



Center for Democracy & Governance

"Holding Power Accountable"

CDG ANNUAL REPORT

The Year 2024 in Review



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CENTER FOR DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE (CDG)
Hargeisa, Somaliland**

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Picture 1 - Panelists Challenges; Inclusiveness of Political Participation

1. Introduction

The Center for Democracy and Governance (CDG) stands as a prominent organization in Somaliland, dedicated to the advancement of democratic principles, the promotion of good governance, and the fostering of active civic engagement. CDG pursues its mission through a detailed approach, encompassing rigorous research to understand the complexities of Somaliland's political landscape, targeted advocacy efforts to influence policy and practice, and impactful capacity-building initiatives designed to empower citizens and strengthen democratic institutions. CDG firmly believes that a robust and functioning democracy requires informed and engaged citizens, transparent and accountable governance structures, and a vibrant civil society capable of holding power to account.

The year 2024 marked a critical juncture in Somaliland's democratic journey, highlighted by the holding of presidential and political party elections. These elections represented both a testament to Somaliland's commitment to democratic processes and an opportunity to further consolidate democratic gains. However, they also presented significant challenges, including the need to ensure inclusivity, transparency, and fairness in the electoral process, as well as addressing ongoing issues related to political participation, representation, and accountability. CDG played a vital role in supporting these democratic processes throughout 2024, contributing through a range of targeted projects focused on strengthening civic engagement, promoting electoral transparency and integrity, and facilitating constructive dialogue on key issues related to democratization.

This annual report provides a comprehensive overview of CDG's activities, achievements, and lessons learned during 2024. It details our key projects and initiatives, highlighting the impact of our work on promoting democratic values and practices in Somaliland. The report also reflects on the challenges encountered and the valuable lessons learned, which will inform and shape our strategies and interventions in the coming year. Furthermore, this report looks ahead to 2025, outlining CDG's future outlook and strategic plans for continuing its crucial work in supporting Somaliland's democratic development. We believe that by sharing our experiences and insights, we can contribute to a broader understanding of the dynamics of democratization in Somaliland and foster collaboration among all stakeholders committed to building a more democratic and prosperous future for the nation.

2. Message from the CDG Country Director

Dear Partners, Colleagues, and Friends,

As I reflect on 2024, I am filled with a sense of both delight and gratitude. The year 2024 has been a remarkable one for CDG, marked by significant achievements in our ongoing mission to promote democratic values and good governance in Somaliland. We witnessed the nation's unwavering commitment to democratic principles through the holding of presidential and political party elections, a testament to the resilience and aspirations of the Somaliland people. I am immensely proud of the contributions CDG made to this crucial process, working alongside our dedicated partners and staff to support electoral integrity, enhance civic engagement, and foster constructive dialogue on the critical issues facing our democracy.

The year presented a unique blend of opportunities and challenges. The elections provided a vital platform for citizens to exercise their democratic rights and shape the future of their country. However, they also highlighted the ongoing need to address persistent challenges, such as ensuring inclusivity for all segments of society, combating misinformation and promoting informed voter participation, and strengthening the capacity of democratic institutions. CDG embraced these challenges head-on, implementing a range of targeted projects designed to address these pressing needs. From conducting pre- and post-election assessments to organizing civic education campaigns and facilitating dialogue forums, our work in 2024 was focused on empowering citizens, strengthening civil society, and promoting accountable governance.

I am deeply grateful for the unwavering dedication and tireless efforts of the entire CDG team. Their passion, expertise, and commitment are the driving force behind our success. I also extend my sincere appreciation to our invaluable partners, including HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG (HBS) and the OXFAM Somaliland. Your support, both financial and strategic, has been essential to our ability to achieve our goals. We are particularly thankful for the active engagement of Somaliland's citizens, whose participation in our programs and commitment to democratic values inspire us every day.

This annual report provides a detailed account of CDG's key activities and achievements in 2024. It highlights the impact of our work in strengthening civic engagement, promoting electoral transparency, and fostering dialogue on democratization. We also reflect candidly on the challenges we encountered and the valuable lessons we learned. These lessons will be instrumental in shaping our strategies and interventions in 2025 as we continue to strive for a more just, democratic, and inclusive Somaliland. We recognize that the journey towards a mature and thriving democracy is a continuous process, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to supporting Somaliland on this path. We believe that by working together, we can build a brighter future for all Somalilanders. Thank you for being a part of this important journey.

Sincerely,

Abdirahman Warsame
CDG Country Director



Picture 2 - CDG Director meeting with Danish Delegation during the 13 November 2024 Presidential Election

3. Year in Review

CDG's work in 2024 was strategically focused on three interconnected pillars - strengthening civic engagement, promoting electoral integrity, and fostering dialogue on democratization. These pillars formed the foundation of our programs and guided our interventions throughout the year. The following sub-sections provide a detailed account of our key activities and achievements under each of these pillars.

3.1. Strengthening Civic Engagement

Recognizing that active and informed citizen participation is the bedrock of a healthy democracy, CDG implemented a comprehensive project, with support from Oxfam, aimed at strengthening civic engagement in Somaliland, particularly during the crucial election period. This project targeted youth, women, minority clans, people with disabilities (PWDs), and host communities in Hargeisa, Burao, and Borama. Key activities included: -

- **Pre- and Post-Election Surveys** - In partnership with the Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS), CDG conducted pre- and post-election surveys to assess public perceptions of the political climate, identify potential risks to the electoral process, and measure the impact of our interventions. The pre-election survey revealed significant concerns about political stability and highlighted risks such as disputes over voter registration (especially concerning IDPs), insecurity in the eastern regions of Sool and Sanaag, potential for electoral fraud, and the ever-present threat of clan-based conflicts. The post-election survey, conducted after the elections, provided valuable insights into the actual conduct of the elections, voter experiences, and public perceptions of the results.

- **Voter Awareness Campaigns** - CDG implemented targeted voter awareness campaigns to educate citizens about their democratic rights and responsibilities, the importance of participating in the electoral process, and the mechanics of voting. These campaigns utilized a variety of channels to reach diverse audiences, including community meetings, radio broadcasts, television programs, social media platforms, and distribution of informational materials. Special attention was paid to reaching marginalized communities and ensuring that information was accessible to all.
- **Dissemination of Election Laws and Regulations** - Access to accurate and understandable information about the legal framework governing elections is essential for informed participation. CDG prioritized the dissemination of election laws and regulations, translating complex legal documents into accessible language (including Somali) and distributing them widely through various channels, including online platforms, print media, and community-based organizations. This initiative aimed to ensure that both citizens and electoral stakeholders had a clear understanding of the rules and procedures governing the electoral process.
- **Inclusive Debates** - CDG organized and facilitated inclusive debates featuring candidates vying for public office. These debates provided a vital platform for voters to hear directly from candidates on key policy issues, compare their platforms, and engage in informed discussions about the future of Somaliland. The debates were designed to be accessible to a broad audience, with live broadcasts and opportunities for audience participation. CDG ensured that the debates were conducted in a fair and impartial manner, promoting respectful dialogue and facilitating informed electoral choices.



Picture 3 - Academic Discussion on the MOU of Ethiopia and Somaliland

- **Empowering Women and Youth** - Recognizing the crucial role of women and youth in democratic processes, CDG implemented targeted training workshops focused on leadership development, advocacy skills, civic engagement, and conflict resolution. These workshops aimed to empower women and youth to take on leadership roles in their communities, advocate for their rights and interests, and actively participate in the electoral process. Pre- and post-training evaluations demonstrated significant improvements in participants' confidence, knowledge, and skills, indicating the effectiveness of these capacity-building initiatives.
- **Civic Education and Dialogue Sessions** - CDG conducted civic education and dialogue sessions in various locations, providing citizens with a deeper understanding of democratic principles, electoral processes, and the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders. These sessions fostered critical thinking about the importance of informed voting, the right to run for public office, and the need for accountability from elected officials. The sessions also provided a safe space for citizens to discuss challenges hindering women and youth participation in the democratic process, such as lack of representation, limited access to education and information, and discrimination.
- **Open Dialogue Sessions for Emerging Leaders** - To further empower emerging young women and youth, CDG conducted open dialogue sessions focused on constitutional rights, barriers to inclusivity, and strategies for promoting equitable participation in governance. These sessions provided a platform for young people to express their views, network with peers, and develop practical strategies for engaging in political and civic life.



Picture 4 - Political Party representatives at Gabiley Polling Station on 13 Nov

3.2. Pre-Election Assessment

The Center for Democracy and Governance (CDG), in collaboration with the Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS), undertook a thorough and comprehensive pre-election risk assessment survey spanning all regions of Somaliland. This initiative was not merely a procedural step, but a critical undertaking designed to proactively identify and mitigate potential threats that could undermine the integrity and peaceful conduct of the 2024 elections.

The assessment employed a detailed methodology, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative data collection techniques. Specifically, the team conducted wide-ranging interviews with key informants, including traditional elders, political party representatives, community leaders, women's groups, and youth organizations. These interviews provided more insights into the prevailing political climate, the depth of clan grievances, and the perceived security risks within each region.

The quantitative surveys were designed to gauge public perceptions on a range of issues, including trust in the electoral process, concerns about voter registration, and the likelihood of electoral violence. The surveys also sought to identify specific triggers for potential conflict, such as disputes over resource allocation or perceived marginalization of certain groups.

The assessment paid particular attention to the eastern regions of Sool and Sanaag, where pre-existing tensions and security challenges posed a heightened risk to the electoral process. In these regions, CDG's team engaged in extensive consultations with local stakeholders to understand the specific dynamics at play and to identify potential mitigation strategies.

The analysis of the collected data revealed several key risk factors, including: -

Political tensions - Rivalries between political parties, disputed territories, and concerns about the fairness of the electoral process; Clan grievances - Historical conflicts, resource disputes, and perceived unequal representation of certain clans; Security concerns - The presence of armed groups, potential for electoral violence, and the capacity of security institutions to maintain order; Voter registration issues - especially concerning IDP populations; The potential for electoral fraud; and The spread of misinformation and disinformation.

The findings of the pre-election risk assessment were disseminated to key stakeholders, including the National Electoral Commission, the Ministry of Interior, security agencies, and civil society organizations. This information enabled these stakeholders to develop targeted mitigation strategies, such as deploying additional security forces to high-risk areas, organizing dialogue and mediation efforts to address clan grievances, and launching public awareness campaigns to combat misinformation. The assessment's insights were instrumental in promoting a more peaceful and credible electoral process in Somaliland.

3.3. Observation of the Election Process

On November 13th, 2024, amidst the pivotal presidential and political party elections, the Center for Democracy and Governance (CDG) deployed a six-member team to conduct local observation of the electoral process, focusing specifically on the public's engagement at polling stations. This initiative aimed to gather firsthand insights into the transparency, fairness, and

inclusivity of the elections, directly from the perspective of the citizens exercising their democratic rights. The CDG team strategically selected over twelve polling stations across various districts, ensuring a diverse representation of the electorate and potential regional variations in the electoral experience.

The observation process involved thorough data collection, including documenting voter turnout, assessing the accessibility of polling stations for marginalized groups, and recording any irregularities or challenges encountered by voters. The CDG team focused on observing the flow of voters, the efficiency of the voting process, and the presence of any undue influence or intimidation. They interacted with election officials, security personnel, and voters, gathering anecdotal evidence and firsthand accounts. Special attention was paid to the conduct of the election officials in addressing voter queries and ensuring adherence to established procedures. The team also documented the physical setup of the polling stations, noting the availability of essential materials and the overall atmosphere.

Furthermore, the CDG team observed the behavior of political party agents and their interactions with voters, noting any attempts to sway opinions or disrupt the process. They paid close attention to the presence of security forces, assessing their role in maintaining order and ensuring a peaceful environment. Detailed notes were taken on the demographic composition of voters, including the participation of women, youth, and individuals with disabilities. Throughout the day, the team-maintained communication, sharing real-time observations and challenges, which allowed for a dynamic and responsive approach to the observation process. The culmination of this effort was the compilation of a comprehensive report, providing valuable insights into the public's experience during the elections and contributing to a deeper understanding of Somaliland's democratic journey.

3.4. Post-Election Assessment

Following the elections, CDG conducted a thorough post-election assessment to document and analyze the 2024 electoral process. This assessment aimed to identify key issues, opportunities, and challenges related to the elections, as well as to evaluate the roles of various stakeholders, including political parties, civil society organizations, international organizations, security forces, and international observers. This was done through the local observation of the presidential and political party election processes as well as conducting key informant interviews. The findings of the post-election assessment provided valuable lessons learned and recommendations for improving future electoral processes in Somaliland.



Picture 5 - Panel discussion of Collaboration among Legislators, Public and Political Actors

3.5. Lessons Learned from the Last Election Debate

CDG facilitated a series of workshops and dialogues focusing on the lessons learned from the 2024 elections, with a particular emphasis on the role of civil society organizations and the media. These sessions brought together representatives from CSOs, media organizations, electoral authorities, and other stakeholders to reflect on their experiences, share insights, and identify best practices for future engagement. Key lessons learned included the importance of strong coordination among CSOs, the need for sustainable funding and capacity building for CSOs and media organizations, the crucial role of ethical journalism in combating misinformation, and the persistent challenges faced by both CSOs and the media in operating in a complex political environment.

The discussions on CSO coordination delved into specific challenges encountered during the election period. Participants highlighted instances of duplicated efforts, conflicting messages, and missed opportunities for collaboration. They explored the need for a more structured coordination mechanism, potentially involving a central platform for information sharing, joint planning, and resource mobilization. Participants also suggested the development of clear protocols for communication and collaboration, ensuring that CSOs could work together effectively while maintaining their independence.

The issue of sustainable funding was a recurring theme, with participants emphasizing the need for diversified funding sources beyond short-term project grants. Discussions explored the

potential for establishing local funding mechanisms, engaging with diaspora communities, and building partnerships with international donors who prioritize long-term support. Capacity-building needs were identified across a range of areas, including strategic planning, financial management, advocacy skills, and the use of technology for data collection and communication. Specific training programs were proposed, tailored to the unique needs of different CSO sectors.



Picture 6 - Panelists Challenges; Inclusiveness of Political Participation

The dialogues on the media's role focused on the critical importance of ethical journalism in combating misinformation and promoting informed public discourse. Participants explored the challenges of verifying information in a rapidly evolving media landscape, particularly on social media platforms. They discussed the need for media literacy campaigns to empower citizens to critically evaluate information and identify misinformation. Participants also emphasized the importance of self-regulation within the media sector, as well as the need for stronger legal frameworks to protect journalists and promote media freedom. Case studies of successful fact-checking initiatives and media literacy programs were presented, providing practical examples for future implementation.

The sessions acknowledged the persistent challenges faced by CSOs and the media in operating in a complex political environment. Participants discussed the need for greater protection of civic space, ensuring that CSOs and media organizations can operate freely and without undue interference. They explored strategies for building relationships with government officials and political parties, while maintaining their independence and credibility. Participants also discussed the importance of advocating for legal reforms that protect freedom of expression and association, and promote transparency and accountability.

The workshops and dialogues culminated in the development of a comprehensive report, outlining key lessons learned and actionable recommendations. These recommendations were targeted at various stakeholders, including CSOs, media organizations, electoral authorities, and international partners. The report served as a roadmap for strengthening Somaliland's democratic processes, promoting collaboration, and ensuring that future elections are conducted in a free, fair, and credible manner. The result of these dialogues created a platform for future collaborative improvements.

3.6. Advocacy Workshop; Role of CSOs in the Last Election of Nov 2024

In the aftermath of the 2024 presidential and political party elections, the Center for Democracy and Governance (CDG) recognized the critical need for a comprehensive evaluation of the electoral process, with a particular focus on the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). To facilitate this, CDG convened a series of dialogues and workshops, bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders, including representatives from various CSOs, media organizations, electoral authorities, and other relevant actors. These sessions aimed to foster a reflective and constructive environment for analyzing the contributions, challenges, and lessons learned from the CSOs' engagement during the elections.



Picture 7 - Panelists for Advocacy Workshop on Lessons Learned in the Last Election and the Role Played by Somaliland Civil Society Organizations

The dialogues focused on several key areas. Firstly, participants explored the effectiveness of CSOs in promoting voter education and awareness. They discussed the strategies employed to reach diverse segments of the population, including marginalized groups, and assessed the impact of these efforts on voter turnout and informed participation. Secondly, the role of CSOs

in observing the electoral process was examined. Participants shared their experiences in monitoring polling stations, documenting irregularities, and contributing to the overall transparency and credibility of the elections.

A significant portion of the dialogue was dedicated to discussing the challenges faced by CSOs. These challenges included limited access to funding, capacity constraints, and the complex political environment, which often posed obstacles to their operations. Participants also addressed the issue of coordination among CSOs, highlighting the need for stronger collaboration and information sharing to maximize their collective impact.

Furthermore, the dialogues provided a platform for CSOs to reflect on their advocacy efforts, particularly in relation to electoral reforms and policy recommendations. They discussed the strategies used to engage with government officials and political parties, and assessed the effectiveness of their advocacy in influencing electoral outcomes. The discussions also explored the media's role in conveying information and the challenges of misinformation.

A central theme throughout the dialogues was the importance of building the capacity of CSOs to effectively contribute to democratic processes. Participants identified key areas for capacity building, such as project management, advocacy skills, and the use of technology for data collection and communication. The dialogues also emphasized the need for sustainable funding mechanisms to ensure the long-term viability of CSOs.

The outcomes of these dialogues were documented in a comprehensive report, which included key findings, recommendations, and lessons learned. This report served as a valuable resource for CSOs, electoral authorities, and other stakeholders, providing insights into how to strengthen the role of civil society in future elections and promote democratic governance in Somaliland.

3.7. Training of Women and Youth in Political Participation

In October 2024, CDG conducted a three-day intensive training workshop in Hargeisa with the support of OXFAM, targeting 20 women and youth activists from diverse backgrounds, including university students, political actors, media professionals, and civil society representatives. The workshop focused on empowering these individuals to become agents of positive change within their communities, particularly in the context of peacebuilding and electoral participation.

The training curriculum encompassed key areas such as leadership, advocacy, civic engagement, and conflict resolution. Participants gained practical skills and knowledge through interactive sessions, leading to significant improvements in their confidence and capabilities. Pre- and post-training evaluations demonstrated substantial growth: leadership strategy confidence surged from 34% to 76%, political participation knowledge increased from 50% to 80%, stakeholder engagement in advocacy awareness rose from 50% to 75%, and conflict resolution technique familiarity dramatically improved from 24% to 83%.

These results highlight the effectiveness of the training in equipping participants with essential skills and knowledge, enabling them to take on leadership roles, advocate for their rights, engage effectively in civic processes, and resolve conflicts constructively. Participants were awarded completion certificates, signifying their readiness to champion positive change and contribute to a more peaceful and inclusive Somaliland.



Picture 8 - Training of Women and Youth on Peaceful Election Participation

3.8. Somaliland Civic Dialogue on Democratization

CDG, in partnership with the Somaliland Dialogue Working Group (SDWG) and with support from HBS, implemented a project aimed at fostering ongoing dialogue on key issues related to democratization in Somaliland. This project included: -

- **Community Dialogue Forums** - CDG organized and facilitated six major community dialogue forums on a range of critical topics, including the Ethiopia-Somaliland Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), challenges facing political parties, the role of the Egyptian government in the Horn of Africa, inclusivity in political participation, and lessons learned from the elections. These forums provided a platform for citizens, civic actors, and government officials to engage in constructive discussions and contribute to policy development.
- **Somaliland Dialogue Working Group (SDWG) Engagement** - CDG continued to engage with and support the SDWG, facilitating regular meetings to plan and implement project activities, strengthen coordination among members, and build their capacity on issues related to democracy and good governance. The SDWG played a crucial role in mobilizing communities, facilitating dialogue, and advocating for democratic reforms.

3.9. Cross-Cutting Programs

CDG's commitment to holistic democratic development is reflected in its robust cross-cutting programs, which address interconnected governance challenges and foster a more inclusive and responsive society. These programs operate across various sectors, ensuring that democratic principles permeate all aspects of Somaliland's development.

- **Governance Coordination and Collaboration**
 - CDG actively participated in governance coordination meetings organized by the Ministry of Interior, recognizing the critical importance of inter-agency collaboration for effective governance. These meetings provided a platform for information sharing, policy coordination, and joint problem-solving.
 - CDG contributed to discussions on key governance issues, sharing its expertise and insights to inform policy decisions.
 - By actively engaging in these coordination efforts, CDG fostered stronger relationships with government stakeholders and contributed to a more cohesive and collaborative governance framework.
- **Strengthening Community Policing**
 - CDG worked diligently to strengthen community policing through the facilitation of dialogue forums between security providers and community members.
 - These forums served as crucial platforms for building trust, addressing community concerns, and promoting collaborative problem-solving.
 - CDG facilitated open and constructive discussions on issues such as crime prevention, police accountability, and community safety.
 - By fostering dialogue and collaboration, CDG aimed to create a more responsive and community-oriented policing system.
- **Strengthening Climate Governance**
 - CDG recognized the growing importance of addressing climate-related challenges and worked to strengthen climate governance in Somaliland.
 - CDG amplified community voices in climate-related discussions, ensuring that local needs and perspectives were considered in policy development.
 - CDG facilitated dialogue and collaboration among government agencies, civil society organizations, and community groups to develop and implement effective climate adaptation and mitigation strategies.
 - CDG worked to unlock resources and expertise to help communities tackle climate related challenges.
- **Legal Awareness and Advocacy**
 - CDG increased legal awareness among citizens, empowering them to understand their rights and access justice.
 - CDG lobbied traditional and government systems to expand the spectrum of rules and law enforcement, advocating for legal reforms that promote human rights and the rule of law.
 - CDG conducted workshops and seminars to educate citizens on their legal rights.

- CDG engaged with traditional leaders and government officials to promote legal reforms.



Picture 9 - Group session during the Training of Women and Youth on Peaceful Election Participation

- **Advocacy for Inclusive Education**

- CDG conducted advocacy for inclusive education, working to ensure that all children, including those from marginalized communities, have access to quality education.
- CDG worked to increase the responsiveness of local government to citizen concerns regarding educational access.
- CDG assisted local governments in developing systems for more effective interaction between local officials and citizens regarding education.
- CDG worked to remove barriers to education for marginalized groups.

- **Research Development and Legislative Strengthening**

- CDG focused on research development, conducting rigorous analysis of critical governance and democracy issues.
- CDG produced research papers and reports that informed policy discussions and contributed to evidence-based decision-making.

- CDG focused on building national and regional-level legislatures in east Africa countries, and is considered to be one of the region's leading legislative strengthening organizations.¹
- CDG provided technical assistance and capacity-building support to legislative bodies, promoting effective lawmaking and oversight.

3.10. Challenges and Lessons Learned

The year 2024 presented CDG with a complex and dynamic operating environment, marked by both significant opportunities and persistent challenges. Navigating these complexities provided valuable lessons that will inform CDG's strategies and interventions moving forward.

- **Political Instabilities and Conflicts in the Eastern Regions**

- The ongoing political instabilities and conflicts in the eastern regions of Somaliland, particularly in Sool and Sanaag, posed significant challenges to CDG's operations.
- These conflicts created security risks, limited access to communities, and disrupted program implementation.
- CDG learned the importance of adopting a conflict-sensitive approach, tailoring its programs to the specific context of these regions.
- This involved building relationships with local stakeholders, including traditional leaders, community groups, and security actors, to ensure safe and effective program delivery.

- **Misinformation and Disinformation During the Electoral Period**

- The spread of misinformation and disinformation during the electoral period presented a major challenge to ensuring informed and credible elections.
- Social media platforms became a breeding ground for unverified and misleading information, creating confusion and undermining public trust.
- CDG recognized the need for robust counter-measures, including fact-checking initiatives, media literacy campaigns, and partnerships with media organizations to promote accurate and reliable reporting.
- CDG learned that counteracting misinformation requires a detailed approach that includes education, collaboration, and rapid response mechanisms.

- **Ensuring Inclusivity and Participation of Marginalized Groups**

- Despite CDG's efforts, ensuring the full and meaningful participation of marginalized groups, including women, youth, minorities, and people with disabilities, remained a key challenge.

¹ <https://cdgsomaliland.org>

- Socio-cultural norms, limited access to resources, and discriminatory practices continued to hinder their engagement in political and civic life.
- CDG recognized the need for more targeted and sustained interventions to address these barriers, including capacity-building programs, advocacy campaigns, and partnerships with organizations representing marginalized groups.
- **Importance of Constant Communication with Local Elders and Leaders in Eastern Regions**
 - CDG learned the critical importance of maintaining constant and open communication with local elders and leaders in the eastern regions.
 - These leaders play a crucial role in shaping community dynamics and influencing decision-making.
 - By building strong relationships with them, CDG was able to gain a deeper understanding of the local context, build trust, and facilitate program implementation.
 - CDG also learned that these relationships help with conflict mitigation.
- **Importance of Constant Flexibility When Dealing with Political Instabilities**
 - CDG discovered the necessity of maintaining constant flexibility and adaptability when operating in politically unstable environments.
 - Rapidly changing circumstances required CDG to adjust its strategies and approaches in real-time.
 - This involved developing contingency plans, empowering staff to make decisions at the local level, and fostering a culture of innovation and responsiveness.
 - CDG learned that being adaptable is key to maintaining program continuity and achieving desired outcomes.

3.11. Recommendations

Based on CDG's experiences and insights gained throughout 2024, the following recommendations are presented to the Government of Somaliland and International Donors to enhance democratic governance and promote sustainable development: -

- **Increase Support for Peacebuilding Initiatives in the Eastern Regions**
 - The government and international donors should prioritize and significantly increase funding for peacebuilding initiatives in the eastern regions of Somaliland.
 - These initiatives should focus on addressing the root causes of conflict, promoting dialogue and reconciliation, and strengthening community-based peacebuilding mechanisms.

- Support should be provided for programs that foster economic development, create employment opportunities, and improve access to essential services in these regions.
- Donors should support programs that build the capacity of local elders, and leaders in peace building initiatives.
- **Enhance Funding for Civic Education and Voter Awareness Programs**
 - The government and international donors should significantly increase funding for civic education and voter awareness programs, particularly in the lead-up to elections.
 - These programs should be designed to reach all segments of society, including marginalized groups, and should utilize diverse communication channels.
 - Emphasis should be placed on promoting critical thinking, media literacy, and informed participation in democratic processes.
 - Programs should be designed to counter mis-information, and dis-information.
- **Strengthen the Capacity of CSOs and Media Organizations**
 - International donors should provide sustained and flexible funding to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) and media organizations in Somaliland.
 - Capacity-building support should focus on areas such as organizational management, advocacy skills, financial management, and media ethics.
 - Donors should support initiatives that promote collaboration and networking among CSOs and media organizations.
 - Donors should support programs that promote the safety of journalists.
- **Promote Transparency and Accountability in Governance**
 - The government should strengthen its commitment to transparency and accountability in all areas of governance.
 - This includes implementing robust financial management systems, promoting access to information, and strengthening oversight mechanisms.
 - International donors should support initiatives that promote good governance, combat corruption, and strengthen the rule of law.
 - The government should increase efforts to decentralize power
- **Support Initiatives that Empower Women and Youth in Political Participation**
 - The government and international donors should prioritize initiatives that empower women and youth to participate fully in political and civic life.

- This includes providing training and mentorship opportunities, supporting women and youth-led organizations, and advocating for policies that promote gender equality and youth empowerment.
- Efforts should be made to address socio-cultural barriers that hinder women and youth participation
- The government should enforce quota systems for women and youth representation.
- **Support Community Policing Initiatives**
 - The government and international donors should continue to support community policing initiatives that promote collaboration between security providers and community members.
 - These initiatives should focus on building trust, addressing community concerns, and promoting collaborative problem-solving.
 - Support should be provided for training programs that enhance the skills and professionalism of police officers.
 - Efforts should be made to increase the number of female police officers.
- **Support Climate Governance Initiatives**
 - The government and international donors should increase their support of climate governance initiatives.
 - These initiatives should focus on amplifying the voices of communities, and prioritizing local needs.
 - Support should be given to programs that unlock resources and expertise to help communities tackle climate-related challenges.
 - Support should be given to programs that promote sustainable resource management.

4. Future Outlook and Plans for 2025

Building on the significant achievements and valuable lessons learned in 2024, CDG is poised to further its mission of promoting democratic values and good governance in Somaliland in 2025. We recognize that the journey towards a mature and thriving democracy is a continuous process, requiring sustained effort, adaptation, and a commitment to learning and improvement. CDG's strategic priorities for 2025 are accurately crafted to build upon the successes and lessons learned from 2024, addressing the evolving needs of Somaliland's democratic development. We are committed to deepening our impact in critical areas, strengthening our partnerships, and enhancing our organizational capacity.

Our plans for 2025 are grounded in a deep understanding of the evolving context in Somaliland and a strategic vision for contributing to its democratic development. We will focus on

deepening our impact in key areas, expanding our partnerships, and strengthening our organizational capacity. The following outlines our key priorities and planned initiatives for the year 2025: -

- **Deepening Civic Engagement** - CDG will expand its civic education programs to reach a wider range of communities across Somaliland, with a particular focus on marginalized groups, including women, youth, minorities, and rural populations. We will utilize innovative approaches and diverse communication channels to enhance citizen understanding of democratic principles, electoral processes, and their rights and responsibilities. We will also explore new ways to promote active civic participation, such as through community-based initiatives, youth leadership programs, and online engagement platforms. Our goal is to empower citizens to become active agents of change in their communities and to hold their elected officials accountable. CDG is also looking forward to the Parliamentary Elections scheduled for 31 May 2025.
- **Strengthening CSO Capacity** - Recognizing the vital role of civil society organizations in promoting democracy and good governance, CDG will prioritize strengthening the capacity of CSOs in Somaliland. We will provide targeted training and resources to enhance their organizational management, advocacy skills, fundraising capabilities, and program implementation. We will also facilitate networking and collaboration among CSOs to create a more cohesive and impactful civil society sector. Our focus will be on supporting CSOs that are committed to promoting transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in their work.
- **Promoting Media Development** - CDG will continue to support initiatives that promote media development in Somaliland, recognizing the crucial role of a free and independent media in a democratic society. We will support training programs for journalists focusing on ethical reporting, investigative journalism, and digital media skills. We will also work with media organizations to develop strategies for combating misinformation and promoting accurate and reliable news reporting. Our aim is to contribute to a vibrant media landscape that informs the public, fosters critical thinking, and holds power to account.
- **Facilitating Inclusive Dialogue** - CDG will continue to provide platforms for inclusive dialogue among citizens, government officials, civil society actors, and other stakeholders. We will organize community forums, workshops, and conferences to discuss key issues related to democratization, good governance, and development. We will also support initiatives that promote constructive dialogue and reconciliation at the community level. Our goal is to create spaces for open communication, mutual understanding, and collaborative problem-solving.
- **Research and Advocacy** - CDG will conduct research on key issues related to democratic governance in Somaliland, including electoral reforms, political participation, human rights, and rule of law. The findings of our research will inform our advocacy efforts, as we work to influence policy and practice in ways that promote greater inclusivity, accountability, and transparency. We will engage with policymakers, legislators, and other stakeholders to advocate for reforms that strengthen democratic institutions and protect citizen rights.

- **Expanding Partnerships** - CDG recognizes that collaboration is essential for achieving its mission. We will continue to strengthen our existing partnerships with Oxfam, the Heinrich Böll Stiftung, and other organizations. We will also actively seek to forge new collaborations with relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, international organizations, research institutions, and community-based groups. By working together, we can maximize our impact and contribute more effectively to Somaliland's democratic development.
- **Resource Mobilization** - To ensure the long-term sustainability of our programs and initiatives, CDG will diversify its funding sources. We will actively pursue grants from international donors, explore partnerships with private sector actors, and develop strategies for generating local resources. We will also strengthen our internal fundraising capacity and develop a comprehensive resource mobilization plan.
- **Peacebuilding in the Eastern Regions** - CDG will significantly expand its peacebuilding efforts in the eastern regions of Somaliland, recognizing the urgent need for sustainable peace and stability in these areas. This will involve implementing community-based initiatives that promote dialogue, conflict resolution, and reconciliation. We will work closely with local stakeholders, including traditional leaders, community groups, and youth organizations, to build sustainable peacebuilding mechanisms. Our focus will be on addressing the root causes of conflict, promoting economic development, and strengthening social cohesion. We will strive to create platforms for inclusive dialogue, facilitating the resolution of grievances and fostering a sense of shared ownership in the peacebuilding process.
- **Preparing for the 2025 Elections On aspiring candidates** - As we look ahead to the 2025 elections, CDG will begin early preparations to ensure a free, fair, and credible electoral process. This will include conducting comprehensive civic education campaigns to inform citizens about their rights and responsibilities, empowering them to make informed choices. We will support voter registration drives and initiatives that enhance electoral integrity, working to ensure that all eligible citizens have the opportunity to participate. Furthermore, we will work closely with electoral authorities, political parties, and civil society organizations to promote transparency and accountability throughout the electoral cycle, fostering public trust in the democratic process.
- **Continuing Academic Dialogues** - CDG will continue to facilitate dialogues on key issues related to democratization, governance, and development, recognizing the importance of open and inclusive discussions in shaping Somaliland's future. These dialogues will provide platforms for citizens, government officials, and civil society actors to engage in constructive discussions, share perspectives, and contribute to policy development. We will focus on addressing emerging challenges and promoting inclusive decision-making, ensuring that diverse voices are heard and considered in the formulation of policies and strategies.
- **Empowering Women and Youth in political participation** - Empowering women and youth will remain a central focus for CDG in 2025. We will strengthen our programs aimed at increasing their political participation and leadership, recognizing their crucial role in shaping Somaliland's democratic future. This will involve providing targeted training, mentorship, and support to women and youth leaders, equipping them with

the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. We will also advocate for policies that promote gender equality and youth empowerment, working to dismantle barriers that hinder their full participation in political and civic life. Our goal is to increase the number of women and youth in leadership positions, ensuring that their voices are represented in decision-making processes.

- **Strengthening Civil Society** - CDG will enhance the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in election-related issues and broader democratic processes, recognizing their vital contribution to good governance and citizen engagement. We will provide capacity-building support to CSOs, focusing on areas such as advocacy, organizational management, and financial sustainability. We will also promote collaboration and networking among CSOs to create a more cohesive and impactful civil society sector, enabling them to effectively address key challenges and advance democratic reforms.
- **Enhancing Democratization** - To further enhance Somaliland's democratization process, CDG will conduct trainings, conferences, and debates, focusing on promoting democratic values, strengthening democratic institutions, and fostering a culture of accountability. These initiatives will provide platforms for dialogue and knowledge sharing, enabling stakeholders to engage in critical discussions about the future of democracy in Somaliland. We will also support initiatives that promote good governance and the rule of law, working to strengthen the foundations of a just and equitable society.
- **Community Policing** - CDG will continue its support of community policing initiatives, recognizing the importance of building trust and collaboration between security providers and community members. We will facilitate dialogue forums, provide training to police officers, and support initiatives that build trust and improve community safety. Our goal is to create a more responsive and accountable policing system that prioritizes the needs and concerns of citizens.
- **Researching and Academic Papers** - CDG will increase its production of research and academic papers on critical governance and democracy topics, recognizing the importance of evidence-based decision-making. This research will inform policy discussions and contribute to the development of effective strategies for addressing key challenges. We will focus on publishing research that is relevant to the Somaliland context, providing valuable insights and recommendations for policymakers and practitioners.
- **Climate Change and Governance** - CDG will continue its work on strengthening climate change and governance, recognizing the growing importance of addressing climate-related challenges in Somaliland. We will focus on amplifying community voices, prioritizing local needs, and supporting programs that unlock resources and expertise to help communities tackle climate-related challenges. Our goal is to promote sustainable resource management and build resilience to climate change.
- **Advocacy for Inclusive Education** - CDG will continue its work on advocacy for inclusive education, working to ensure that all children have access to quality education. We will work to increase the responsiveness of local government to citizen concerns regarding

educational access, advocating for policies and programs that promote equity and inclusion.

- **Protection and Advocacy** - CDG will continue its work on protection and advocacy, focusing on increasing legal awareness and lobbying to expand rules and law enforcement. We will work to protect the rights of vulnerable populations, ensuring that they have access to justice and are treated with dignity and respect.

Conclusion

2024 was a year of significant achievement and valuable learning for CDG. Despite facing challenges, we made substantial contributions to the promotion of democracy and good governance in Somaliland. We are committed to building on these achievements in 2025, working collaboratively with our partners and stakeholders to create a more democratic, inclusive, and peaceful Somaliland. We believe that by working together, we can build a brighter future for all Somalilanders.

CDG remains steadfast in its commitment to promoting democratic values and good governance in Somaliland. We believe that by working collaboratively with our partners and engaging actively with citizens, we can contribute to a more just, democratic, and prosperous future for all Somalilanders. We are confident that 2025 will be another year of significant progress in our shared journey towards a stronger and more vibrant democracy in Somaliland.



Picture 10 - Panelists for Advocacy Workshop on Lessons Learned in the Last Election and the Role Played by Somaliland Civil Society Organizations