

# YEARLY ACTIVITY REPORT

Puntland

Office of Programs - Garowe



2019

**CAPACITY BUILDING FOR THE RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS**

**Engagement of Media in Promotion of Freedom of Information & Digital Rights**

The past ten years have seen a revolution in the ways in which people access, consume and share information. The Internet is now within the reach of more than 1 million in Puntland and an increasing number of them are now turning to social media platforms as a key source for the latest news and information, sharing and exchanging vital issues regarding the country's political process, the social services and the demand of greater accountability and transparency from the government.

In similar way, the establishment of social media based news outlets and platforms have significantly expanded the range of information available to people but majority of them have little care in engagement of people in discussions, exchange and direct interactions regarding the country's political transformation, transparency and accountability. The social media based media have been growing dramatically for the last ten years and its reach is more than the TVs and Radios now but have prompt challenges, mainly poor experience and knowledge.

In view of these challenges and consideration of the indispensable role of media in promotion of democracy, open government and federalism in Somalia, Bareedo Platform conducted four days training for 38 journalists from social media based media outlets in Bosaso and Garowe. In addition to this, Bareedo Platform supported



establishment of 3 media outlets to improve access to information, countering disinformation and fake news and engagement of citizens. One of the outlets is English based online media by considering nearly 3 million Somali Diaspora in the West whom 28% of them are unable to understand their language well but know English better. This training strengthened social media based journalist's professionalism, experience and capacity to support of democracy, open government and federalism initiatives' in Somalia.

**ACHIEVEMENTS**

- 38 journalists trained
- 3 media outlets established
- 1 English online media established
- Disinformation & fake news + Digital Rights monitoring desk established
- 1 survey on online harassment and issues affecting digital rights conducted

**Monitoring of Disinformation, Fake News and Issues Affecting Digital Rights**

The online users and access to internet have been getting momentum in Somalia and at the same time, the breaches of social media have been on the rise. People log in to their social media site and notice a string of posts or messages definitely not posted by them or they get a message that their account password has been changed without their knowledge. In a small survey conducted by Bareedo Platform in Somalia in 2019 revealed that 49% of internet users said their online accounts have been hacked at least one time, while 29% reported they were hacked more than once. In a same survey, the strong privacy features needed to protect the online account have been listed down but 89% of the responders said they have not taken such measures with grounds of language barrier and limited awareness rising and literacy.

**#Disinformation**  
**#FakeNews**  
**Update**

We have also noted that women are more vulnerable and suffer online harassment, and young women aged 18-24 are particularly vulnerable as they experience certain severe types of harassment at disproportionately high levels.

When the personal accounts are hacked; hackers take the following oppressive actions against the owner:-

- Password, phone and other personal information are changed immediately
- Offensive messages are sent to the owner's friends
- Shocking posts are created within the hacked account
- Some sensitive personal information of the owner are posted publically

These repressive actions force the owner of the account to be vulnerable and agree the demands offered by the hacker to return the account to the owner or not to reveal the owner's personal data. These demands are always oppressive to the victims and lead them to accept unacceptable humiliations which are mainly exchange of sex, money or illicit actions.

The online violence has subverted the original positive promise of the internet's freedoms and could be threat to freedom of information and people's trust to use social media networks safely and without fear. This issue was raised by the media and human rights activists but was not addressed or tried to find solution.

We have proposed that translation of the existing how-to guides of security and privacy settings of the social media networks and how to regain lost account into local language (Somali) in text and video will be innovative solution for this challenge and the internet users can secure their accounts and access the internet and social media networks safely and without fear.

## PROMOTION OF INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION

### Promotion of Women's Political Participation

Women's and men's equal participation in governance processes and the decisions that affect their lives are vital for achieving inclusive and effective governance system in Somalia. Puntland, an autonomous state under Federal Republic of Somalia has 53 districts which all are required to have local councils to represent the community as the legislative body of their respective district.

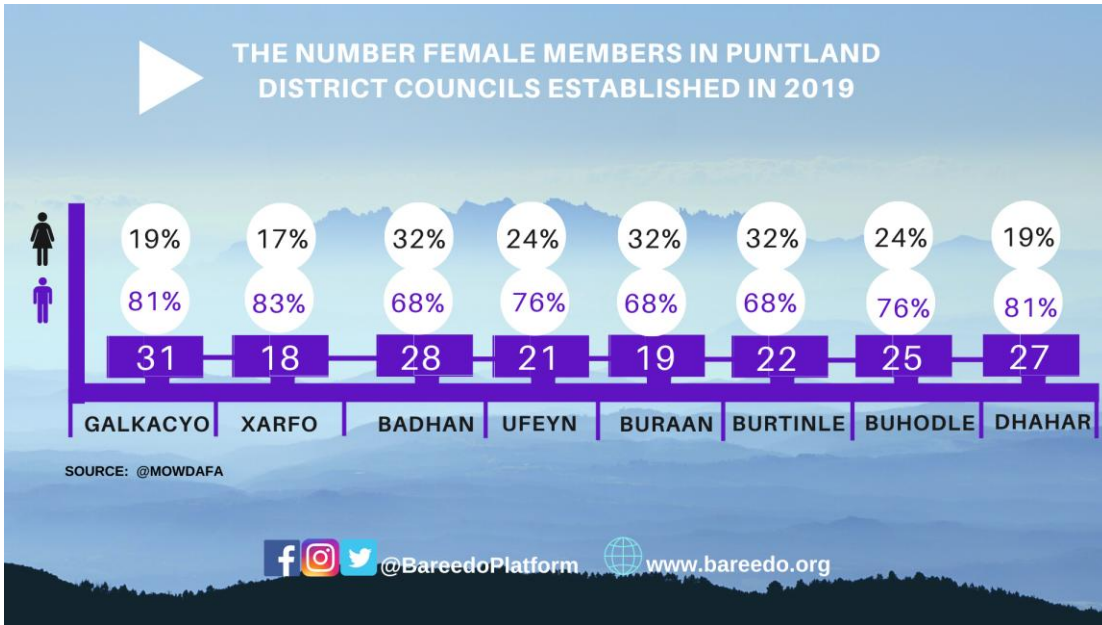
The establishment of the local councils was accelerated by the current Puntland administration which come to the power in January 8, 2019 and the district councils are established through clan based system where the council member is selected by the clan's chief elder. In this system of election which has been in place since establishment of Puntland state in 1998 often makes women unrepresented and the chance of appointing a woman to the councils by the clan elders is zero probability.

#### ACHIEVEMENTS

- 47 women members joined 9 district municipalities
- 2 women deputy mayors were elected in 2 districts
- 30% women quota reinforced
- 21% increase of women's participation in municipal elections
- Database for women's political participation launched

The commitment of 30% women quota was reinforced by Puntland Ministry of Interior, Federalism and Democratisation which further strengthened adherence of 30% women quota in selection of the district based councils. The main intend of the commitment letter was to remind the clan elders, regional governors and other stakeholders to keep in mind the women's quota during selection process of the district council members. The commitment was followed by continued public advocacy campaign led by Puntland Ministry of Women & Family Affairs aimed to promote women's representation in district councils by reaching clan elders and other relevant stakeholders to ensure appointment of women members to the councils. Advocacy workshops were conducted for the clan elders who have the mandate to select the district council members before start of the selection process which helped adherence to women's quota and achieved a tangible progress in getting good women representatives in district councils.

8 district councils were established in 2019 with total members of 191; 47 of them were women which is an increase of 21% compared to previous years. In addition to that, two female members were selected as deputy mayors in Badhan and Buraan districts which is another great achievement. Bareedo Platform established a database for recording women's political participation, the challenges and success stories for publication and the below table shows the number of district councils established in 2019; the number men and women representatives in each district council:-



District	# of Members	Male	Female
Galkacyo	31	25	6
Xarfo	18	15	3
Badhan	28	19	9
Buraan	19	13	6
Ufeyn	21	16	5
Burtinle	22	15	7
Buuhoodle	25	19	6
Dhahar	27	22	5

### Empowering Youth's Political Participation

Meaningful democracy requires the meaningful participation of youth. Young people have much to offer societies – from innovation to creativity to new thinking. Their participation in democracy promotes active citizenship, strengthens social responsibility and can enhance democratic processes and institutions. Yet young people’s engagement with democracy faces significant challenges – threatening the ongoing political transformation in Somalia. Bareedo Platform concentrated on promotion of youth's active participation in country's political process, policy discussions and decisions affecting their future.



Bareedo Platform conducted four similar workshops for 151 youth members in Garowe, Qardho, Bosaso and Galkacyo with objective of:

- a) Promoting the participatory policy process with regards to young men and women in the country's political process and policy making;
- b) Promoting the active role of youth to raise their voice in key political discussions;
- c) And documenting key achievements and challenges on youth's active participation.

The four workshops held in Garowe, Qardho, Bosaso and Galkacyo reached a total of 151 youth members; 60% male and 40% female participants and given them a chance to discuss the vital actions of enhancing youth's active participation, relevant policies, identification of role of political parties, decision makers, media and civil society in promotion of youth's active participation by mainstreaming such matter in national and local policies and strategies and investing in youth led initiatives.

The participants of the workshops stressed the importance of youth's active participation and engagement which need to be addressed politically, endorsed by the policymakers and make the issue a national matter of which all parties required to act on. Furthermore, the participants further stressed that the matter is not only a human rights perspective but a social, economic and political stability and making Somalia politically and economically inclusive.

## OPEN GOVERNMENT

### Promotion of Open Data in Puntland

The term "open data" is something new to the Somali people, but it is definitely time to apply such approach in Somalia. Open data is not a new concept, although it only seems to have gained fame recent decades. It is simply defined as data that anyone can access, use and share. Openness of government data to the public has been recognized as a tool that can reinforce anti-corruption efforts by strengthening transparency, increasing trust in government and improving public sector integrity and accountability by reinforcing the rule of law through dynamic citizen participation and engagement.

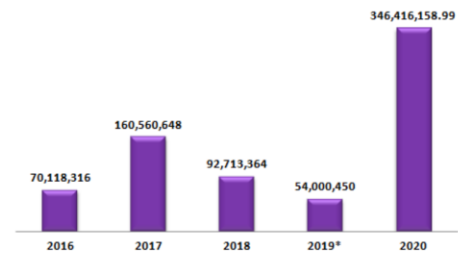
There has been growing demands for transparent, accessible and credible open data and publication of government data in reusable formats that could be accessed by the general public to be used for safeguarding transparency and accountability of the government to the citizens and empowers civil society, journalists and citizens to hold power-holders accountable and to expose and address corruption.

#### ACHIEVEMENTS

- Public revenue and expenditure published at [www.mof.pl.so](http://www.mof.pl.so)
- E-Government system introduced
- 25 individual websites established for the government institutions
- 1 district published its revenue and expenditure
- Puntland Statistics Act

Bareedo Platform has been leading a campaign aimed to encourage open government in Somalia to promote democracy, accountable government and challenge corruption. In specific, the first campaign was started in Puntland State, a mature state with functional institutions and has been active and functioning even before re-establishment of Somalia's central government. To set up a baseline, Bareedo Platform conducted the first study on open data in Puntland which its findings has been released and the publication will follow soon. The aim of the study was to know the level of openness and engagement of citizens in public matters.

**ISBARBARDHIG MIISAANIYADDA DOWLADDA PUNTLAND 2016-2020**



Lacagtu waa Doolar, Tiraduna Waa Milyan  
 \*Waa 9 Billood oo keliya (2019)  
 Xigasho: Wasaaradda Maaliyadda DPL

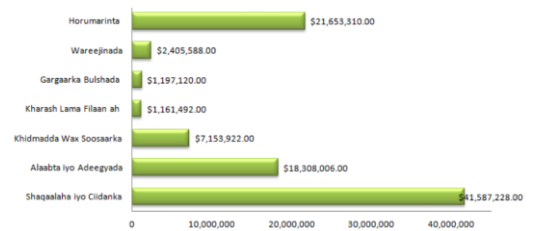
@TheWhitePearlNews



After continues awareness rising, training and mentoring for civil society, media and government institutions on opening up vital data for the public, the following achievements were made:-

1. Puntland Ministry of Finance started publication of state revenue and expenditure to the public and engaged citizens in its budgeting process first time. This is first kind of openness to be shown by a budget holder in Somalia and is a time Puntland citizens are in need of greater transparency and accountability from their government. This initiative shown that government spending reflects the people's interests and needs and will improve people's attention to watch the actions of the delegated persons to ensure that they are fulfilling the popular mandate and not pursuing their own interests.
2. Puntland Ministry of Information and Telecommunication committed establishment of e-government system very soon to accommodate all public data and information which will allow the citizens to watch what their government is doing. The process has been started and the establishment of individual information website for government institutions has been finalized so far.
3. The mayor of Garowe city started to openly present the monthly district revenue and expenditure which is a sense of openness and first ever openness amongst the district authorities across Puntland. Although, the budget is presented in numbers which is hard to the public to understand easily, but it is the beginning of open government and will influence other districts to do so. The openness shown by the mayor already established good reputation and public trust which in turn is expected to increase tax collection.
4. Puntland Statistics Act was endorsed by the Parliament to provide for collection, compilation, extraction and dissemination of official statistics in Puntland.
5. Bareedo Platform advocated legislative openness and engagement of citizens to the parliamentary work to increase accountability, transparency and access to public

**MIISAANIYADDA DOWLADDA PUNTLAND EE 2020 WAXAA LAGU BIXINAYAA MADAXYADAN**



Xigasho: Wasaaradda Maaliyadda DPL

@TheWhitePearlNews



information. There has been commitment that made by the Parliament of which we agreed to come into action in 2020 and that Bareedo Platform supports the process.

**END**