, encompassing Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn, are integral to Somalia's socio-political landscape, rich in culture and history yet marred by prolonged conflict and instability. These regions have historically been at the crossroads of territorial disputes and political tensions, significantly impacting the local populations' livelihoods, safety, and access to essential services. In response to these challenges, the SSC-Khatumo Administration was established as an interim governance body, representing a concerted effort by the communities to forge a path towards self-governance, peace, and sustainable development within the framework of the Somali federal system.

The rationale behind this assessment is rooted in a clear recognition of the multifaceted crises affecting the SSC regions, which demand a nuanced understanding of both the historical context and the current realities on the ground. These regions have witnessed a degradation of their socio-economic fabric, exacerbated by conflict, leading to widespread displacement, infrastructure damage, and a dire need for humanitarian assistance and developmental support. This detailed assessment highlights the necessity to map out the immediate and enduring needs of the affected populations, to tailor recovery and development strategies that are both effective and sustainable.

The overarching goal of this assessment is to meticulously evaluate the acute and long-term requirements of the communities impacted by the conflicts within the SSC-Khatumo regions. It aims to pave the way for targeted, impactful interventions that address the nuanced challenges these regions face, advocating for stability, development, and prosperity in the post-conflict landscape. Through the voices and experiences of the local communities directly affected, this assessment intends to facilitate informed decision-making that aligns with the aspirations and priorities of the SSC populations.

Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, this assessment combines qualitative insights with quantitative data to paint a comprehensive picture of the current state of the SSC-Khatumo regions. Through key informant interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions, the assessment taps into the firsthand experiences of those at the heart of the conflict, ensuring a multidimensional understanding of the situation. Complemented by a thorough desk review of relevant literature, the methodology adopted here ensures that the findings are rooted in a deep contextual understanding.

The assessment is structured and analysed around three themes: **Humanitarian Needs** assessed the immediate impact of conflict, including displacement, livelihood challenges, food and health security, violence exposure, and the necessity for specific humanitarian aid. **Peace Building and Conflict Resolution** delved into the underlying causes of strife, evaluating ongoing peace efforts and the significant role of elders, women, and youth in fostering peace and resolving disputes for enduring tranquility. Lastly, **Post-Conflict/War Recovery** highlighted strategies for rebuilding the community and infrastructure, foster reconciliation and stability in the SSC Khatumo regions.

The assessment generated several key findings and recommendations, as highlighted in the table below.

Table 1: Key Findings and Key Recommendations

Key Findings	Key Recommendations
Humanitarian Needs	
The conflict has led to the displacement of thousands, with many families losing their homes and livelihoods. The urgent need for safe, adequate shelter and basic necessities is paramount for the displaced populations seeking refuge and stability.	Launch a comprehensive housing and resettlement program that provides emergency shelters immediately and facilitates the construction of permanent, resilient housing solutions.
The local economy has been severely impacted by the conflict, resulting in increased unemployment, reduced income opportunities, and heightened poverty.	Implement a multifaceted economic recovery program that includes cash assistance for immediate relief, skills training and microfinance for livelihood restoration, and investment in local infrastructure projects to create jobs and stimulate the local economy.
Schools have been destroyed or rendered inaccessible, disrupting the education of countless children and youth.	Rebuild and rehabilitate educational facilities. Additionally, provide psychosocial support for students and training for teachers to address the trauma experienced by the community.
The conflict has exacerbated health challenges, with damaged healthcare facilities and a scarcity of medical supplies leading to inadequate care for those affected.	Restore and upgrade healthcare facilities to ensure comprehensive coverage, from primary care to specialized treatments.
The disruption of local agriculture and markets, combined with economic hardship, has led to significant food insecurity.	Initiate immediate food assistance programs to address acute food insecurity, complemented by sustainable agricultural development initiatives that support the recovery of local food production systems.
Peace Building and Conflict Resolution	
The assessment identified long-standing tribal disputes, recent political disagreements, and competition over scarce resources as primary drivers of conflict.	Implement a structured dialogue and reconciliation program that brings together representatives from all community sectors, including those from conflicting parties, to address historical grievances, political disagreements, and resource competition.

Communities in the SSC-Khatumo regions are affected by a spectrum of violence, including economic violence, acts of genocide, psychological warfare, clan-based conflicts, and gender-based violence.	Develop targeted interventions to address the various forms of violence affecting the communities, such as economic support programs to alleviate poverty-induced violence, legal and psychological support for victims of gender-based and clan-based violence, and community-based initiatives aimed at preventing further conflicts.
Despite the complex nature of conflicts, there is a strong reliance on traditional methods for conflict resolution, such as mediation by local leaders and community dialogues. While these methods are deeply respected and have historical significance, there is also a need for formal peacebuilding initiatives that can address the multifaceted aspects of the conflicts.	Enhance the capacity of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms while integrating them with formal peace processes. This could involve training local leaders in modern peacebuilding techniques and establishing platforms where traditional and formal methods coalesce, ensuring a more holistic approach to conflict resolution.
Although traditional elders play a significant role in mediation efforts, the assessment highlights the underrepresentation of women and youth in peacebuilding and conflict resolution processes.	Launch programs specifically designed to increase the participation of women and youth in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. This could include leadership and negotiation skills training, the establishment of youth and women peace councils, and ensuring their representation in all peace-related discussions and decision-making processes.
Post-Conflict/War Recovery	
Post-conflict, there has been a noticeable improvement in community cohesion, with many respondents reporting a strengthened sense of unity and collective identity.	Capitalize on the improved sense of unity by implementing community-led development projects. Facilitate platforms for continuous dialogue and collaboration among community members.
A significant portion of respondents observed improvements in security within their communities, indicating progress in establishing stability and safety post-conflict.	Support and expand community-based security initiatives. Work with local law enforcement and community leaders to develop strategies that sustain peace and safety, enabling the safe return of displaced populations and the smooth implementation of recovery and development projects.
Although recovery is in its early stages, there are indications of economic revitalization, with some sectors beginning to show signs of growth.	Launch targeted economic development programs focusing on sectors showing growth potential. This includes providing training and resources for entrepreneurship, investing in

	infrastructure that supports economic activities, and creating employment opportunities, particularly for youth and women.
Despite some improvements, there remains a substantial need for rebuilding critical infrastructure, including healthcare facilities, schools, and public utilities. The damage to infrastructure has significantly hindered access to essential services.	Prioritize and allocate resources for the immediate restoration of essential services, focusing on healthcare, education, and utilities. Develop partnerships with international donors and private sector entities to fund and implement infrastructure projects that are resilient and sustainable.
The conflict has disrupted agricultural activities and market access, exacerbating food insecurity.	Implement agricultural support programs that provide seeds, tools, and training to farmers. Improve market access and supply chains to ensure food products reach all community members.
The findings highlight the need for more inclusive recovery strategies that consider the diverse needs and contributions of all community members, including women, youth, and marginalized groups.	Develop recovery plans that explicitly include the needs and perspectives of women, youth, and marginalized groups. Establish advisory councils composed of diverse community representatives to guide recovery efforts, ensuring programs are equitable and beneficial to all community segments.
The assessment identifies several obstacles to recovery, including insufficient funding, the politicization of aid, a lack of external support, and a need for increased advocacy for the SSC-Khatumo regions	Advocate for increased funding and support from both national and international partners to address the gap in resources for recovery efforts. Work to depoliticize aid distribution, ensuring assistance is based on need rather than political affiliations, and launch campaigns to raise awareness of the SSC-Khatumo regions' needs to garner broader support.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn (SSC) regions have been embroiled in a protracted conflict, with the recent crisis in LasAnod marking a significant escalation in violence. The core of the dispute lies in the overlapping territorial claims by the self-declared republic of Somaliland and the autonomous Puntland State of Somalia. This conflict is deeply rooted in historical grievances, colonial legacies, and complex clan dynamics, significantly affecting the local populations' safety, livelihoods, and access to essential services.¹

Moreover, over the past couple of years, the situation in the Sool region has seriously deteriorated, significantly impacted by the targeted killings of influential figures, including business leaders, religious leaders, academicians, politicians, and community activists. In December 2022, LasAnod witnessed the assassination of a young politician, marking the latest in a series of targeted killings within the city, highlighting the escalating insecurity and its profound implications on regional stability.² Furthermore, the shelling of Las Anod by Somaliland forces has led to significant casualties and displacement. Reports indicate that over 500 lives were lost, 2,400 people injured, and 203,000 displaced. The conflict has also resulted in the destruction of community infrastructure, with more than 300 homes, at least two mosques, and three schools damaged.

These incidents, which have occurred over time without prevention, resolution, or follow-up by the Somaliland authorities in the area, serve as a touching example of the ongoing violence and lack of accountability in the region³. Additionally, accusations have linked the sequence of killings in LasAnod to internal community conflicts or implied Al-Shabaab militia activities. Yet, the lack of concrete evidence implicating Al-Shabaab casts doubts on these assertions.

In LasAnod and the broader Sool region, residents have sought justice and security protections. Yet, Somaliland authorities have consistently failed to take meaningful steps towards ensuring justice or implementing security measures to safeguard civilians. In reaction to ongoing insecurity, protests in LasAnod intensified when Somaliland troops fired on demonstrators, killing about 15 and wounding many, mainly youths. This incident highlights the dangerous security challenges and the harsh response of authorities to civil unrest⁴.

¹ Omar S. Mahmood. "Overlapping claims by Somaliland and Puntland: The case of Sool and Sanaag." EAST AFRICA REPORT 27, November 2019.

² Ibid

³ Hoehne, M. V. (2023, February 6). Crisis in LasAnod: Border Disputes, Escalating Insecurity and the Future of Somaliland.

⁴ Ibid

Healthcare facilities in the region, crucial for the well-being of the population, have not been spared in the conflict. The Las Anod General Hospital, hit at more than four times, illustrates the catastrophic impact on healthcare, with significant damage to its structure, including critical areas like the pediatric ward and the blood bank along with destruction of ambulances⁵. The World Health Organization's condemnation of attacks on healthcare infrastructure in LasAnod highlights the violation of international humanitarian norms and the exacerbation of the healthcare crisis in the area⁶. Médecins Sans Frontières' decision to suspend operations in Las Anod due to extreme violence including a recent incident on 8 July that injured staff and damaged hospital infrastructure, marking the fifth attack since violence intensified on 6 February 2023 further evidences the breakdown of healthcare services, accentuating the critical need for peace and stability to restore essential services.⁷



Photo 1: (Kalabaydh): Displaced women from the LasAnod war | Photo 2: Mass graves for the LasAnod people killed by Somaliland forces

⁵ Somaliland: Urgent investigation needed as fighting takes heavy toll on civilians in Las Anod
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/04/somaliland-conflict/>

⁶ WHO condemns attack on health care facility in LasAnod: <https://www.emro.who.int/media/news/who-condemns-attack-on-health-care-facility-in-las-canood-somaliland.html>

⁷Extreme violence in Las Anod forces MSF to close activities

<https://www.msf.org/extreme-violence-las-anod-forces-msf-close-activities>



Photo: LasAnod Hospital devastated by the indiscriminate shelling from Somaliland forces

In early 2023, faced with escalating tensions and severe disruptions to essential supplies like water, power, and access to medical services and markets, LaAnod's diverse community leaders, including elders, business figures, religious leaders, and civil society members, united to form 33 consultative committees. On February 6, 2023, they announced the LasAnod Declaration, establishing an autonomous regional administration under the federal government of Somalia's oversight. This move, which the federal government swiftly supported, marked a crucial step toward addressing the humanitarian crisis and facilitating the evacuation of critically injured individuals to Mogadishu amid the conflict with Somaliland forces. These committees, along with traditional elders, pursued the creation of a governance structure through ongoing consultations, leading to a unified administration for the SSC-Khatumo regions, representing the community's collective aspiration for autonomy and effective governance amidst the conflict.⁸

As Somaliland forces heightened their shelling, severely damaging vital community infrastructure, including schools, mosques, and civilian homes, the 33 committee members and traditional elders continued their efforts to form a governance body amidst the growing conflict. Through a series of constant consultations and meetings among the 33 committee members and the traditional leaders of the local community, they agreed to establish a unified administration representing the entire community residing in the SSC-Khatumo regions. By this time, a sequence of conferences involving the 33 committee members and the traditional leaders has led to the election of the Speaker and the SSC-Khatumo Administration Central Council deputies.⁹

On August 5, 2023, elections were held for the leader and deputy leader of the SSC-Khatumo Administration, marking a central step forward in the local communities' interest of self-governance and representation under the Somali federal structure.

⁸ SSC- Khaatumo oo yeelatay hoggaan rasmi ah oo doorasho ku yimid https://hiiraan.com/news/2023/Aug/wararka_maanta1-184991.htm

⁹ ibid

After the elections, on October 19th, 2023, Somalia's Federal Government recognised the newly elected leaders and their administration with temporary recognition for a two-year period, positioning them under Somalia's federal governance structure, under the oversight of the Ministry of Interior, Federalism, and Reconciliation, in line with regional federal governance structure.

The establishment of the SSC-Khatumo Administration indicates a significant milestone in the region's history, displaying the local population's desire for autonomy and effective leadership. The new services and charged with the task of rebuilding the area, the administration is faced with the daunting challenges of reconstructing infrastructure, restoring services, and revitalizing a community's economy and social framework that has been forgotten for too long.



Photo: People of LasAnod protesting to seek justice for the killing of Hadrawi

In efforts to support governance and peacebuilding, civil society members have become instrumental in advocating for essential community needs. Additionally, in line with promoting gender representation, the SSC Khatumo women's group was formed as a women-led platform focused on female empowerment and ensuring gender equality. This initiative saw 45 members from various sub-clans within the community democratically elect a chairwoman and deputy, marking a significant step towards inclusive governance.

Photo: SSC-Khatumo Administration central council and executive leaders of SSC-Khatumo Administration



The international community's role in supporting the SSC-Khatumo regions through targeted humanitarian assistance, development projects, and governance support is essential. Collaboration between international actors and federal and local authorities is essential to ensure effective aid distribution, addressing the immediate humanitarian needs while fostering sustainable development and resilience. This strategic approach is vital for the SSC-Khatumo region's recovery, aiming to mitigate the conflict's impacts and lay a foundation for long-term stability and prosperity in these regions.

This assessment aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the current situation, informed by the historical context of the dispute, to identify pathways for recovery, peacebuilding, and sustainable development in the SSC-Khatumo regions.

1.2 RATIONALE OF THE ASSESSMENT

This needs assessment is conceived in response to the urgent and complex challenges faced by the SSC-Khatumo regions, emerging from decades of conflict and instability. This assessment is a necessary step to understand the humanitarian, developmental, and socio-political needs within these areas. The rationale for this assessment is based on several considerations:

Addressing the Legacy of Conflict: The regions have endured prolonged periods of conflict that have deeply affected the social fabric, economy, and infrastructure. The assessment seeks to understand these impacts comprehensively, recognizing that the path to recovery and peacebuilding requires a detailed and nuanced understanding of the conditions on the ground.

Critical Need for Humanitarian and Developmental Support: Despite the resilience shown by the communities, there is a critical need for immediate humanitarian aid and long-term developmental support. The assessment aims to identify the most pressing needs and prioritize interventions that can alleviate suffering and foster sustainable development.

Foundation for Effective Peacebuilding: Lasting peace in the SSC-Khatumo regions necessitates a careful, informed approach to addressing the underlying causes of conflict and building capacities for conflict resolution. The assessment provides a basis for developing targeted peacebuilding strategies that are informed by the needs and aspirations of the local communities.

Establishment of a Functional Administration: The interim SSC-Khatumo administration's efforts to establish health services, education, basic infrastructure, and effective governance are contingent upon a clear understanding of the existing gaps and challenges. The assessment is instrumental in mapping out the priorities and strategies for the administration to serve its communities effectively.

Mobilizing Support: The findings from the assessment are pivotal in making a compelling case for support from the federal government of Somalia and the international community. By clearly articulating the needs and potential interventions, the assessment seeks to mobilize the necessary resources and partnerships for recovery and peacebuilding efforts.

Empowering Communities: At its core, the assessment is about placing the voices and needs of the SSC-Khatumo communities at the forefront of recovery and development initiatives. It serves as a mechanism for involving communities in shaping their future, ensuring that interventions are contextually relevant and aligned with the aspirations of the people.

1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSESSMENT

The primary objective of the assessment is to conduct a thorough evaluation of both immediate and long-term needs of displaced and impacted populations in the SSC-Khatumo regions. This effort is designed to inform targeted and effective aid and recovery strategies that address specific challenges and promote

sustainable interventions. The ultimate goal is to support stability and development in a post-conflict context through precise and meaningful support.

The specific objectives of the assessment include:

1. To identify and prioritize the urgent humanitarian needs of displaced and affected populations based on the community's identified priorities. This aims to ensure that relief efforts are effective in reducing suffering and are aligned with the immediate concerns and needs as expressed by the community, thereby preventing further crisis consequences.
2. To assess the long-term developmental and infrastructural needs within the SSC-Khatumo regions, with a focus on essential sectors such as health, education, and economic opportunities. The aim is to establish a strong foundation for sustainable development and resilience.
3. To conduct an in-depth analysis of the root causes of conflict within the region, incorporating perspectives from diverse community stakeholders. This objective seeks to inform peacebuilding initiatives and reconciliation efforts that address underlying tensions and grievances, thereby facilitating a pathway towards durable peace and social cohesion.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE REPORT

The scope of the assessment includes a detailed assessment across SSC-Khatumo regions (Sool, Sanaag, Cayn), focusing on immediate and long-term needs like food security, healthcare, and infrastructure damage. It identifies vulnerable groups for targeted aid, evaluates socio-political and economic factors influencing the crisis, and incorporates peace and conflict resolution strategies. The goal is to formulate prioritized interventions for effective post-conflict recovery and stability.

2. METHODOLOGY OF THE ASSESSMENT

The assessment utilised a mixed methods approach encompassing both qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The primary data collection approach adopted aims to gain new intuitions and information that accurately signal the real context in the SSC-Khatumo regions and acquire the voices of the local communities. The methodology includes a mixture of key informant interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions, designed to ensure a comprehensive and multi-dimensional understanding of the post-conflict situation, concentrating entirely on gathering firsthand information to represent the perspectives and experiences of those directly affected. Desk review of existing literature was utilised to complement insights from the data collection and to provide a contextual foundation that enhances the analysis of current dynamics within the SSC-Khatumo regions.

2.1 DESK REVIEW

As a preliminary step, an extensive desk review was conducted to compile and analyze existing literature on the SSC-Khatumo regions, focusing on historical conflicts, previous humanitarian interventions, and documented efforts in peacebuilding and recovery. This review helped in identifying gaps in existing data and provided a contextual backdrop against which new findings were assessed, ensuring a rich, layered understanding of the current crisis.

2.3 QUANTITATIVE METHODS

The survey component of the assessment was conducted through surveys with 224 individuals across 21 targeted locations, covering various districts and villages. The participants represent different community stakeholders that were directly impacted by the war crisis in LasAnod. To ensure the collection of unbiased and accurate information, the surveys were administered by data collector teams from esteemed third-party institutions, including ADRA, CARE, Mercy-USA, ALIGHT, and Gacan-Qabad-locally owned NGO.

2.3 QUALITATIVE METHOD

The assessment methodology merged a combination of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to gather nuanced insights on the impact of the conflict in the SSC-Khatumo regions. KIIs were conducted with 45 individuals from all study locations, including displaced persons, academics, community leaders, business owners affected by the conflict, and local government officials. FGDs were held in major district centers - LasAnod, Taleh, Buhodle, and Hudun – a total of 40 participants from various community segments were engaged. These qualitative methods were invaluable in understanding personal narratives, coping strategies, and the direct impacts of conflict, providing a comprehensive view that complements the quantitative survey data.

2.4 DURATION, LOGISTICS AND THE LOCATIONS OF THE ASSESSMENT

The assessment was conducted over a period of eight weeks. The initial three weeks were used to design the research methodology and questions, followed by data collection. The subsequent two weeks focused on analysis, and the final three weeks were allocated to compiling the report. The assessment covered a broad range of locations, including LaAnod with 8 locations (including *Ganbadhe, Kalabaydh, Tukaraq, Karin, Adhiadeye, Gumays, Bocame and Dharkayn*), Buhodle with 6 locations (including *Widhwidh, Hadhwanag, Dandan, Sool-jogto and Yeyle*), Hudun with 2 locations (including *Lafawayne and Awrbogays*), Taleh with 2 locations (including *God'alo and Sarmayo*), and Sanag region with 2 locations (including *Fiqi-Fuliye and Gal-Barwaqo*).

Logistics for each area were carefully planned and funded through in-kind support by the esteemed third-party institutions mentioned above, ensuring efficient, accurate and reliable data collection and meaningful stakeholder engagement.

2.5 Analytical approach

The analysis was structured around three key thematic areas:

1. **Humanitarian Needs:** This theme explored the humanitarian impact of the war, focusing on the conditions of those displaced, their livelihood strategies, food security, health concerns, prevalent violence, and the urgent need for targeted humanitarian interventions.
2. **Peace Building and Conflict Resolution:** Examining the root causes of conflict, existing peace initiatives, and the roles of community elders, women, and youth in peacebuilding, this theme identified strategic measures necessary for dispute resolution and sustainable harmony.
3. **Post-Conflict/War Recovery:** Focused on mechanisms for post-conflict recovery, this theme emphasized community rebuilding, reconciliation, stabilization efforts, and the pursuit of sustainable peace, evaluating the community's evolution post-conflict and the challenges to achieving lasting stability.

2.6 LIMITATION OF THE ASSESSMENT

It is important to acknowledge that the assessment's scope was limited to specific areas within the SSC-Khatumo regions due to time, funding, and logistical constraints. As such, the findings, while providing valuable insights, may not fully represent the entire spectrum of experiences and conditions across the regions.

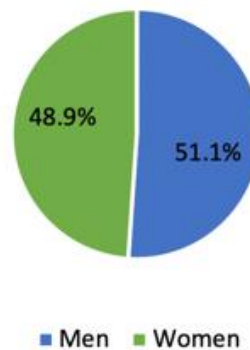
3. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

A total of 309 participants were engaged for the assessment through surveys, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The assessment achieved nearly balanced gender representation, with 48.9% (151) of the participants being women and 51.1% (158) men.

Figure 1: Gender distribution of participants

Distribution by Gender



In terms of regional distribution, reflecting the conflict's epicenter in LasAnod district within the Sool region, a majority of participants, 71.8%, are from Sool. This is indicative of the conflict's significant impact on the area. The remaining participants were distributed with 23.6% from the Cayn region and 4.5% from the Sanaag region.

Figure 2: Distribution by region

Distribution by region

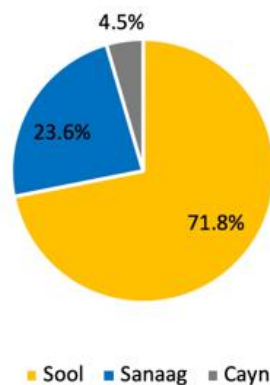
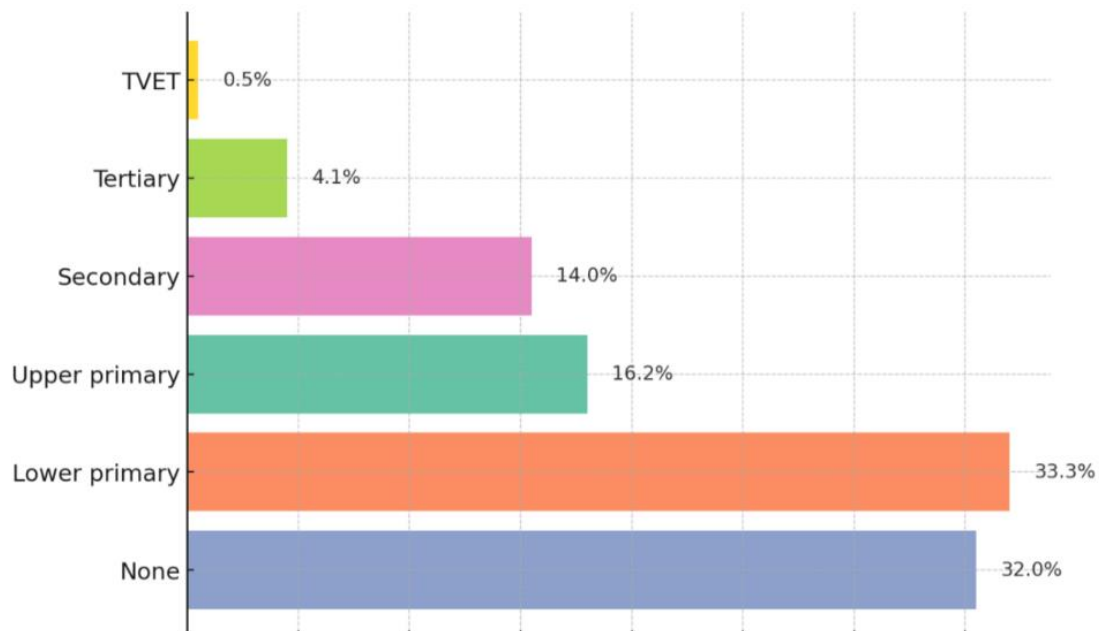


Figure3: Respondent's education level distribution



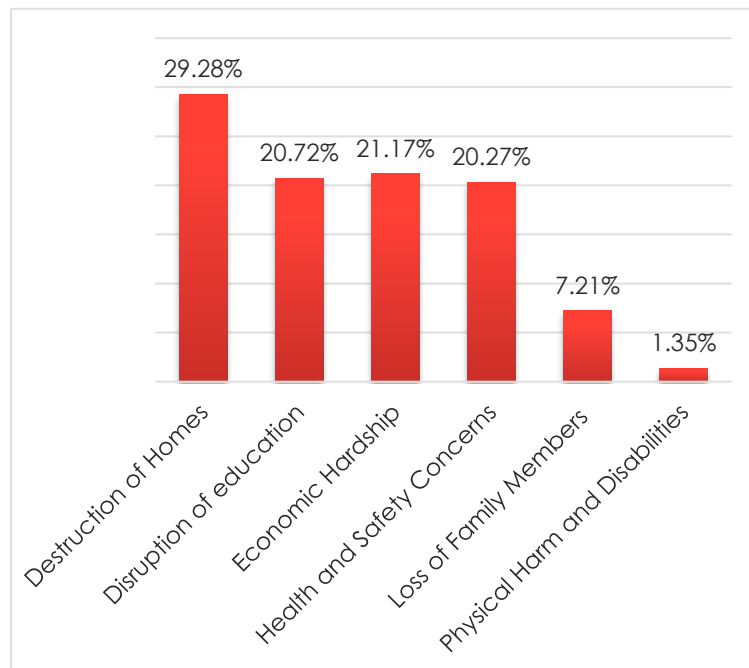
The bar chart displays the education levels of the survey respondents, with 33.3% having attended lower primary, 32.0% attending none, 16.2% attending upper primary, 14.0% attending secondary, 4.1% attending tertiary, and 0.5% attending TVET. **This pre-existing low educational attainment is at risk of further decline due to the conflict, which has led to the destruction of educational facilities and the displacement of people.** The impact of the conflict exacerbates the challenge of improving education in the region, threatening to further lower access to and quality of education for its people.

3.2 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS ACROSS THE ASSESSMENT THEMES

3.2.1 Humanitarian Needs

The assessment highlights extensive humanitarian challenges in the SSC-Khatumo regions, particularly affecting individuals displaced by the LasAnod war crisis. A significant portion of respondents, **29.28%**, reports the **destruction of their homes**, pointing to a dire need for shelter and reconstruction efforts. **Economic hardship affects 21.17%** of the respondents, emphasizing the conflict's impact on livelihoods and the local economy. The crisis has also **disrupted education according to 20.72% of respondents**, highlighting the need for immediate educational support and infrastructure rebuilding. **Health and safety concerns were mentioned by 20.27%** of those surveyed, indicating a critical demand for healthcare services. Additionally, the personal toll of the conflict is evidenced by **7.21% of respondents experiencing the loss of family members** and **1.35% suffering physical harm**.

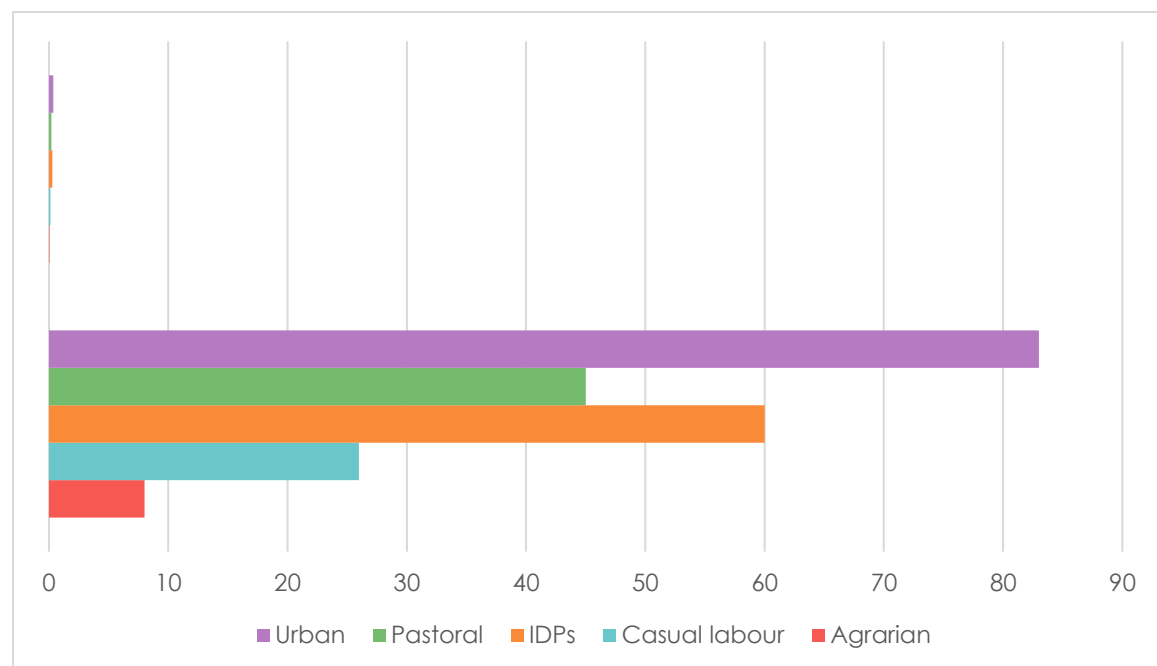
Figure 4. the impact of the LasAnod war crisis



'The war has devastated us, destroying our homes and infrastructure. Everything is affected' **FGD respondent**

Food security remains a significant challenge, as there is more reliance on market purchases amid economic difficulties. The graph shows 'Urban' areas experiencing the highest food security challenges, with 'Agrarian' areas the lowest. The need for economic empowerment and enhanced food access is urgent, especially to ensure diverse, sustainable food production systems

Figure5: Population dependency by sector



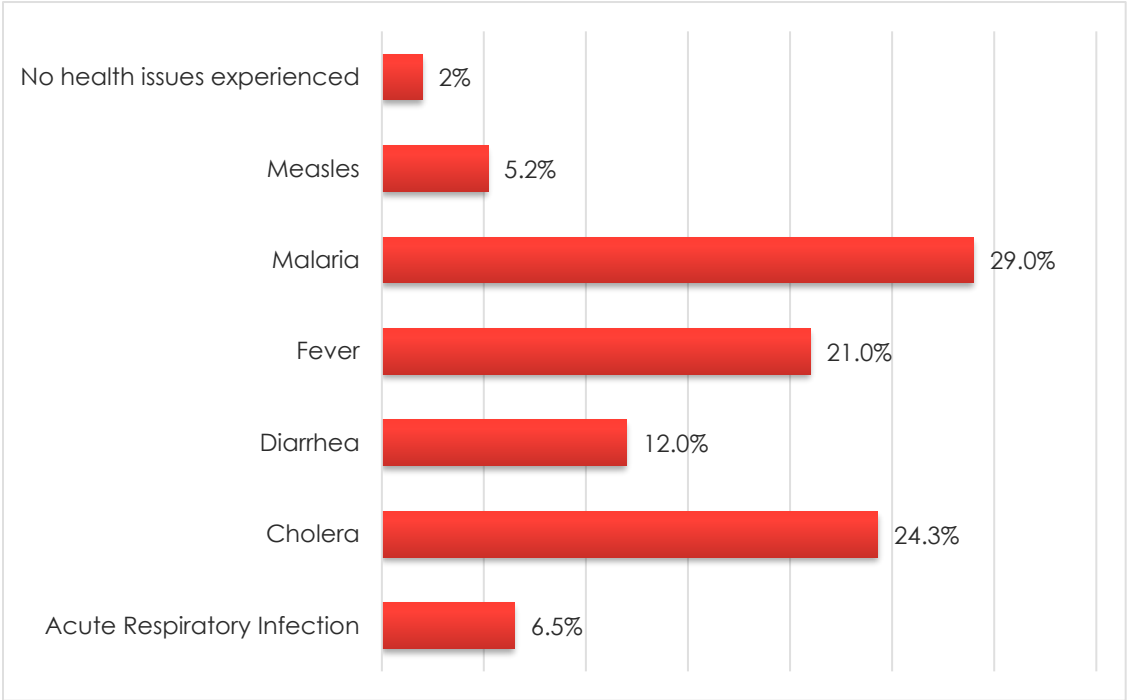
“During and after the war conflict, our community has adapted to depend greatly on livestock, engaging in small businesses, and casual labor for our livelihoods. This shift has become our new normal, with livestock products forming the backbone of our economy” KII, Community leader

Education in the SSC-Khatumo regions is severely disrupted, as highlighted by the Secretary of Education, **with 1,659 students impacted by school closures** due to a lack of teachers, destroyed facilities, and financial constraints. Additionally, the findings revealed that **the few existing educational facilities are overcrowded** and **210 schools urgently require maintenance** to ensure a conducive learning environment.

This disruption exacerbates **the already low education levels among the population**, a critical issue underlined by the assessment's demographic data. **With only 4% attending tertiary level and 14% of participants having attended secondary education**, the closures significantly limit educational opportunities and the future prospects of the region's youth, stemming from teacher shortages, damaged infrastructure, and economic barriers faced by families as a result of the war crisis.

Healthcare needs in the SSC-Khatumo regions are critically high, with respondents highlighting **Malaria (29%), Cholera (24.3%), and Fever (21%) as the most prevalent health concerns**. The destruction and scarcity of medical supplies have severely limited the capacity to address these health challenges, further compounded by 1,036 reported cases of TB and the suspension of essential vaccination programs since December 2022. This alarming situation necessitates immediate healthcare interventions, including the restoration of healthcare facilities and the resumption of vaccination services, to mitigate the health crisis and support the community's recovery.

Figure 6. health issues in the war crisis affected areas



“Our community faces significant health service challenges and scarcity, primarily due to minimal healthcare facilities. While we have basic maternal and child health (MCH) services, there needs to be more inpatient care, which still needs to be improved. Additionally, our children's vaccination programs have been stopped since December 2022. We need help to combat infectious diseases effectively. The lack of NGO or donor funding further exacerbates our inability to provide essential healthcare services, leaving our community vulnerable and underserved.” KII, Community health worker

The findings highlight the severe impact of the LasAnod conflict, leading to significant displacement rates, as shown in the table below. Insights from key informant interviews and focus group discussions reveal dire humanitarian needs within these communities due to this displacement, such as a critical shortage of clean water, which has increased health risks and the prevalence of waterborne diseases. The situation is exacerbated by destroyed infrastructure, high unemployment, and economic instability. There is an urgent

need for aid in these regions, with a focus on reconstructing infrastructure, reviving education, and fostering economic recovery, essential for providing immediate relief and ensuring long-term stability.

Table 2: Displaced locations for surveyed individuals from LasAnod

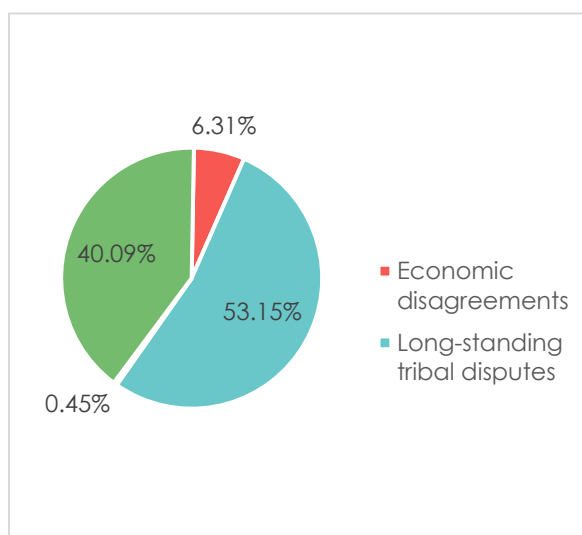
Districts/Locations	Female	Male	Total	Percent
Awrboogays	11	10	21	9.5%
Boocame	7	9	16	7.2%
Buuhoodle	15	9	24	10.8%
Dalyare	9	12	21	9.5%
Garoowe	17	13	30	13.5%
Xudun	14	9	23	10.4%
Kalabaydh	10	12	22	9.9%
Lafaweyne	9	11	20	9.0%
Sarmaanyo	13	9	22	9.9%
Taleex	12	11	23	10.4%
Grand Total	117	105	222	100%
<i>Source: Primary, 2023</i>				

"The war really hit us hard, declining our economy, schools, and health. It also displaced us, creating room tight as 500 families joined us," a community member stated" **FGD respondent**

3.2.2 Peace Building and Conflict Resolution

This theme aimed to explore the root causes of conflict, existing peace initiatives, and the roles of community elders, women, and youth in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, which are essential for peace and sustainable development in the SSC Khatumo regions. According to survey respondents, **over half (53.15%) identified long-standing tribal disputes between the communities in the SSC-Khatumo regions and the Somaliland government as a key factor leading to escalated tensions and prolonged conflict.** Additionally, **40.09% pinpointed recent political disagreements between the Somaliland government and the people of SSC-Khatumo as primary contributors to the ongoing strife.** Additionally, **6.31% mentioned that economic disputes over limited resources have contributed to the unrest and conflict in the region.**

Figure 7: Root causes of the conflict

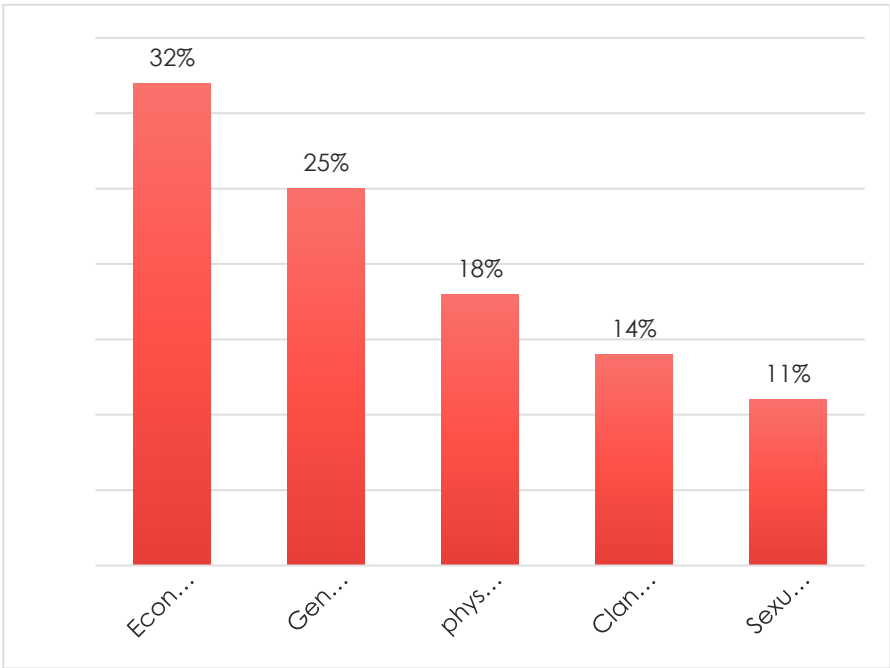


Participants from FGDs and KII indicated that **policies from the Somaliland administration tend to exacerbate these tensions, despite mediation efforts by traditional leaders.** They also emphasized that the **absence of a reliable legal system perpetuates the violence**, calling for improved governance, regional autonomy, and respect for tribal borders to foster peaceful coexistence and secure lasting peace.

"The conflict's root causes are manifested in Somaliland's conflict-ridden political strategies, aggravating territorial disputes with Puntland. Crucial local conflict issues include grazing lands, access to water points, long-standing tribal conflicts over settlements and resources, all compounded by the absence of a reliable formal and informal justice system." KII, Academic

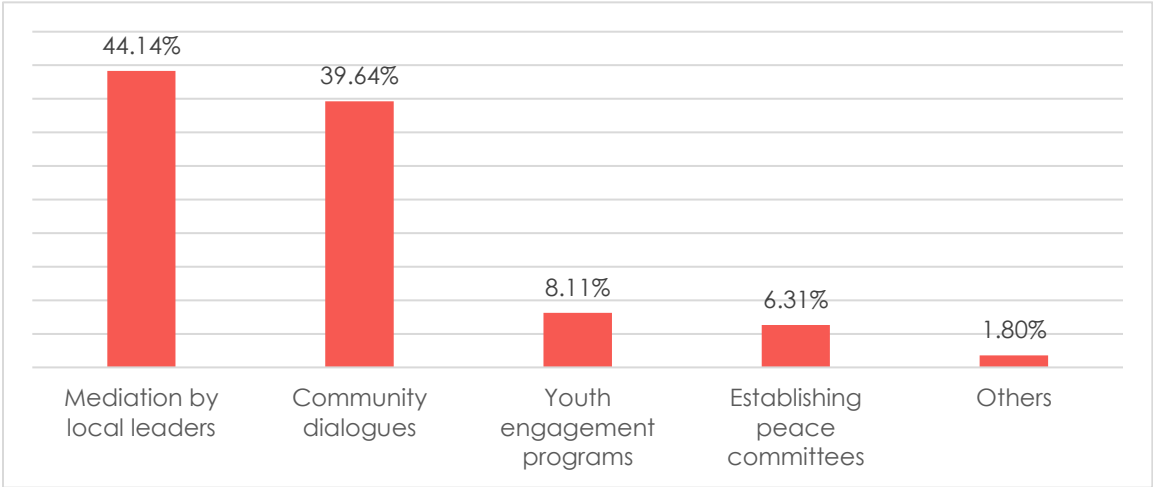
The assessment reveals a spectrum of violence affecting the community. Economic violence is cited by 32% of survey respondents, indicating prevalent financial exploitation. Additionally, 25% mentioned genocide violence, reflected by significant loss of life during the conflict. Psychological warfare, impacting mental well-being and stability, was reported by 18% of participants. Clan-based violence was identified by 14%, and 11% of respondents highlighted sexual violence, pointing to deep-seated social divisions and gender-based injustices, respectively.

Figure 8: Forms of Violence during the war crisis in LasAnod



In the SSC-Khatumo regions, peace initiatives are deeply rooted in traditional approaches, emphasizing the importance of community involvement and grassroots methods for conflict resolution and peacebuilding. According to the interviewed participants, **local leader mediation as the predominant method of resolving conflicts at 44.14%, with community dialogues closely following at 39.64%, highlighting the community's reliance on familiar and trusted mechanisms for resolving disputes.** In comparison, **youth engagement and peace committees are less represented, at 8.11% and 6.31% respectively,** indicating potential for expanding these efforts to include a broader range of voices and perspectives.

Figure 9: peacebuilding initiatives



“Clan elders play a vital role in establishing lasting peace through collaboration with the government, aiming to reduce tensions and strengthen community unity. Key efforts include organizing peace dialogues, enhancing community awareness, supporting police forces for public safety, promoting disarmament, and ensuring the maintenance of tribal borders,” KII, Women activist

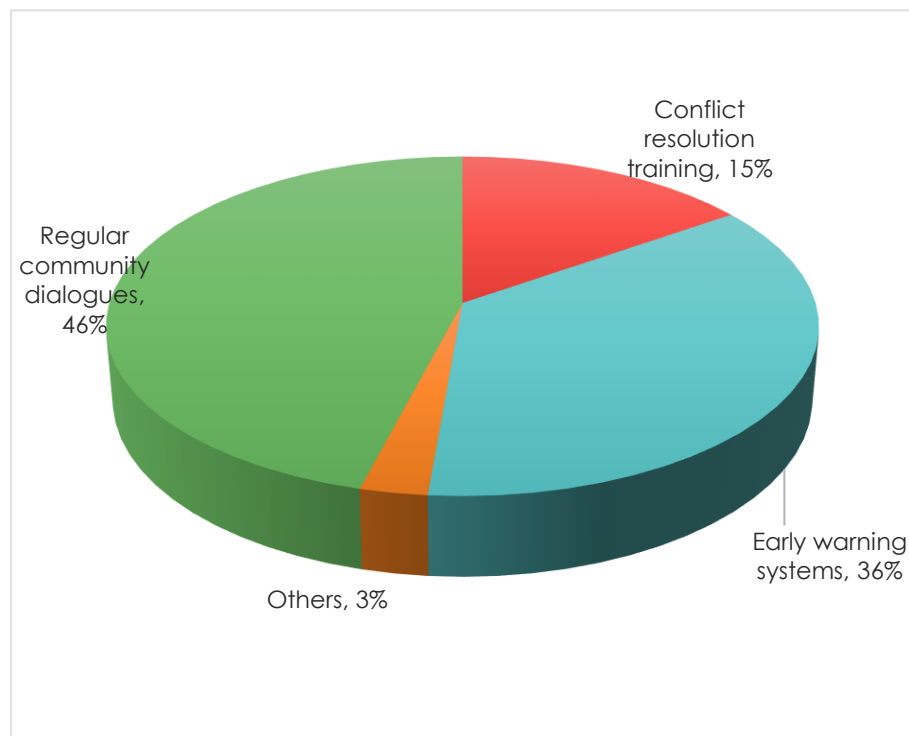
Despite prevailing challenges, **there is a cautiously optimistic perspective toward these peace initiatives, focusing on the critical role of active community participation and addressing the underlying causes of conflict.** Concerns about the destabilizing effects of external influences on regional stability suggest that **moving toward more inclusive and integrated peacebuilding strategies could enhance lasting peace and reconciliation.** Traditional leaders play a crucial role in peace efforts, mediating 72% of initiatives. **The involvement of women in leadership roles (37%) compared to supportive roles (63%) and the active engagement of youth in peacebuilding (55%) and organizing events (36%) highlight the untapped potential of these groups, emphasizing the need for a more inclusive peace process that combines traditional and formal resolution methods.**

Table 3: Role of traditional elders, women, and youth in peacebuilding process

Variables	Indicators	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Traditional Leaders	Advisory role	42	28.0%
	Primary mediators	180	72.0%
Role of Women	Leading roles	90	37.0%
	Supportive roles	132	63.0%
Role of Youth	Active participants	112	55%
	Organizers of peace events	91	36%
	Passive participants	19	9.0%
Grand Total		222	100%

Recommendations from respondents for optimal conflict prevention strategies emphasize the significance of community dialogues and early warning systems as key proactive measures for conflict resolution. 46% of respondents highlighted community dialogues, and 36% advocated for the implementation of early warning systems to detect and mitigate potential conflicts early. Additionally, 15% of respondents pointed to the importance of training in conflict resolution, showcasing a keen interest in fostering peacebuilding capabilities within communities. These recommendations highlight a collective desire for approaches that integrate grassroots reconciliation that draws upon traditional and Islamic principles, and respect the diverse contributions of all community members—elders, scholars, women, and youth. **This approach aims for sustainable peace that proactively addresses both conflicts and economic challenges through united, community-driven efforts.**

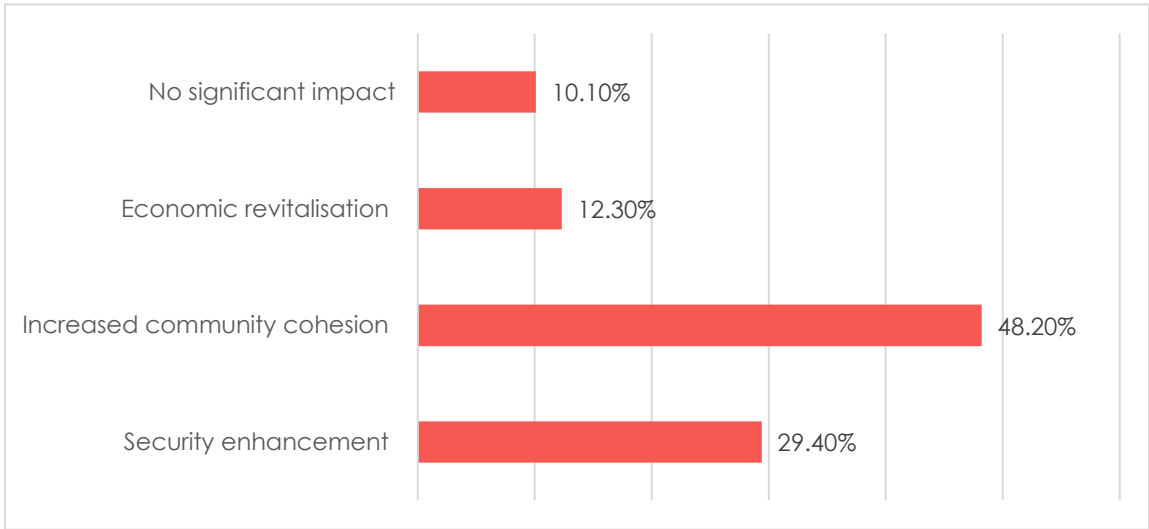
Figure 10: Strategies to prevent disputes.



3.33 Post-Conflict/War Recovery

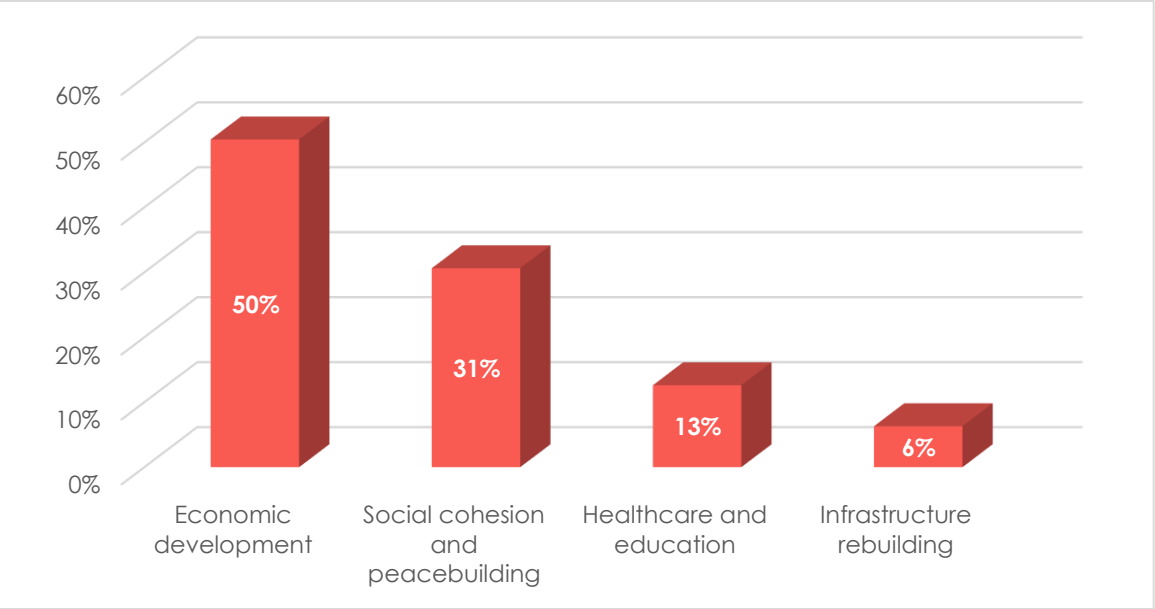
The assessment under this theme aimed to understand the mechanisms for the post-conflict recovery process in SSC Khatumo, focusing on community rebuilding, reconciliation, and stabilization efforts for sustained peace in the regions. **48.20% of the respondents mentioned increased community cohesion, after the conflict indicating that shared adversity has strengthened unity and collective identity.** 29.40% observe security improvements, pointing towards efforts to enhance safety and prevent future conflicts. The economic sector shows signs of revitalization, with 12.30% noting gradual recovery initiatives, while 10.10% report no substantial changes post-conflict, underlining the need for more inclusive recovery strategies.

Figure 11: How the community changes since the onset of the war



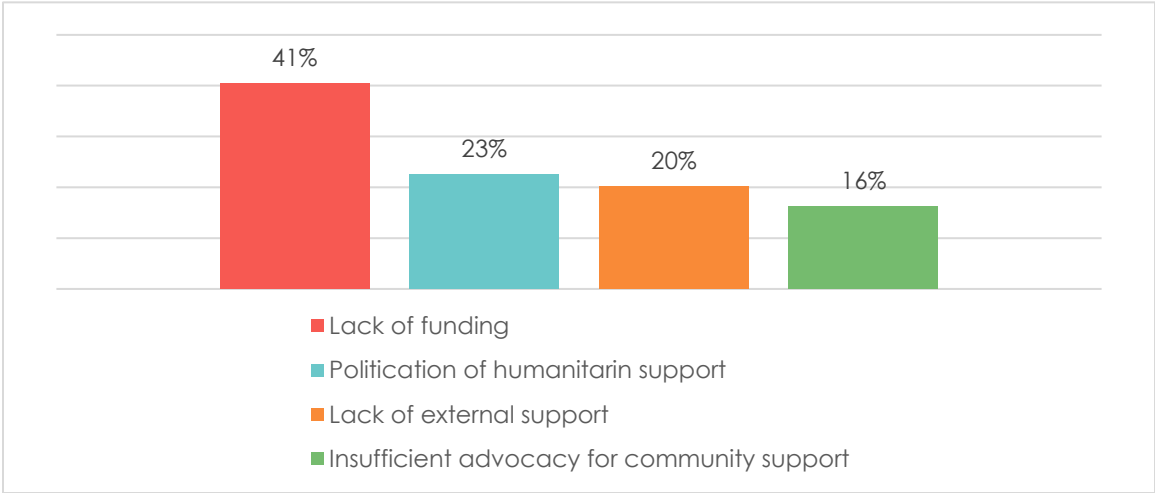
The findings emphasize economic development as the top priority for post-crisis community development, with 50% of respondents stressing its vital role in recovery and stability. 31% of participants then pointed to the importance of social cohesion and peacebuilding efforts as key elements. Following this, 31% of participants highlighted the significance of social cohesion and peacebuilding efforts. 13% mentioned healthcare and education, and 6% of participants pointed out the need for infrastructure rebuilding.

Figure 9: Priorities for post conflict recovery



According to survey respondents, **challenges to recovery include insufficient funding (41%), politicization of humanitarian support (23%), absence of external support (20%), and a need for increased advocacy for community support (16%).** These obstacles emphasize the complexities of post-conflict recovery, highlighting the urgent need for assistance, depoliticization of aid, and enhanced advocacy for the war-affected regions of SSC-Khatumo. **The mayor of the LasAnod district, outlined recovery priorities, calling for an integrated response that includes economic development, social cohesion, healthcare, education, and infrastructure** to address immediate needs and bolster long-term resilience and stability in the region.

Figure 10: Challenges in post conflict



4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusion

4.1.1. Humanitarian Needs

- Displacement has significantly impacted communities, as the war crisis in LasAnod has forced many to flee their homes, seeking safety in nearby areas. This mass movement underlines the urgent need for comprehensive support and resettlement programs for displaced populations to their city.
- Health concerns are widespread and deeply troubling, with diseases like malaria leading the list of rampant conditions. This situation is intensified by outbreaks of cholera and fever, and diarrhea indicating a critical need for enhanced healthcare facilities and services, disease prevention programs, and access to clean water and sanitation facilities.
- Livelihood challenges are evident, with many households' dependent on market sources for food amidst economic hardships. This dependency reveals the demanding necessity for initiatives aimed at strengthening food security and providing sustainable economic opportunities to improve the overall well-being and livelihood of the communities.
- The state of education exposes a concerning number of individuals without formal education or with only basic education levels. This educational gap stresses the importance of investing in educational infrastructure and programs to enhance literacy and learning opportunities, ensuring a brighter future for the region's children and youth.

4.1.2 Peace Building and Conflict resolution

- Tribal disputes and political conflicts appear as the predominant catalysts for unrest in the region, with economic disagreements also playing a major role. This mixture underlines the complicated nature of conflicts, driven by a combination of social, political, and economic factors.
- The landscape of violence is diverse, with economic deficiency and acts of genocide causing significant suffering among communities. Psychological warfare, clan disputes, and sexual violence further compound the safety and security challenges faced by individuals, highlighting the constraint for targeted interventions to address these forms of violence and support affected populations.
- Efforts to disperse these conflicts rest profoundly on traditional methods, with local leader mediation and community dialogues at the forefront. This preference features the community's trust in indigenous approaches to conflict resolution, enhanced by youth engagement programs and peace committees.
- The involvement in peace processes varies, with traditional leaders often mediating, women taking on both leading and supportive roles, and youth actively participating and organizing peace events. This assortment in roles highlights a collective effort towards peace, showcasing the community's multifaceted approach to conflict resolution.

4.1.3 Post Conflict Recovery Process

- The consequences of conflict have seen an important increase in community cohesion, with many respondents believing a strengthened sense of unity and collective identity. There's also a reported improvement in security, contributing to a sense of restored order and stability. Economic revitalization is gradually being recognized, although a segment of the community feels minimal changes, pointing to persistent challenges.
- Economic development emerges as a critical priority for half of the respondents, emphasizing its importance in the broader recovery process. Initiatives aimed at improving social cohesion and peacebuilding are also significant, alongside the need for improvements in healthcare and education. A smaller focus is placed on infrastructure rebuilding, emphasizing the foundational aspects of economic and social recovery.
- The recovery process is primarily troubled by a lack of funding, with politicization of aid and insufficient external support also posing significant barriers. Additionally, the need for more effective advocacy is marked, indicating a gap in representation and voice necessary for attracting external support and investment.

4.2 Recommendations

4.2.1 Humanitarian Needs

- **Support for displaced people:** For those returning to LasAnod, establish reintegration programs including job training, housing assistance, and psychosocial support. For those still displaced, especially in remote areas, provide necessities like food, water, and shelter, and implement community-building activities to maintain social cohesion and mental well-being.
- **Health challenges:** Establish and enhance partnerships with Federal Government Ministry of Health and international health NGOs to provide resources, drugs, and health services with expertise. Establish mobile health service and prioritize remote areas for regular visits, offering preventive care, child vaccinations, and health education. Use these clinics as platforms for health awareness campaigns, focusing on widespread diseases like malaria and diarrhea. Rebuild the main hospital in Las Anod that was damaged by bombing attacks from Somaliland forces.
- **Reduce Violence action:** Establish protection programs by engaging with sector NGOs and collaborate with local leaders to design community-specific violence reduction strategies. Incorporate peace education in schools and community centers to establish local peace committees for early conflict identification and resolution. Implement rehabilitation programs for those affected by violence, including economic and psychological support.
- **Livelihood support:** To improve the community's livelihood, it is crucial to implement programs that enhance livestock management and market access, alongside diversifying income sources through vocational training in sustainable agriculture practices. These initiatives aim to strengthen food security, increase resilience to economic fluctuations, and foster sustainable development, thus improving the livelihood and well-being of the communities. Establish cooperative societies to strengthen market linkages and bargaining power. Develop irrigation projects to ensure year-round farming and mitigate the effects of drought.
- **Educational enhancement):** Partner with educational NGOs and strengthen the federal government Ministry of education to build schools and provide teacher training. Initiate adult

literacy programs and vocational training for those who missed formal education. Incorporate community-based education programs to ensure wide-reaching impact.

- **Implement targeted mental health support**, including counselling for young combatants affected by Post Traumatic Syndrome Disorder (PTSD), fostering resilience, and aiding their reintegration into society.

4.2.2 Peace Building and conflict resolution

- **Establish Conflict Resolution Workshops:** Engage experienced mediators to conduct workshops, focusing on conflict analysis, negotiation skills, and peacebuilding strategies. Encourage participation from all community segments, including marginalized groups. Post-workshop, establish a follow-up mechanism to track progress and implementation.
- **Propose Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) Programs and Peace Awareness:** Implement DDR programs as a critical component of peacebuilding. This should include vocational training and education for former combatants to facilitate their economic and social reintegration. Establish youth rehabilitation centers specifically for young soldiers, providing them with disarmament facilities, educational opportunities, and psychological support to aid their reintegration into society. Alongside DDR, conduct peace awareness campaigns across communities to promote a culture of peace, emphasizing the importance of resolving conflicts through dialogue and mutual understanding.
- **Implement Inter-tribal conflict resolution and mediation sessions:** Organize dialogues facilitated by neutral parties to address inter-tribal long-term conflicts and disputes. This dialogue should involve key tribal leaders, political figures, and community representatives, and be structured to foster deep understanding, reconciliation, and the development of sustainable solutions.
- **Establish Peace Committees:** Strengthen the roles of elders, Youth and Women Peace committees. Encourage these committees to lead peace awareness-raising programs, mobilise community in participating conflict resolution workshops, trainings, focusing on the importance of disarmament and non-violence. These should be effectively trained by conflict resolution and peacebuilding skills, to act as mediators and peace advocates at the grassroots level.
- **Empower women in governance, peacebuilding, and state-building** by ensuring their participation in leadership roles, improving decision-making processes, and promoting gender-sensitive policies for societal stability.

4.2. 3 Post Conflict Recovery Process

- **Establish community projects:** Involve community members in the planning and execution of projects to enhance ownership. Focus on projects that address both social and economic needs, like community farms or local trade fairs.
- **Propose Local Security Initiatives:** Offer training in conflict resolution and law enforcement to local security forces. Establish community policing programs to build trust between security forces and the community. Provide necessary equipment and support for effective operation. Judicial institutions support.

- **Provide Economic Revival Programs:** Tailor programs to local needs and skills, ensuring they are sustainable and relevant. Encourage entrepreneurship through micro-loans and business mentorship. Focus on sectors with growth potential, such as small-scale manufacturing or service industries.
- **Rebuild Health and Education Infrastructure:** Ensure community involvement in the design and management of facilities. Prioritize areas with the least access to services. Incorporate sustainable practices, like solar energy and rainwater harvesting, in construction. Building prisons building
- **Rebuild Essential Infrastructures:** Conduct thorough assessments to identify critical infrastructure needs. Engage local labor in construction to boost employment. Ensure infrastructure projects are resilient to future conflicts or natural disasters.
- **Civil society should actively engage in community development,** advocate for essential services, and foster peace, governance, and cohesion, emphasizing the inclusion of diverse community voices.

4.2.4 Overcoming Challenges in Recovery process

- **Support and facilitate the development of comprehensive Funding Proposals:** Develop detailed, data-backed proposals to demand to a wide range of donors. Focus on specific needs and expected outcomes to ensure clarity and accountability. Regularly update donors on progress and challenges.
- **Encourage Transparent Aid Distribution:** Establish community-based committees to oversee aid distribution. Implement monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure fairness and effectiveness. Engage local media and civil society in oversight.
- **Engage International Partners:** Build strong narratives around the region's needs and potential. Participate in international forums to raise awareness. Foster long-term partnerships rather than one-off aid agreements.
- **Improve Local Advocacy Efforts:** Train local leaders in advocacy and communication skills. Establish networks for sharing information and strategies. Utilize media, both local and international, to expand the region's voice.