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Strengthening the humanity and dignity of people in crisis through knowledge and practice



## NARRATIVES OF FAMINE Somalia 2011

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## Acronyms

ACF	Action Contre le Faim
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation

## Terminology

Gu	the main rainy season
Jilaal	the long dry season
Deyr	the short rainy season
Hagaa	the short dry season

# Executive Summary

The Somalia famine of 2011 was an enormous human catastrophe and significant historical event for the Horn of Africa and for humanitarian action more broadly. This report is primarily designed to present, with relatively little accompanying analysis, extended first-person narratives of this experience from the perspectives of those that lived through it. This is an attempt to bring out a Somali ‘voice’ where the distance between local populations and humanitarian actors is increasing; inaccessibility and remote management has become the new norm in Somalia and many other humanitarian contexts. These narratives offer an important opportunity to learn about certain characteristics of Somali society and livelihoods (in the broadest sense of the word) that are difficult to access today and that are pertinent both to the everyday as well as extreme times. This report is intended as the background to (and effectively the database for) a more analytical report, also published by the Feinstein Center.<sup>1</sup>

The major analytical insights that these narratives offer concern the role that flexibility, diversification and social connectedness play in the ability of people to manage (or not manage) extreme conditions. The connectedness and networks that link individuals and households across occupational and livelihood-related resource bases – and between rural and urban, and national and international locations – is a critical aspect of Somali society. This diversification reflects very different risk contexts. In simple terms, a family with a rural livelihood base may be significantly protected from a natural or other calamity if they have relatives with a foot in the business sector and/or in the diaspora (the two are often related). And vice versa: those that do not have this livelihood AND risk diversification within their social networks are likely much more vulnerable to certain shocks. Much of the standard household and livelihood group-based analysis that is currently undertaken in Somalia under-appreciates the extent to which wider ‘community’ or ‘clan’-based identity and social networks determine vulnerability and resilience. In the case of Somalia, the social solidarity within these networks may be

stronger than in many other contexts. Reflecting this point, each of the narratives is referenced according to its clan identity and these identities are discussed at various points in the report.

The social networks and identities referred to here, that serve to protect certain groups, are also evident in the level of exploitation and discrimination that takes place between groups or clans, and it is most evident from the IDP and refugee camps, where many of our informants were residing or had passed through. Furthermore, humanitarian actors are commonly not aware of how their own organisation is part of these dynamics.

The narratives below also illuminate the presence and role of Al-Shabaab in the lead up to and during the famine period. Al-Shabaab was a critical actor, not just in terms of its antagonism towards international aid (which was highly politicised by all parties), but for its influence – or attempts to influence – many areas of the local response to the crisis, including by clan-based groups, the diaspora and the Somali private sector. While there is much to criticise in terms of the politicisation of aid and the (Western) humanitarian response in Somalia, Al-Shabaab’s influence was pervasive and insidious.

The perspectives revealed here and their implications for policy and practice are not a notable part of vulnerability or resilience-related discussions for Somalia. There are indeed sensitivities as well as challenges around incorporating these socio-political dimensions. However, given the history of humanitarian action as well as analytical developments in early warning and programming that have taken place in Somalia over the last twenty years, it is remiss to neglect them.

## Introduction

The Somalia famine of 2011–12 marks a major historical moment in the Somali imagination and for global humanitarianism. With nearly 260,000 deaths, this was the largest famine of the twenty-first century and was prominent in global and Somalia-specific media at the time. A number of factors combined to cause this human catastrophe, including a severe drought, global and local market



shocks, and a complex political-security context where the militant Islamist group, Al-Shabaab, controlled much of South-Central Somalia and therefore where counter-terrorism and humanitarian aims were in competition and served to delay a larger-scale humanitarian response.<sup>2</sup>

Initial analyses of the famine focused on *external* responses and perspectives, that is, of and by the (Western) international community. These reflect the way in which Somalia and Somalis are portrayed and understood by external agencies and individuals, as well as the specific issues and constraints faced by these humanitarian actors. These perspectives, while important, tend to blur or miss other *internal* factors that are equally or even more important in understanding Somali society, the evolution of the famine and, in particular, who survived, who did not, and why. Globally, this ‘external bias’, articulated through remotely managed humanitarian engagement, has been increasingly criticized for its intellectual, emotional, and psychological distance from local populations.<sup>3</sup>

This report presents narratives that capture a wide range of experiences from people that lived through the extreme conditions of 2011. These narratives capture multiple dimensions of the famine period of 2011 and convey the very human experiences of the time, as well as the complexity – and resilience – of Somali society. These narratives – chosen from several hundred we gathered – provide an extremely important resource in themselves, as ‘raw data’, that can (and perhaps should) be read by anyone working in or on Somalia. They also provide the empirical basis for a more detailed analysis of the concept of social capital (working in extremis) and on a wider analysis of the famine of 2011.<sup>4</sup>

While the famine itself occurred nearly four years ago, the experiences and analysis we emphasise in this report remain relevant and important in understanding ongoing and future vulnerability and ‘resilience’ in Somali society, but, we suggest, remain under-analysed and under-appreciated by humanitarian actors. In Maxwell et al. (2015), we build on the narratives below to illustrate how social ‘connectedness’ and social networks – between rural, urban and diaspora locations – were and remain a critical component of survival strategies

in 2011, and that these networks have a socio-political – or ‘clan’ – identity as well as both national and transnational dimensions.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, changed agricultural patterns and investment strategies that are evident in the epicentre of the famine appear to be significant factors in the evolution of the famine but are still poorly understood as ongoing processes in rural areas in Somalia.<sup>6</sup> The following narratives therefore not only provide an ‘emic’ description of the context of 2011 but also provide insights into processes not well captured elsewhere.

## **Social structures, hierarchies and networks in Somalia**

Given the emphasis on socio-political identity and social networks in this report, a brief overview of the Somali clan system and social structure follows. Somalia has five main clan families: the Rahanweyn, Dir, Darod, Hawiye and Isaaq. The latter four embody a nomadic or pastoral identity, culture and livelihood, although this pastoral, rural livelihood has significantly evolved over many decades to include urban and transnational dimensions. These ‘nomadic’ clans are especially associated with northern and central regions of Somalia. At a very general level, these clan-based identity groups benefited most from the resources of the state, such as through education and state employment opportunities, as well as the international migration opportunities associated with the Gulf oil boom in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>7</sup>

The Somali clan-based social system includes all five clan families and is described as having a ‘segmented lineage’ structure, repeatedly dividing from generation to generation along an expanding family tree. The Rahanweyn fall within the overall segmented lineage structure of the Somali, as one of the five main clan families, but have long occupied a marginal position; looked down upon in part for their agro-pastoral and agricultural livelihoods in the inter-riverine areas of southern Somalia.<sup>8</sup> The Somali Bantu comprise a significant further population group that falls outside of the clan or lineage system altogether. The Rahanweyn and Somali Bantu have been referred to as second- and third-class citizens respectively although they comprise

a very significant proportion of the population of southern Somalia.<sup>9</sup> These socio-political distinctions are of critical importance when considering that the most affected groups in the famines of both 1992 and 2011 were from the Rahanweyn and the Somali Bantu.<sup>10</sup> While the causal factors in these two famines were different, the following narratives and discussion highlight how processes of migration and diversification within social networks are socially and historically contingent, and influenced by processes of marginalisation, a subject analysed in more detail in the sister paper to this report.<sup>11</sup>

Having described some of these general characteristics of Somali society, these clan and social groupings disguise huge variations within them, with significant internal differences in terms of migration history, levels of education and social cohesion.

## Methodology

The study and narratives upon which this report is based included over 350 interviews with key informants in different research areas in Somalia and in other countries. The main research sites where we interviewed individuals about their experiences of famine were Mogadishu, Baidoa, Burhakaba, Qorioley, Jamame, Luuq, Gaal Hareeri, El Garas, and the refugee camps of Dadaab and Dollo-Ado in Kenya and Ethiopia respectively. Many other key informants such as local authorities, traders, and staff of local NGOs, were interviewed in rural villages within the above districts as well as in the town (the name of the town and district are the same in many regions of Somalia). Most households interviewed in Mogadishu, Baidoa, Dadaab and Dollo-Ado were displaced from their original homes and were therefore providing information on a much wider set of locations than indicated by the research site names. Key informants were also interviewed in Nairobi and various Somali diaspora locations around the world. Interviews and extended conversations were conducted in-person and/or by telephone; in some cases both methods were used in the same areas while in other cases security constraints meant that only telephone interviews were possible.

Both geography and clan identity were considerations in selecting sites and individual respondents.

To generate a comprehensive and comparable analysis of the famine, the above locations include areas affected to differing extents by the conditions of 2011 as well as the major areas to which people were displaced. A socio-political lens was deliberately adopted throughout the research. This required purposively sampling representatives from different clans *within* the same areas as well as enabling comparisons between completely different geographic locations. This lens was adopted to provide a complementary and comparative perspective to the livelihood group analyses conducted by food-security information systems covering Somalia. Given the volatility of the Somalia context and the sensitivity of socio-political identity, the field research team had to be careful and skilled in adopting this socio-political lens. Language and social identity of the researchers were important considerations in undertaking the fieldwork. The main language of the Rahanweyn of Bay and Bakool is Af-Maay and one of the senior Somali researchers was fluent in this language. Both researchers are fluent in Maxatiir (commonly referred to as standard Somali).

A 'snowballing' methodology was used in the case of telephone interviewing: Somali social networks, particularly within the diaspora, were used to identify potential key informants from particular geographical areas and/or clans. They in turn would provide contacts and/or introductions to people on the ground (in Somalia, as well as some in Ethiopia and Kenya). The same process would take place once contacts were established or interviews conducted in the 'field', with requests for further potential key informants made. The research team made sure that they used different social-information networks in order to reduce potential bias in interview responses.

Widespread cell phone network coverage in Somalia meant that both urban and rural areas could be reached by telephone, although an urban bias was inevitable, as electricity for charging phones is more accessible in larger settlements and towns. In-person interviews were conducted in several areas and followed a similar snowballing method; villages were selected in part based on clan identity. Severe security constraints on movement outside of towns during the research period (in 2013 and 2014) meant that in-person interviews had an urban bias;

however a large number of respondents were interviewed in refugee and IDP camps, with questions largely referring to their situation in 2011 in the rural areas from which they came.

The two main Somali researchers were men and were mostly restricted to interviewing other men. Two female Somali researchers were also part of the research team but provided a relatively small proportion of the interviews. Interviews in Dollo-Ado refugee camps were primarily with women.

Interviews were semi-structured, based on an interview guide that was prepared at the beginning of the study. Notes were generally taken during interviews, written up (on computer) and submitted soon after. Interviews were conducted in Somali (Maxatiir and Af-Maay) and written up in English. The narratives presented below are therefore based on the initial translation from Somali to English as notes were being taken. They have been slightly edited for clarity, and sometimes for structure and flow, in order to make them more accessible. Respondents' names were not taken and introductions were carried out to ensure respondents were aware of the ethical principles underlying the work – of protection, confidentiality, anonymity – and that the research was not linked to any aid agency or aid resources. The narratives have been re-labelled for the purposes of presenting them in this report.

The interviews ranged significantly in quality and depth, and interview narratives presented here were chosen based on their illustrative value, and for reflecting themes that were commonly referred to (briefly or in more depth) across many of the interviews. The lead author of this paper was responsible for reading and selecting the interviews to be included here, and the lead author and the two senior Somali researchers (who conducted most of the research) worked closely together in analysing all of the findings. A workshop was convened to discuss the findings in Nairobi, and different aspects of the findings were presented at various meetings in Nairobi, Mogadishu, London, Boston, Washington and New York.<sup>12</sup>

## Structure of the report

The structure of the report is largely based on the geographic areas where the research took place or that respondents were referring to (many respondents were consulted in locations they had been displaced to). However, these areas also reflect distinct socio-political identities that in turn reflect the social networks they were part of and the indigenous responses that took place through these networks – these responses varied enormously between some areas and identity groups. This report is structured as follows: It begins with several narratives from the central regions of Somalia among the Hawiye clan (the Duduble and Murasade in particular), in areas initially the priority for humanitarian concern, but which ultimately did not fall into the famine conditions that affected other regions in the south. These narratives provide a compelling example of strong indigenous coping and social connectedness, an example which was less evident in many other areas (due to differences of wealth and diversification rather than social solidarity, as is explained further below). The focus then shifts to the epicentre of the famine, in Bay and Bakool among the Rahanweyn, and then to Rahanweyn in Dadaab and Dollo-Ado refugee camps. These narratives reflect perspectives and experiences of those in and closest to the epicentre of the famine but also capture local variations that still exist in terms of underlying agricultural conditions, clan identities, crisis impact and survival (within Bay and Bakool regions and the Rahanweyn).

From the inter-riverine Rahanweyn areas, the next set of narratives represents perspectives in the Lower Shabelle area, another major locus of the disaster of 2011, where the drying up of the river Shabelle was an unprecedented occurrence and where one clan in particular – the Jiddo – faced a disaster not experienced in living memory. The Juba valley provides the next geographical area covered by these narratives, with key informants drawn from the Jamame area, in the south, and from the Luuq area, in the far north, with these two locations representing different clan identities and livelihoods. A final set of narratives are drawn from the business sector, a mosque in Nairobi used by Somalis, and the Somali diaspora.

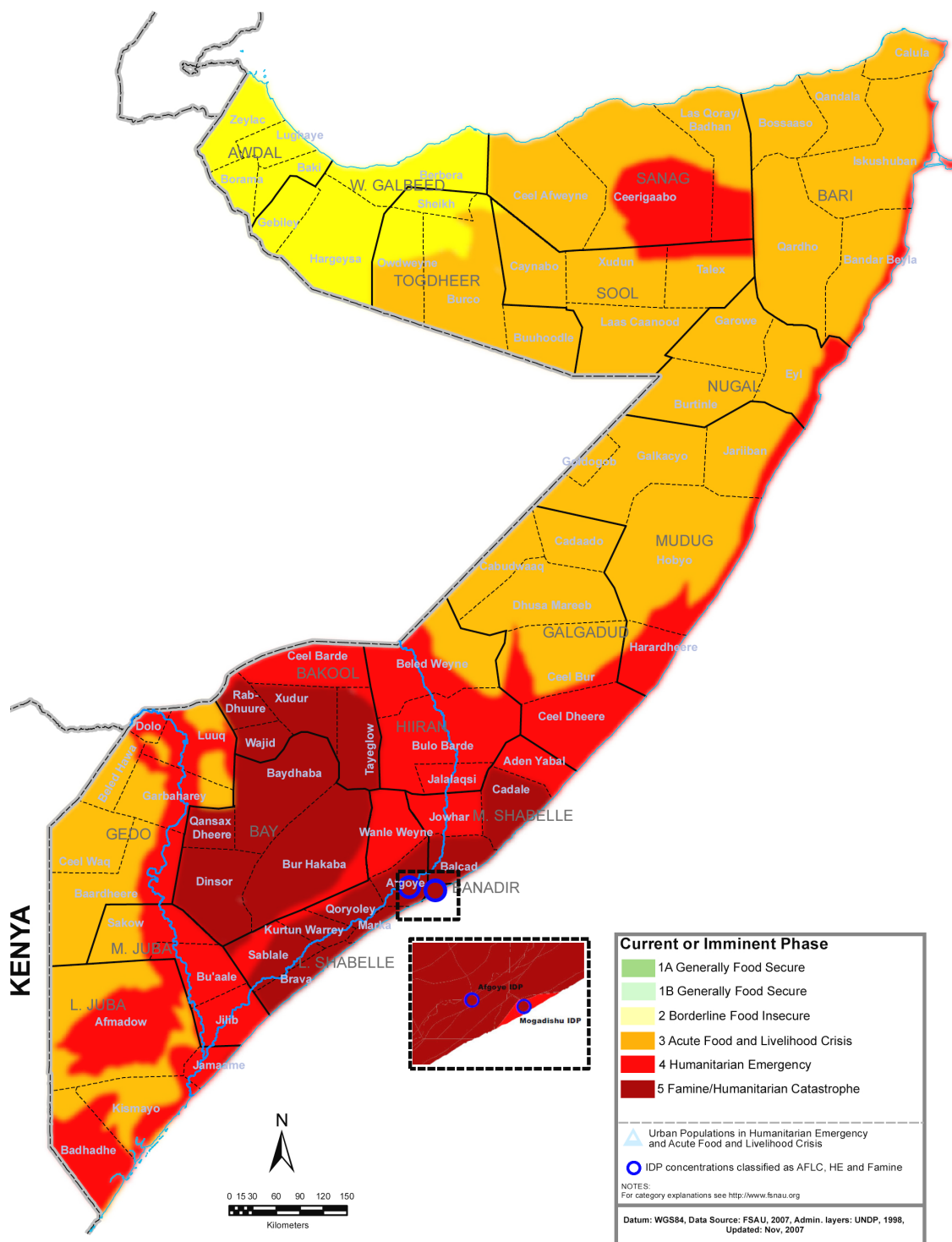


Each of these narrative-driven sections is followed by a discussion of the stories presented, with a concluding section discussing and comparing all of the 'data', and drawing out implications for policy and

programming, from early warning to humanitarian interventions.

The list of interviewees can be found in Annex I.

Figure 1. FEWSNET/FSNAU Map of the Famine. August 2011



# Narratives of the famine

## Central Regions – First affected, locally contained?

According to food security analyses of March to May 2011, the central regions of Somalia were judged to be in worst humanitarian conditions, than those that ultimately did fall into famine conditions.<sup>13</sup> Ultimately, this area and these people did not fall into famine. Why this was the case has not been well analysed previously but the following narratives provide one possible explanation – it was a function of the wealth, diversification and social cohesion of the clans in the area in question. Regardless of whether they do indeed provide the primary explanation, the responses mobilised at the clan level both illustrate the capacity and workings of indigenous social systems of particular clans (the Duduble and Murasade of the Hawiye) and provide a contrast to other experiences captured in following sections, where the same processes do not seem to have been as successful.

### A woman from El Bur district (01-001)

*During the drought, this area was under the control of Al-Shabaab as it is today. There was no help from any NGO or any UN agency because they were all banned, even Hormuud Foundation were not allowed to work here.<sup>14</sup> This town is almost entirely populated by the Duduble. Most of the people here are pastoralists as there is no farming activities in this area. Most of the families in this area also depend heavily on remittances from Mogadishu, Nairobi and abroad as there is a large business community who are from this clan including one of the richest man in Somalia. So even before the drought people here depended heavily on support from relatives.*

*I live in the town [local settlement] but keep ninety shoats and fourteen camels. During the drought, water shortage was the main problem. Our communities abroad and in major towns in the region supported us with water trucking. Most of the people had support from their relatives abroad or in Mogadishu. I have a brother who owns business in Nairobi and supports me all the time. He sends me money regularly to help*

*me support my family. During the drought, he sent us some more money because of the drought. Our birkas dried up and we had no water so we depended on water trucking paid by our community abroad and in Mogadishu.<sup>15</sup>*

*Our communities abroad and in Mogadishu sent help to individual families without any problem, but the money collected for water trucking and for families who didn't have anyone to support them had to be channelled through Al-Shabaab. There are so many rich people from this area who can build these facilities but Al-Shabaab wouldn't allow it. Almost all the rich men from this area are not allowed to come to this area, many of them are afraid to come to Mogadishu and [instead] stay abroad. Any help that was not for an individual person was either blocked or had to go through Al-Shabaab.*

*It was harsh time; however, I do not know anyone who died because of the drought. Almost every single family in this area had support from members of their family abroad or in Mogadishu. This clan has large business community and comparatively large diaspora.*

*The closest town is Dhusa Mareeb and people couldn't go there because Al-Shabaab will accuse them of going to a Sufis-controlled area. You could be executed for just going to Dhusa Mareeb. People had to go to the east and then to the south to go Mogadishu without being noticed.*

### A businessman from Nairobi (01-002)

*I own several shops in Nairobi and have others in different parts of Somalia. I am originally from El-Bur, Galgadud, but have been in Kenya many years. Many of my family still remain in Somalia and in Galgadud. After fighting with the Murasade, the Duduble have moved to El-Garas which is now their main town in Galgadud. My brother lives there. He is a pastoralist with goats and camel. He has many children, more than ten and depends on us. I send him US\$200 a month. He normally calls randomly for more money and as he is older than me I always send him. During the drought of 2011, my brother started to request more money from December 2010 saying that it was harsh jilaal and he needed to take his animals far away so he needed more money for water and other supplies. He called again about two months later and again after two months. He kept calling*

*every two months. The first call seemed to me to be one of his usual calls but he wanted more money. It seemed there was something wrong when he called in two months but later I realised from the media that there was an emergency in the region and I and my brothers who work with me have agreed to support our brother until the drought ends. He lost many animals especially his shoats but none of his camels died. We used this opportunity to get some of his children into school. We asked him to bring his children to the town.*

*There was clan response to the drought. The members of the clan in Nairobi collected money for El-Garas. I donated money but was not one of the people who were collecting the money so I don't know the exact amount that was collected. This was done everywhere where members of the clan lived, in the West, in Mogadishu and in the Gulf. I don't know how the money was distributed but I heard that Al-Shabaab refused access and the money was in the end handed to them so that they can distribute it to the needy.*

#### **An agro-pastoral woman from Gaal Hareeri (01-003)**

*I have a small rain-fed farm in which I grow beans. I also had seventy shoats, almost all goats. There were no rains for long time, I don't remember exactly how many seasons we missed but definitely the preceding two seasons we did not have good rains. We just kept hoping that the next season we will have plenty of rains and tried to do all we could to keep our animals alive. When the gu rains failed we still hoped that it will rain later in the gu season but it didn't and we had no means to keep our animals alive. I lost all my animals. I moved my family to town so that they can be helped by my relatives in town. I didn't have any close family abroad, such as siblings, but many of my cousins and distant relatives are abroad and in Mogadishu. Different relatives helped my family while I tried to keep some of my goats alive. In the end I came to town with eleven goats. We fed these goats some of our food and food we collected from garbages.*

*Our relatives in Gal Hareeri shared their food with us. Later I received some money from relatives in Mogadishu. We also received some food from Islamic charities. I can't remember their names but few came before the deyr rains. They distributed rice, flour, sugar and oil.*

*I didn't call any of my relatives abroad; instead I sought help from my relatives in Gal Hareeri who in turn called our relatives in Mogadishu and abroad. I had some money from individuals and later from groups. This help came through relatives and elders. My children became very weak and were ill most of the time but they all made it to the end of the drought alive. This was the worst drought I have been through. Many children died during the gu but it was from weakness and diseases. I don't want to say much about the local authority or the people in control; they are probably listening and will not hesitate to kill me if I say anything bad about them. We had some water trucking before the gu rains but it was stopped when we needed it most as the gu rains failed.*

#### **A rural man from El Dheer district, Galgadud (01-004)**

*My family consists of me, my wife, and seven children. I had one hundred goats and sheep, a single male camel used for getting water for the family and a rain-fed farm in which I grew beans and water-melons. Before the drought, I was self-sufficient and had a peaceful life. I used to take my farm's products to a nearby village and exchange them with sugar and other items needed. The drought changed my life dramatically. My sheep and goats started dying during the jilaal and by the gu I lost all of them. I decided to sell the single camel I had but couldn't find any buyers as the drought affected everyone in the area. After a long search, I found a buyer in the end who paid very little money for my camel.*

*While I was looking for a buyer, I lost two daughters, Fatima and Maka. I believe that they died of malnutrition. I decided to move the family to the village. I walked to the village and two days later, I arrived with my remaining five children and my wife. We went to my paternal auntie's house. My auntie saw that the children were in bad condition and she quickly gathered the family. The family decided that the children will be divided between three families, two families will take two each and one family will take one and I and my wife would have to support ourselves.*

*I had some money remaining from the camel I sold but it was not enough so I started to work as a labourer fetching water and bringing water and selling*

*it to support myself and my wife. I continued in this situation until the end of the drought. At the end of the drought, I was one of those who were given some livestock by the clan to help us re-start our lives. I am now back to my farm with my family reunited. I have some sheep and goats, and a male camel. I am back in my old ordinary life, self-sufficient and regularly contribute to the wellbeing of the clan.*

### **A community leader in the UK (01-005)**

*The drought started at the end of 2010. We started receiving calls for help and alarming news from families in that area. Al-Shabaab were in control of the area as they are now and were not allowing any food aid. At the time, NGOs were still allowed to operate in the area, so they did some water trucking that really helped, as food aid was not allowed by Al-Shabaab, and the NGOs were distributing some cash. Then as the drought was getting worse, Al-Shabaab banned all aid organizations and the NGOs had to stop working. It was this time that sheep and goats started to die, then followed by cattle and, in the end, camels started dying. I know families who had one hundred and ten small ruminants who were left with only ten.*

*As the drought progressed, those who were left destitute started flocking into the nearest settlements. The village had about five hundred families, but five hundred destitute families arrived at the village in a short time. The settled families did the best they could. Most of the families took in at least one family. On top of that, they were collecting money and supplies for the others who were not taken by any family. As this was not enough, people started dying. Actually, many people started dying before they moved to the village. For three months, more than three persons were dying daily in the village. When the village couldn't cope anymore and deaths couldn't be halted, they called for help from the clan members in Mogadishu. The village is remote and there was no media coverage or interest.*

*The clan members in Mogadishu responded quickly with cash and food. The food was bought from Mogadishu market and it bore the signs of the WFP, so Al-Shabaab rejected it and it couldn't be distributed while people were dying. They also requested the money to be handed to them so they themselves would distribute it. The clan refused this. There was a standoff for a while but in the end, the elders of the*

*clan put pressure on the clan members who were in the leadership of Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab yielded and allowed the cash and any food that didn't bear the signs of WFP or any other organization to be distributed freely. The clan members in Mogadishu responded well. I know one man who donated US\$200,000 in one go. Many others were similar in generosity. The members in Mogadishu also contacted the diaspora members of the clan who in three months collected and sent more than US\$1 million. The death rate started reducing and the deaths stopped altogether before the rains started.*

*When the rains started, the remaining cash was used to buy livestock for the people who lost their animals, as rains would have meant nothing for them without their livestock. People in the area also donated animals for this purpose. For example, my mother gave away ten sheep or goats to relatives. There was a lot of death in this area but [it] was not reported.*

*At first when people were calling me, I thought it was the usual calls that I used to receive as people always tell us stories to get money. Then we realized there was a problem later. It took time to mobilize people. It also took time to convince Al-Shabaab to let us help our people. All this contributed to the delay. It is also the case that many nomads put all their efforts in saving their animals and had not much time in soliciting money from relatives until their children were too weak. Some of them also were proud people who didn't want to ask for handouts. All these factors contributed to the delay. However, in the end, the family got their act together and halted the death rates before the dry rains.*

### **Diversification and social networks**

The above narratives are drawn from respondents in or from the central regions of Somalia, including Mogadishu. These are the home areas of the Hawiye clan family and its various sub-clans, and the Duduble and Murasade sub-clans in the above cases. These areas are much more arid than much of southern Somalia, and are therefore primarily the home of livestock-rearing people, although there is some agriculture alongside herding. Of great relevance to this area is that Mogadishu is relatively close and, since the civil war, has been



controlled by the Hawiye. While there is much conflict between Hawiye sub-clans, the considerable wealth flowing into and through Mogadishu, benefits the Hawiye more than any other group.<sup>16</sup> As well as having a considerable number of businesspersons and business wealth, the Hawiye also have significant urban and diaspora populations.

These narratives clearly indicate the extent to which people from these areas were able to call upon relatives and kin outside the immediate areas affected by the local, rural, evolving crisis. While rural agro-pastoral and pastoral households were initially absorbed by nearby urban kin, the importance (and indicative number) of relatives in Mogadishu, Nairobi and much further afield in the diaspora was obviously crucial. Some observers suggest also that the sense of social solidarity and identity is particularly strong among the more pastoral clans. However, the narratives suggest that it took some time to fully mobilise the clan, and that there was a sense of increasing mortality for a time, particularly among the Murasade. For the Murasade in particular, this mobilisation process went up to the level of the entire clan – a relatively rare event – where a common pot was created which was then managed by elders to support the most badly affected.

It is not clear that the Duduble were mobilised to the same level, and this is partly explained by the more recent and considerable migration of clan members to Mogadishu, so that many or even most households have a relatively close family member in Mogadishu or further afield. The Murasade, in slight contrast, have been urbanised for much longer, suggesting that some ties have become weaker between rural and urban/diaspora members; therefore, mobilising the whole clan took longer.

Finally, in spite of the wealth and power of both of these clans, the influence – or interference – of Al-Shabaab was strongly felt; the group being keen to try to control even these indigenous resources. This level of clan mobilisation would have taken place in many parts of southern and central Somalia (and is notable in northern Somalia around responses to other disasters), but its effectiveness depends in large part on the relative level of wealth and diversification within the social groups in question.<sup>17</sup>

What is not captured here, but alluded to below, is the ability of Mogadishu-based Hawiye clan members to control and profit from the enormous inflow of humanitarian resources that started to arrive in the capital from about August 2011. In other words, the Hawiye benefited from their own political and economic advantages vis-à-vis their own ‘indigenous’ humanitarian responses, but also by influencing external resources.

## **Bay, Bakool and the refugee camps – The epicentre of famine**

Bay and Bakool regions are the home of the Rahanweyn and the epicentre of the famine in 2011. These two regions and people are generally noted for their agro-pastoral livelihoods, with a relatively productive sorghum growing area running through part of Bay region and up to neighbouring Gedo (close to Bardheere).<sup>18</sup> There are also pastoral groups residing in and moving through these areas. Baidoa, in Bay region, is the capital of the Rahanweyn. However, these are very large regions with their southeastern areas close to Mogadishu and the Shabelle valley, western areas close to the Juba river and northern areas relatively isolated and close to remote areas of Somali Region, Ethiopia and northern Gedo. These locations matter, as people moved in all directions in 2011.

The following narratives are drawn from Rahanweyn respondents within Bay and Bakool as well as from Mogadishu IDP camps, and Dollo-Ado and Dadaab refugee camps; they describe conditions in and around the epicentre of the famine, as well as the journeys to and conditions in IDP and refugee camps.

### **A woman farmer from Qansaxdheere district (02-001)**

*I was a rain-fed farmer, also doing farm labour, and I owned some cattle [before the 2011 crisis]. There were major changes in our area leading up to 2011. We once became rich because of sesame and livestock but became very poor after a short time. Also, the increased fear because of Al-Shabaab made many people migrate before the drought crisis. There was also conflict between the Hubeer and Yantar, which made*



*us lose a lot of our food reserves (this was 2007–08), as well as internal conflict between the Hubeer and Jareer-Hubeer, which also made us very poor. The combination of all of these problems exacerbated our levels of vulnerability.*

*From 2009 to the gu rains of 2010, we harvested a lot of cash crops (sesame) and had very few food reserves in the granary or 'bakara'. We invested in buying cattle with most of the cash from our sesame. In 2010–11, the deyr failed, followed by very long and harsh jilaal. There were no reserves in the bakara. There was a shortage of water during the 2011 jilaal (February–April). Cattle had nothing to feed on and their bodies deteriorated and became very weak. Sesame has no stalks to feed cattle and we had to share the little sorghum we had between people and cattle. From late April to May 2011, cattle started dying. June 2011 we became displaced because there was no food, no water, and the livestock [were] dying. We left [the area] with some of the cattle still alive but not able to move. One of my children died on the way to Baidoa. We arrived in Baidoa in a congested camp called Bargiyamo. It was full of people of all clans. We received some food and other items from Baidoa people. We got some help from a local organization.*

*All of my family and relatives have been living in Oflow village but now they were displaced to different places like Dollo, Dadaab, Mogadishu and some of us are here in Baidoa. The people most affected in 2011 were agro-pastoralists, pure farmers, and labour dependents, and people who owned cattle were worst, as if the rain fails their livelihood fails. In terms of clans, the Hubeer, Yantar, Gelidle, and Dabare, as well as Jareer, were worst affected. Households with many children and aged people also. Those who had business and others to cry to were better and have not moved out of the village.*

*The main causes of the famine were recurrent conflict between different clans in recent years, increased shift from sorghum to sesame growing, investment of sesame earnings in cattle, drought, and cattle diseases. In terms of local authority influence, they only create conflict, put heavy taxation, and create tensions and terrorize people.*

### **A displaced man from Rabdhure, Bakool (02-002)**

*Before we were displaced to Baidoa, we relied on our livestock (mainly), rain-fed farming, charcoal making, collecting Arabica gum. Now that we are IDPs, we mainly depend on aid, some small remittances from my son in Bosasso and two of my sons who get daily labour in town.*

*When the rains failed in the deyr of 2010–11 we started moving from place to place with our few livestock. Water was the main problem – where we could get water and pasture. With time, all water and pasture became finished and livestock started dying. When we feel livelihood stress, we normally start charcoal burning which is not normally affected by either drought or rains. It is an alternative income, like collection of gums, always important in hard times. But Al-Shabaab taxed charcoal production and we could not pay. We do not do commercial charcoal production for export. It is for Mogadishu local market and we are not the only suppliers. If we pay tax and increase the price, buyers will go to where there is no Al-Shabaab. Because of this taxation, it made it impossible to burn it and sell and we moved to Rabdhure and eventually to Wajid. By May 2011, almost all of the livestock were dead and we first moved to Rabdhure town. Then we moved to Wajid in June. We received assistance from ACF but it was later chased by Al-Shabaab. Because we were already aid dependent and nothing else, we moved to Baidoa by foot. The road to Baidoa was long, tiring and we arrived in Baidoa hungry. We did not receive assistance quickly but later we were assisted by Al-Shabaab and Baidoa business people. There were many groups of people doing food assistance but I can't know who was who. Life in the IDP camp is not good either. We initially face challenges including congestion, poor water, access to latrines and there is no bush to use for defecation. All my family and relatives are in Baidoa, Rabdhure, Wajid, Huddur or Mogadishu.*

### **An agro-pastoralist man from Baidoa district (02-003)**

*Our family kept cattle, some camels, and we farm. As a family, we have many people who are able and can work and we sell our labour to farms during the farming period. This is called 'ta'ab goosi'. We had a good*

sesame harvest in gu 2010. In general, farming practices in Bay region have changed [in recent years] and the change was towards increasing growing of cash crops – sesame and groundnuts. Before the drought of 2011, livestock numbers increased too much but reduced to almost zero because of the drought, especially for cattle. I had invested to buy ten good-looking cows. I used a good amount of my money for my son's marriage and dowry. Yes, we had a relatively good amount of sorghum reserves. Things were well and in order.

Unfortunately, the 2010–11 deyr failed. From February to April 2011, there was a very hot jilaal. We did not have our own water but we were getting some water [brought by tanker] from Baidoa. I don't know who exactly was paying for that water. Because there is no livestock feed stocks from sesame, the cattle we had and the goats had nothing to feed on. We had to give part of the sorghum we had and share it between people and livestock. When the sorghum was out of stock, we started giving the livestock the grass roof that was on our huts. Livelihood stress continued, number of meals and amount was reduced. This was the beginning of January 2011 and onwards. Cattle started dying by February 2011 and by the end of April, it was almost finished. By May, people started becoming IDPs, moving to different places. For our case, we divided the family in three groups: one group went to Dollo Ethiopia refugee camp, one group went to Baidoa, especially the weaker ones, and one group stayed or moved with the camels and few goats (because there were lactating camels). I was part of the Baidoa group. We moved to Baidoa during June 2011. I went to some clan members in Baidoa to assist me and save my family. They assisted me with some food that was enough for at least a month. I also found some aid that was done by Baidoa business group and Al-Shabaab. Later there was some aid from ICRC and Al-Shabaab. All my family members are in Baidoa district and I don't have any family members in other countries that I can cry to but there are some clan members in Baidoa town that I can cry to for some assistance.

Households with many cattle and farmers were worst affected. The pure farmers were all affected as they bought a lot of animals the previous years. People with many children, old people, and sick people were also affected very much. Children and old people

were those who died most. I have seen myself a family with more than ten children, four of them dead in two days. People who have nobody to cry to, that is who don't have kinsmen to help, don't have a son or a daughter in the towns or out of the country to help . . . all such people have no ability to manage.

In terms of clan, the drought affected the following clans the worst: the Gelidde, the Yantar, the Hubeer and the Jareer from different clans. These are all the strong producers of sorghum in Bay region. Yantar and Hubeer had a very bad conflict in 2007–08. This affected their reserves. They also did intensive sesame growth. They were also the worst affected in terms of Al-Shabaab taxation (on farm produce). For the Jareer, they don't have livelihood apart from farming. They always finish their products quickly. They are also farm labourers and there was no farm labour for two seasons.

From our case, we were also affected very much in our village but the number of people who died were not many. Because, as Leysan we could not let our clan members die of hunger while we know and have something. The Leysans in Baidoa and even other places were collecting money to help us.

### **A male farmer and labourer from Burhakaba district (02-004)**

I do farming producing only sorghum. I also depend on wage labour to earn income, both farming labour and in-town work. There have been no significant farming changes in this district. We know sesame has gained momentum in other areas of Bay region but it is not suitable in Burhakaba district. Recurrent migration because of droughts and water shortages, as well as the 2006–07 conflict between the ICU and Ethiopia, which was mainly in Burhakaba, have been major disruptions in this area.

The crisis started as early as deyr 2010–11. When the deyr rains failed, both water shortage and reduction of food reserve started. When such happens, humanitarian organizations used to do water trucking, but that was stopped by Al-Shabaab. Many people started moving out of the villages as early as February 2011 because of water shortages. They were only moving to villages that have water and to Burhakaba town. Most of them had food reserves, however little. For my case, I moved to Wafdhay, which is our main vil-

lage. I started collecting firewood, charcoal, and even building logs [for construction] and selling them in Burhakaba to get [money to buy] food and water for the family. In April 2011, the water catchment in Wafdhay dried up and there was nowhere to stay. The gu rain also failed. No rain fell. We had no option but to move out along with many people. We sold the few food reserves we had and footed to Mogadishu. Al-Shabaab were stopping people from going but we used a long route so that they don't [find] us. We reached Afgooye IDP camps and Al-Shabaab moved us to Kilometre 50 where we had the worst experience. As a family, I lost two of my children there. After two weeks we again footed in a hiding way because there was no help [at Kilometre 50 or K50] yet we were forced to be there. We reached Mogadishu. For almost ten days, we were depending on begging in the streets with our children because there was no aid. It was around late May to early June 2011 that we were taken to one of the Mogadishu IDP camps. They [the humanitarian agencies] bring food every day but after taking photos, the food is taken back from all the people and only 20 percent given to us. Some business people and the owner of the camp, plus the NGO staff are taking the food. We can't complain because they will chase us from the camp. Sometimes the militia are coming at night taking the few things left and raping girls and women.<sup>19</sup>

Over three quarters of the IDPs in Mogadishu are Rahanweyn-Elay. Cattle pastoralists and farmers were the worst affected. Women, children, and aged people were among the worst affected. Many of them died, either on the way or when they were in the IDP camps. Water shortage, lack of humanitarian assistance, and Al-Shabaab pressure were the main causes. Yes, Al-Shabaab pressure still continues because they are forcing people to pay tax wherever they are.

During the ICU and Hizbul-Islam time (2006) there was too much recruitment into militias. During Al-Shabaab time there was increased fear and terrorizing of the population. Al-Shabaab stopped all humanitarian assistance while people are dying. The current local authority is corrupt and taking everything for themselves. They work closely with NGO and INGO local staff and share what would have been given to the population. In the IDP camps, we got some assistance but it was the biggest corruption I have ever seen.

## ***Local variations at the epicentre***

These four narratives reveal similar but distinct experiences from four districts in Bay and Bakool. Firstly, not only were the Rahanweyn widely recognised by other Somalis as being the hardest hit in 2011 but, within the Rahanweyn, certain clans and districts were considered at the heart of the famine. These were in the high-potential sorghum-growing area (the sorghum belt in the FSNAU map): Dinsor and Qansaxdheere in particular, with the Gelidle, Yantar, Hubeer and the Somali Bantu. Among the Rahanweyn, these groups are considered the most sedentary and agriculturally dependent, who have not diversified outside of the rural economy to any great extent.

In addition, a very specific agricultural dynamic occurred in these areas. This was the increasing cultivation of sesame (previously only grown in irrigated conditions in Somalia) and the investment of sesame returns in cattle. Why people started growing more sesame in these rain-fed conditions is not clear, but increasing interest in earning cash and encouragement (including credit provision) by large traders are among the reasons given. However, while people benefitted from this process briefly, prior to 2011, this switch increased vulnerability to a major drought, as less sorghum was being cultivated (for fodder and human consumption) and more demand existed for it (from humans and cattle). As the dry season intensified, people increasingly desperately were trying to keep their cattle (their primary and newly gained wealth) alive, depleting other resources, aiming to reach the gu rains. Unfortunately, these rains almost completely failed to materialise.

Al-Shabaab's influence further complicated this dynamic. They were reportedly taxing the rural and urban economies, claiming zakat for themselves (rather than redistributing it to the poor) and causing wealthier people to leave the area (reducing local social safety net capacity). Furthermore, they inhibited people from moving out of their areas as the crisis deepened, and when peoples' resources were exhausted, journeys were made longer in order to avoid Al-Shabaab detection. Similarly, as



peoples' movements outward were restricted, so was the inward movement of humanitarian aid.<sup>20</sup>

Outside of the sorghum belt, the situation was severe, as reported above, but opportunities also were available. The Leysan-Rahanweyn respondent (Interview 02-003) reflects both a more pastoral identity and livelihood within the Rahanweyn agro-pastoral spectrum, himself owning camels and other animals. The Leysan are also one of the wealthier and more diversified among the Rahanweyn. This respondent indicates how his family managed by dividing into three different units, moving in different directions and being able to call on fellow clan members for support. Although they were displaced, the respondent suggests no deaths occurred among people he knew and he was able to manage through his own resources and clan-based support networks. The importance of having someone to 'cry to' is noted here, and a theme we identify throughout this report. Familiar food security 'coping' activities are evident, including producing and selling charcoal, collecting and selling other natural resources (including gums), as well as searching for labour opportunities.

While we suggest that the Rahanweyn do not have a large business or diaspora community, particularly in comparison to the Hawiye for example, there was nevertheless a response by the Rahanweyn business, religious and diaspora community. A Rahanweyn NGO in London (Moragabey) was mentioned by many respondents and a Baidoa business group made a major response. These groups did raise significant resources, directed primarily at IDPs in Mogadishu and Baidoa, but in comparison to the number of people affected, this response was limited—especially in comparison with other groups or clans farther to the north.

People were displaced to many areas, with Mogadishu, Baidoa, Dadaab and Dollo-Ado being the major destinations. Baidoa arguably provided the nearest and most receptive area, as this was a Rahanweyn area and the local business and diaspora population were managing the response there, along with Al-Shabaab. However, the above narratives highlight some of the corruption and abuses witnessed in Mogadishu, at the expense of IDPs. These Rahanweyn IDPs were from clans different

from those that control resources in Mogadishu and this accounts in part for the level of exploitation they face. The control and exploitation of IDPs in Mogadishu is noted elsewhere.<sup>21</sup>

### ***Crossing national borders***

The following section provides a perspective on the Rahanweyn as they moved across national borders to neighbouring countries, drawn from interviews conducted in the refugee camps in Kenya and Ethiopia.

#### **A displaced woman from Bay region (03-001)**

*We had five cows and thirty-two goats before the drought. We were doing intensive farming, growing sorghum, maize, sesame, and cowpeas. Sesame growing started only three seasons before the drought. It was bringing in a lot of money but it made us regret because we initially got money but lost it easily because there was no feed stock for livestock from the sesame. I do believe it was because of sesame growing by the people and Al-Shabaab pressure that made the drought as bad as it was. No, we had no access to any remittance. All those who had access to remittances are still there in their villages.*

*Al-Shabaab also introduced farm taxation that has never been there even during the colonial period. We used to pay at the planting and harvesting times and the harvest zakat is again separate. They don't give the zakat to the poor people.*

*We kept a huge amount of sorghum stock because we sold two cows and bought sorghum. This was in December 2010. We tried hard to feed the three cows left and the goats. We pushed them to April 2011 but my husband said these cows will die so don't waste the food for the children on them. [By] May 2011, all the cows and half of the goats died. Because there were many relatives in the village, my husband asked me to assist those who don't have sorghum with what we have. He gave all the goats we had to those who had nothing. By the end of May 2011, we had finished our sorghum stock too. We shared our sorghum stock with those who had nothing. We called some relatives in Mogadishu to assist us with something, which they did, and we used it to buy food on the way to Dollo.*

*[My husband] called all the elders and told them we need to go to another place to survive. Otherwise, the drought will kill all the people too. The family head of these eleven families including my husband decided to move us to Dollo. We migrated from Ufurow district. We moved by foot from Ufurow to Dollo. We lost three children on the way between the eleven families moving together. We arrived in Dollo the month before the Ramadan of the drought year (June 2011). We spent fifteen days on the way. We used donkey carts to carry the weak children, water, and food.*

*We chose Dollo because it was nearer to us than Dadaab and Mogadishu, and it is more secure than Dadaab, Baidoa, and Mogadishu. Also, Al-Shabaab were controlling the way to Baidoa and Mogadishu. They were the only [ones] who had resources and they were giving it to themselves and [their] supporters so that everyone joins them on the basis of resources. We heard Dollo was good and that is why we came here.*

*In Dollo, we arrived and were received at Wabarka, where we registered and stayed two days. Then [we] moved to the transit point at Yubow. Here it was very bad because almost everybody fell sick. From the eleven families that came together we lost two children including one of my daughters. We were then moved here Hilaweyn camp. We are doing well. Initially we were been given good food but now we have problems with food because it is lacking important ingredients like milk, meat, and vegetable. However, we got education, medical and water services for our children, which we never had in Ufurow.*

### **A displaced man from Bakool region (03-002)**

*We are rain-fed farmers, keeping goats and a few cattle. We also collect Arabic gums and do agricultural labour in the farming seasons. We have no access to remittances and there is no charcoal burning because [our home was] far from any urban centre. Agricultural practices in the rain-fed farming remained the same [in our area]. However, because of recurrent droughts, harvest has been going down year after year. Collection of Arabic gum is also not big because one can only collect 0.5 kilograms or less per day. In terms of livestock keeping, the best is normally camel, but for me I didn't have it. For the goats and cattle, they are not strong for the droughts.*

*When the deyr 2010–11 failed, it was followed by a long and harsh jilaal. Pasture and water become finished. Cattle required to be fed at home with human food for it to survive to gu 2011. Most of livestock survived to gu while they were very weak. We used most of the goats to buy food for both cattle and people. Unfortunately, when gu failed again we could not sustain the livestock. May 2011, almost 90 percent of our livestock died in the drought. June 2011, we sold the few left and migrated to Dollo. Almost everybody left the village except some few people who had enough food stock or remittance or business. There was no any humanitarian [aid] coming to us because Al-Shabaab stopped it. They were also taxing everything including the Arabic gums, business, making food very expensive for us.*

*We tried to manage during 2010–11 by trying to make our livestock survive to gu 2011 which we did but we could not continue. We were also doing Arabic gums collection to get some income. [We also called] upon the close relatives that had food stock in their bakara.<sup>22</sup> We removed the grass on the house to feed the cows and goats. When all options were exhausted and we could not stay any longer, we moved out to Dollo.*

*We arrived in Dollo the month before Ramadan of the drought year (June 2011). We migrated from Burdhuxunle, Rabdhure [district] of Bakool region. We footed [walked] from Burdhuxunle to Dollo. We used donkey carts to carry water, food and younger children. We spent six days on the way from Burdhuxunle to Dollo. No, we didn't lose anybody on the way but we lost a child at Yubow, the screening and transit point. When we were moving out, it was when almost everybody was moving and Al-Shabaab could not control people.*

*We chose to move to Dollo because it was near to us. We heard that it was secure and the reception was good and we saw that [when we arrived]. There was some of our people who were already there especially those militia groups that ran away from Al-Shabaab and they have been sending us information. I always go back to farm and come [back] and that is the only way I can compensate what I get from the refugee [camp].*

*We arrived [in Ethiopia] and were received at the Wabarka, registered, stayed four days, moved to*



*Yubow and stayed there for three months.<sup>23</sup> I lost a son at Yubow and [that] was the worst place because all the children became sick. We were later moved to the refugee camp. In the refugee camp, we got good food, water, security and medical services until three months ago. Now the food is not good because [it] lacks some components. Sorghum needs milk, meat or vegetable for one to be fine and healthy with it and we are only getting sorghum.*

*Almost everybody in Burdhuxunle had the same experience but because people don't have the [same] capacity to cope with drought, many remained in the village. Those who had access to remittance, business, had good sorghum reserve or camel mostly remained in the village while many poor people moved out.*

### **A woman displaced from Bay region (03-003)**

*In general, we were agro-pastoral people who also do some natural resources extraction to compensate our income. We migrated from Rahole village of Dinsor district [Bay region]. We arrived in Dollo the month of Ramadan of the drought year (July 2011). We used vehicle from Rahole to Ufurow spent three days waiting [for a] vehicle, [then] got vehicle from Ufurow to Bohol Bashir, twenty-two kilometres outside Luuq. Because Al-Shabaab were not allowing vehicle beyond that, then we footed to Luuq, stayed there two days and then moved to Dollo. We spent 7,500,000 shilling [US\$300] for a household of six people from Rahole to Dollo. Yes, it is a lot of money. We sold our donkey carts at 1,200,000 shillings [US\$48], a lactating female [animal] at 1,500,000 shillings [US\$60] and we got 4,500,000 shilling [US\$180] on credit from a relative.<sup>24</sup> When we were unable to clear the debts, my son was working in the riverine farms and burning charcoal to pay back that money for five months*

*The main problem was water during the long jilaal. Livestock started dying as from April 2011, especially cattle. By May 2011, we had no any cattle left because they all died. The few camel we had were moved close to Kismayo by my older son and other relatives. My husband and my son were both collecting firewood and selling it at Dinsor, which is 50 kilometres away. When the gu rains failed again we become worried because our few left goats were also dying. My husband sold one camel and its calf, the donkey and cart*

*we were using and got some money on credit from his brother.*

*We moved to Dollo refugee camp because there was no aid coming because of Al-Shabaab. Only Al-Shabaab or those working for them were able to survive because they could access resources through taxation and intimidation. There were some Islamic organizations bringing some food and they handed it over to Al-Shabaab [who] take it for themselves. Many people were affected like us and most of them moved to Sakow, Dinsor, Bardera, Dadaab and Dollo.*

*We chose [Dollo] because it was near and more secure. I have two teenage sons [and] if we could go to Baidoa or Mogadishu, Al-Shabaab would recruit them and if I go to Dadaab soldiers will arrest them. We have no problem here in Dollo. In Dollo we arrived at the Wabarka we were registered, stayed two days, moved to the transit place Yubow, stayed one month, then moved here, Hilaweyn. Here we have been assisted with [a] good reception. We were given food and shelter, water, medical services, and education our children. My husband died eight months ago here in this camp.*

*The other main thing is that Al-Shabaab chased all the business and political people and there were nobody to talk for us and to ask for help in the area. There were no humanitarian assistance unlike the previous droughts where we could access aid. If people could get humanitarian assistance at their place, nobody would have moved. We are the most affected clan because all the people in Rahole were displaced. I think it is because we don't have diaspora, business, politician, etc. that can help us when we need.*

### **A male farmer from Sakow, Middle Juba (03-004)**

*I was a rain-fed farmer and when two rains failed and there was increased insecurity from Al-Shabaab, I felt unsafe for my family. I also had some boys who could be convinced by Al-Shabaab and I feared for them to join them. Many of their age in Sakow have joined Al-Shabaab while many died in the fights. My three sons are now in school (in Dadaab).*

*I arrived [in Dadaab] one month before the Ramadan of 2011, coming from Sakow district. From Sakow we used vehicle transport but when we arrived in Dhob-*

ley [on the Somalia-Kenya border], we had no money. We became stranded there for three weeks. We sent the weak members of the family, like young children and their mother, by vehicle and my three sons and I footed from Dhobley to Dadaab. We spent three days on the way. When we arrived, for one month we were only getting food from other refugees but when we got our card we started receiving food too. I have two wives and I moved with most of the children, but one wife and some children are left taking care of the farm. Nobody of our family died on the way but when we arrived here in the camp, we lost a child of two years.

We came to Dadaab because when you are in Sakow, you don't easily get information about Dollo (Ethiopia). Dadaab has been a refugee camp for more than twenty-three years now. There were people from Sakow and even from our village who have been here for several years. We had their information. For Mogadishu, we were also running away from Al-Shabaab.

There are many challenges [to staying in Dadaab] including insecurity from the local community militias. The life is very difficult but good water service and free education for our children is why we are tolerating all the problems we have here. We only receive what we are given but don't ask, because we fear for our lives from the host community and their clan members in the refugee camp. Even the humanitarian agencies staff are from the local community.

Yes, we all go back do some farming or labour work, whichever is possible, to get some money to send for the family here. That is the only way to survive if you don't have business or someone to send you money. So that is common especially for the Rahanweyn refugees.

### **A second male farmer from Sakow, Middle Juba (03-005)**

We arrived when gu 2011 failed. Yes, it was before Ramadan because I know we fasted here in the camp. We migrated from Sakow district. When the *deyr* 2010–11 failed, the long *jilaal* finished the few livestock we had, we consumed all the food stock we had, no aid was coming, there were increased pressures and fears from Al-Shabaab and gu 2011 failed. So we could wait to die in the village but we thought [of] running to where we think we will get assistance, however far it is.

We footed all the way from the village Barka Mumin Dhorow to Dadaab. We moved together with many other families. Every family had at least one donkey cart while some had two. We used these donkey carts to carry food and water for the families. We footed thirty-one days. For children when they are tired, we put them in the donkey carts.

We were received by UN in Dhagahley. We were very tired, weak and we have finished all we had on the way and were very hungry. We needed emergency attention. It was a very bad journey that I will never forget. When we arrived, almost all the people in Dhagahley came to us watching and they gave us the first assistance before the UN assistance. For two days, we were given food and clothes by Dhagahley people.

Yes, we left two children on the way while other families also left many children of the way. We were almost fifty-three families moving in convoy. We only [had] information about Dadaab because there are many people from Sakow district who have been in the refugee camps since early 1990s. We heard it was good because it is an old refugee camp; children get education unlike other places.

[In Dadaab] . . . well it is not as it was when we were coming but still we are getting something. However, being refugee is being slave. For the host community because they insult you, you are denied your rights, you can't complain because they are the ones working for the agencies you could complain to, the security officers of Kenya. No, we have no choice; neither can we complain because you will be targeted. I am sure the UN is not aware of this but we [are] colonized by the host community and the soldiers.

### **A woman from Bardera (03-006)**

I arrived May 2011. Because drought started early 2011 and when gu 2011 failed and there was no aid coming, we could not wait to die in the villages. I migrated from Bardera because of the drought. You know there was combination of drought, conflict and fear from Al-Shabaab as well as lack of humanitarian aid. If there would have been aid coming in, there would have been no death and displacement. But because Al-Shabaab denied aid access, people either died of hunger or [were] displaced.

*From Bardera to Dadaab by [we used] vehicle transport. We were nine families moving together from the same village. The transport cost of person was 700,000 Somali shillings, which was equivalent to US\$23 per person. We sold a plot in Bardera to transport the family because [we] had no any other option.*

*We were received by the UN in Dhagahley but the first three days we were assisted by the refugees who were there before us. No part of the family was left behind to at least take [care] of the farms. My husband has two wives and the younger wife was left in Bardera. She is doing farming and taking care of the assets we left behind. My husband often goes to Bardera to also support in farming and get some income for us; he is there even now. No, we did not lose any family member.*

*[We chose Dadaab] because there were already many people coming to Dadaab; there were no people going to Dollo from Bardera while there were very few people going to Mogadishu also. Many people like us also ran away with their children because they could easily be part of Al-Shabaab. When we come here, it was very good, were given a lot of food and care but now things have changed. I don't know if they want to close the camps; it's as if they are telling us go home. Yes, we could but so long as Al-Shabaab is there [and there are] no proper schools, I don't think we can go back.*

### ***The refugee camps – Displacement, death and mobility***

Other than Mogadishu, Baidoa and other smaller locations within Somalia, many people from the hardest-hit areas of Bay and Bakool, as well as from other areas, fled to the Dadaab and Dollo-Ado refugee camps. Dadaab has a long history as a Somali refugee camp, located in the Somali-populated area of northeast Kenya, and hosting mainly Somali populations since the early 1990s. There were no refugee camps in Dollo-Ado prior to 2011. These two refugee camps were major centres of the international humanitarian response in 2011, in part due to the lack of access to most of southern Somalia, where Al-Shabaab was in control. But also, by the time the famine was declared and resources mobilised, people had already been leaving

their home areas in large numbers, in desperation, and heading for these areas. In terms of Somali migration history, the Rahanweyn had not been part of previous, major cross-border refugee flows from Somalia, and have primarily moved to Mogadishu historically; hence this movement marked a shift in the clan composition of the long-standing Dadaab camp, as well as the newly formed Dollo-Ado camps, and a significant change in the social geography of the Rahanweyn.

As well as providing further descriptions of the conditions within Somalia, these narratives indicate a number of reasons why people chose to move in particular directions. Geographical proximity and existing knowledge about the two camp locations were important factors. Some people, particularly from southern Gedo and neighbouring Bay region, were already aware of Dadaab. Further north, some information was coming from individuals and militia that had fled to Ethiopia when Ethiopia forces withdrew following their incursion in 2007 (in response to the rise of the Islamic Courts Union). Many of the respondents are not only fleeing the food security conditions but the risk of their children joining Al-Shabaab, which they have clearly seen happening around them. While the journey to Kenya was considered more dangerous in terms of security (because of Kenyan Somali bandits rather than Al-Shabaab), Ethiopia is seen as a relatively peaceful place. Furthermore, the importance of identity, and the exclusion of one group by another, appears to be stronger in Kenya than in Ethiopia.

Many of the respondents point out how they were initially supported by fellow refugees upon their arrival. Formal reports confirm that conditions in both refugee camps were horrendous in the first few weeks of the first arrivals and that preparedness was very poor; malnutrition and mortality rates were very high for many weeks.<sup>25</sup>

Once established, it is also clear that refugee camps become important resource opportunities for families that have split and, in effect, diversified their livelihoods between different locations. Many people will move between camps and farms during the agricultural season to generate food and income in their home areas while maintaining access to education and other resources in the camps.



## Lower Shabelle – A drying river

The Shabelle valley is one of the most agriculturally productive areas in Somalia, with a long history of irrigated agriculture where many different crops are grown, including cereal crops (maize and sorghum) and cash crops (fruits, pulses, vegetables). Its agricultural wealth has attracted predatory groups over time, from the government itself to powerful clans. There are complex land-ownership issues. The irrigation infrastructure has been in a poor state since the collapse of the Siad Barre regime, although it continues to be a critical determinant of national food supply and food security. The presence of the river and the agricultural activities (of larger, more commercial farms and small holdings) means that the area has been something of a safe haven, where people and animals come in difficult times to access water, pasture and wage labour opportunities, very different to the situation in 2011.<sup>26</sup>

Due to its favourable agricultural potential as well as proximity to long-established towns (Mogadishu, Brava, Merca etc.), many different clans and social groups live in the valley. In the Qorioley area, where the research was conducted, there are three main clans: the Somali Bantu who live alongside the river, the Jiddo who are pastoral and agro-pastoral (herding mainly cattle) and the Garre. There are also many other local clans, and interviews were conducted with Reer Hassan, a small mixed-livelihood clan. This mixed clan composition is also reflected in the languages spoken, both Maxatiir and Maay, as well as local dialects such as Garre.

Many Somalis at the time commented on how much the Jiddo were affected by the famine. Upon further research, the unprecedented impact on this group became more apparent and provides a tragic example of how a social group's asset became its liability (like the Rahanweyn who invested in cattle).

### A male teacher and farmer (04-001)

*I worked as a teacher before the civil war. After the collapse of the government, no schools were open around here so I started selling vegetables and fruits. I have a farm (about one hectare) in which I grow, maize, sesame, beans, onions, sweet potatoes and watermelon. This produces the basic food for the*

*family. I also take vegetables and fruits from Qorioley to sell them in Mogadishu, Baidoa and other towns. I use this to buy extra things such as meat, clothes, medicine, etc. I have no livestock at all but my brother keeps some cows. We live close to the river and we irrigate our farms so the river flow is the most important factor in our lives. Our village depends more on the river than the rain. If there were no water in the river, people in my village will scatter and move away like they did in the crisis.*

*I have eight children. One daughter is married and has her own family and a son is in school in Mogadishu. The remaining six children are very young and are all with me. None of my family members are abroad. My son is in school in Mogadishu and my brother is an IDP in Galka'yo, the rest of the family are in Qorioley district. My brother was not in position to offer any help, he was actually worse off than us.*

*During the crisis, I had no savings so I had to run around to make sure that I could provide for my family in that hard time. I used to take vegetables and fruits to Baidoa. I also borrowed money. My sister have also handed me some cash she had so that I could buy more stocks and we shared the profits. My village is mainly an agricultural village with some livestock. The people who suffered most were those who rented land to farm. In this village, people are two classes: those who own their land and those who don't. The land owners were mostly better off. Mostly one to five hectares. You can say those who died were all landless and already vulnerable.*

*Later, more people had to leave the village including many who had land. Almost 80 percent of the population of the village went to Mogadishu as IDPs. They sent money back, and they still do to date, to continue their farming activities. Some of them are back; some of them built new houses from the money they earned in Mogadishu. The people in Mogadishu have benefited and are still benefiting from the IDPs in Mogadishu and elsewhere in Somalia.*

*Al-Shabaab were the authority in Qorioley district at the time of the crisis. They distributed some help from abroad or other organisations. Sometimes they were giving twenty koobo of maize to each needy family (koobo is about half a kilogram). Sometimes they gave 30,000 Somali shillings to each needy family. My*

understanding is that some of this help was from community members abroad and some was from organisations and concerned individuals. Al-Shabaab collect zakat. Normally zakat is paid to locals and relatives who are poor. However, Al-Shabaab collect one-tenth of farm produce and 2.5 percent business capital. They just come, estimate your business and demand payment. You can't argue with this so people just pay. I don't know where this money goes, but certainly not much of it is given to the poor in this village. They also come periodically for what they call taakulo, meaning support. They just ask you to pay a set amount of money and you have to pay.

Because they are less dependent on the river and many of them rear camels, the Garre have suffered less than the Jiddo. The Jiddo keep large number of cows. They all have farms but these farms were too small to support their large herds of cattle so they lost the majority of their herds. If you had a small herd of say ten cows, your farm may support them but if you have 100 cows or more, there is no chance. For example, my brother had ten cows, he sold five of them in order to save the other five. He used this money to buy stalks (fodder). Some people who had savings or support from abroad were able to save their animals by paying the big farms to allow them to graze their animals in there. They were charged 5,000 Somali shillings per head per day. Most of the Jiddo are pastoralists with large herds of cattle. There was no way they could support this with their small plots of land. They had no savings and no support from relatives abroad, so their herds just perished in the crisis and many of them became destitute for the first time in their life.

I was well off comparatively and did not receive any help. As an educated person and an elder, I was burdened with the responsibility of making sure that everyone in the village survived. I had to go to Qorioley town, [then to] Merca and all the way to Mogadishu to seek help for the needy who were dying in our village. We also called people abroad to inform them of the situation and pleading with them to help. Most of our people who live abroad live in Saudi Arabia. We called them as a group representing the village, the whole town mobilised to support the weak and to look for help, as most of us did not have much to support each other. Any support we received was given to the neediest. We did not have specific criteria to identify

the weakest but there are about 100 houses in the village and we know each other so there was no problem of knowing who deserved the most.

### **A male riverine farmer (04-002)**

I am a member of the Darbane, a sub-clan of the Dubane Digil who live in villages in and around the districts of Qorioley, Buulo Mareer, Golweyn, Kurtunwaarrey and others. I am married and have four children. All of us survived the crisis and we had no death in our family.

Before the crisis, I was a farmer. My farm is on the bank of the Shabelle river. The river had many canals that relieve it from excess water and irrigate farms far from the river. These canals are now in bad condition and most of them are blocked. The river now floods more often. This is what happened to my farm before the crisis (in 2010). It was flooded, and I had to wait until the next season for it to dry up, but before I was able to do anything, it was again flooded and I had to wait again. By the time the farmland dried up completely, the farm was a bush with big trees that needed clearing. I did not have the means to do this so I started renting other farms.

The crisis came while I was in this situation. It was already harsh jilaal then the gu rains failed, then the river waters receded to very low levels. Actually, in some areas the river was virtually dry. There was no rain and no water in the river so I had no harvest. I then took an axe and went into the bushes to cut trees and sell them as building or enclosure material or burn them to produce charcoal. Then every clan started to claim the ownership of the bushes in their territory and refusing others to cut it. I was tortured a few times for trespassing on other clans' territory and cutting down their trees but I had no choice, as I needed to feed my family.

Then my wife went to Mogadishu on her own to see if there was help available. She went to Badbaado IDP camp in Mogadishu and after a while, she sent us fare money for all of five of us and asked me to bring the children to Elasha Biyaha near Mogadishu where she will be waiting for us. We jumped on a lorry. No one bothered us until we reached Shalambod, near Marka, where we were stopped by Al-Shabaab. They lectured us saying that it was bad idea to take the children to a place where there were many Ugandan,



Burundian, and other infidels. They said we were supposed to take the fight to them and this place was not really safe for children. Most of the people were afraid and didn't say anything but some people talked back to them saying that they had nothing to eat and no one was coming to this area to help so they had to take their children to where they can get help or else they will all die. They said, 'If you give us food we will stay with you.' Others said that they sold everything they had including their land and homes and had no place to return to and asked, 'Where will we return to?' Al-Shabaab's reply was that this drought was brought upon us by God and he will take it away and help us. They did not actually order people to get down but many people were afraid and got down.

The lorry took us to Elasha Biyaha and from there my wife took us to Badbaado camp in Mogadishu where she was staying. In the camp where we stayed, we were told to get cooked meals every day from a place nearby. Some days, people tell me that some people were given cards to get rations of food but this was done in the night and they gave these cards to their own clans, friends, and acquaintances. I was not a friend or a member of their clan so we were never given a card but we were okay as long as we got something to eat every day. My wife used to go to town to do menial work for the well off in the town such as washing their clothes, cleaning, or any other work she could find. We used the money she brought back to buy more food for us and the children.

There is not much jobs for men in Mogadishu, but after while I started to work pushing a wheelbarrow, carrying things for people. In other times, I sold water to the IDPs, fetching it from nearby places. Later I worked as a security guard in the camp. I stayed in these IDP camps for two years during which I saw many tragedies and acts of crime. We were very hungry most of the time. Many children died of malnutrition and diseases such as cholera. I have seen youths from established communities in Mogadishu come in to the camps almost every night and rob these IDPs of the few things they had and rape woman with impunity. In the end, I came back to re-establish myself here (in Qorioley District) but my wife and our four children are still there. I have now cleared my farm and started growing tomatoes and beans. If all go well, I will bring my children back.

Many people in the area sold their farmland during the crisis. Some have sold even their homes and have nothing to come back to. The people who bought this land are those with money or have some relatives abroad. If a person informs their relatives abroad that because of the crisis, cheap land was available. Then they will send money and buy the land. This is now causing conflict in the area as more people return and ask for the land they sold to be returned to them.

People couldn't find anyone who could lend them money during the crisis and that is why they resorted to selling their properties, farms and homes. Many of them can't return to this area because they have nothing to return to. In one area near Buulo Mareer, a Haber Gedir militia used containers to block the canals and they will release water only to those with big farms who can pay lots of money. So many small farms in that area are no longer cultivated. These small farms are the ones that grow maize.

### **A male cattle pastoralist (04-003)**

The Jiddo are a large clan, part of the Digil. They have their own language and live mainly in the three districts of Qorioley, Kurtunwaarrey and Sablale. Apart from the few who live in towns, they are all pastoralist who rear cattle. Many of them had large herds of cattle, hundreds, before the crisis. These have now been wiped out by the crisis. Many people who have never been destitute are now destitute and do not know how to restart. It was long dry season, then the gu rains failed. People just continued to hope for rains and spent the last shilling they had on saving their cattle. By the time they realised it was too late, they basically have lost everything. Many took their children and went to Mogadishu and most of them are still there in the IDP camps; many others went to Qorioley town where there was no much help as Al-Shabaab banned the humanitarian organisations. Some organisations come and started helping but then they left the area. Some people were coming from Mogadishu with some help but after few days, they also left. The area is administered by Al-Shabaab who banned all organisations. They tried to help by feeding some people and sometimes distributing some food but it was too little. Food became very expensive . . . at the same time, cattle became very cheap as it was

*weak and so many people were selling their cattle. This meant that a cow was worth few [kilos] of maize.*

*I lived near Afgoye Yare village. I had seventy-three cows and moved around with them. In the end, they all perished in the crisis. A few died each night and then few more during the day. It was like this for everyone, so it was apocalyptic as the world we knew was ending. When all my cattle perished, I took my children to Qorioley where we were given a daily meal by the administration. I then started to work for the big farmers who were paying people for working on a piece of land called 'jibaal'. You were paid by each jibaal. It was hard work and I was not used to working on other people's farm but I had no choice. Then I took my children to Mogadishu. I was given a free ride to Mogadishu by an NGO. When I went to Mogadishu I was welcomed by a headman of the camp we went. He gave us some food but then we waited for a while to get some food. During this waiting time we went to feeding centres to eat. Then we had a card we were given food. We never had many but we were given food. I stayed in Mogadishu for more than a year. I then came back to my village and I am trying to restart my life because we can't stay in an IDP camp indefinitely. I had now two harvests and I am in the process of building a house for my family in the village. I do not have any relative abroad. Not many people I know have relatives abroad. I have already told you what Al-Shabaab did and I don't want to repeat it.*

### **An elder of the Jiddo in Qorioley (04-004)**

*There was insufficient rainfall in the deyr of 2010 and as a result the dry season (jilaal) was very harsh. Then the gu of 2011 failed and it was a disaster. Also the river dried up and there was acute water shortage. People who had never left the district went to Mogadishu IDP camps and as far away as Bosasso. People with smaller herds did better as [it was] not possible to keep a lot alive. With water and food shortage, people's health also started to deteriorate and many died. People went first to K50, but that was transit to Mogadishu<sup>27</sup>. Qorioley was a place where historically those who have suffered drought elsewhere in Somalia used to come to settle to restart their live but in this crisis it was the people of Qorioley who were looking*

*for help in every corner of Somalia for the first time in their history.*

*Many people are still in camps. Qorioley town cannot hold these people as there is not enough employment opportunities and there is no help available, so they have to go to bigger towns where there is more opportunities and help. In the crisis, all the help available was in the form of subcontractors bringing some help from Mogadishu for few days and then disappearing. This was done by small NGOs. So people went where they could get help for longer time. Moragabey was helping people in Mogadishu and the help they provide is one off help not continuous.*

*The Hawiye in the district are much better off than the Jiddo because they are urban and are much more advanced and involved in the urban economy. For example, we don't receive a single dollar from abroad in comparison to them.*

*The things have gone so bad in the last crisis. I have never seen before a Jiddo person begging. Today the number of Jiddo begging are countless and it sad-denening. Most of Jiddo are away from their homeland to date. The young and many others have deserted Qorioley town and are in Mogadishu and other parts of Somalia were they thought they could find better opportunities and this all due to help not being available in the area most because of Al-Shabaab's barring of humanitarian organisations from working in the area.*

### **An elder of the Jiddo in the UK (04-005)**

*This was the last drought ever.<sup>28</sup> When there was drought before the river used to bring water but in this crisis the river was empty and wells were dug in the river-bed and sometimes even these dried up. There was acute water shortage. Jiddo never fled their home land before this crisis in which 1,500 families are still [in] Mogadishu IDP camps. The main cause was the water shortage and the fact that the river have completely dried up.*

*The Jiddo diaspora community is very small in comparison with other Somali clans. There are twenty in USA, five in Australia, 500–1,000 in Saudi Arabia, three in the UK. In addition, the Jiddo do not have business or trading culture and hence do not have big*

*businessmen who could support them in hard times. Many people have fled because of Al-Shabaab. I am the chairman of the Digil and Mirifle Community in UK.<sup>29</sup> In the crisis, I have convened a meeting for the community to ask them to help their people who were suffering in Qorioley and other areas. The response was not encouraging to say the least. So I and others approached the Universal TV to do fundraising. We used Moragabey charity which was registered in the UK and they have done good job and helped many people but was not enough.*

### **A male agro-pastoralist (04-006)**

*Before the crisis, I used to depend on my cattle and my farm. Now I rent a piece of land and grow different thing on it. During 2011, all my savings went into saving my cattle. I bought fodder stalks and maize to feed the cattle. When my savings finished, I then sold my farm. I also sold my last sesame harvest. When all this finished I then sold my two strong donkeys. At the end of the dry season I was very happy thinking that even though it cost me a lot, I saved my cattle as the gu rains were around the corner.*

*Then there were no rains in the gu. We had moved around and we did anything we could to save them but in the end, the cattle started dying, first one, then few, then more. I remember one night I slaughtered fourteen cows and then eight the next night. When we saw that a cow was about to die we slaughtered it so that we can sell the skin with which we could buy food for the children.*

*When all cows died, we had nothing left to live on because we had sold all our assets and used up all our savings to save our cattle. So I, along with fifty other families, all Reer Hassan, wanted to go to somewhere where we could find help. We went towards Mogadishu and at Kilometre 50 [K50], we were stopped by Al-Shabaab telling us that it was shame to go to Mogadishu for help since it was occupied by infidels. We stayed in that camp for four months. The first two months before Ramadan (July 2011) we were given nothing and we lost eight children (between the fifty families). But at the start of Ramadan we were given plenty of food.*

*Then we were moved back to where we [came] from. They [Al-Shabaab] brought us vehicles and transported us back to where we were from. There was nothing*

*we could do in our area since we had no cattle or farm or anything, so I moved to Qorioley town after two months. Members of my clan in Qorioley supported me for a short period and then a son of my cousin who lives in UK started supporting us. He supported me and three other families who lost everything for six months. He sent US\$50 each family. We started farming, and within six months we had our first harvest and then we became self-sufficient. We are still poor but thanks to God we can manage.*

*Those who had camels did much better than those, like me, who had cows. Also those who had more people in town had better support, and this also meant that they had more people abroad.*

*Those who had cattle or small farms were the ones who suffered most. Many Garre and almost all of the Jiddo had cattle and disproportionately suffered in this crisis. The Jareer also suffered because they had small farms and no savings. They worked as labourers but with almost all of their population in the same position, they could not get work.*

### **An elder of the Garre from Qorioley (04-007)**

*Many people have been destroyed. The hagua and the deyr were both bad, and then there came a long jilaal followed by a gu in which no rains have come. As the signs of the gu rains appeared, people were trying to follow the rains. Those who had strong animals that can move and go to the area where rains were seen to be falling were moving. But many couldn't move as their animals were not strong enough. In the end, there were no rains really and everyone came to the river. Water shortage was everywhere; worse than this, there was no grass anywhere so all cattle from the area was brought to the two sides of the river. Everyone wanted to buy stalks [fodder] from the farms that had been irrigated. There was no market for cattle and for every farm, there must have been about thirty nomadic families, all of them wanting to use the irrigated farm to save their cattle. This was not possible because of the sheer numbers. The river also dried up and wells have to be dug in the river bed. Animals started dying and many people just abandoned their cattle when they saw that there was no hope for its survival. Both sides of the river became full of corpses. The stench was so bad and it is there for two years.*

*The people then divided into three groups: those who took their children and went to Mogadishu and beyond; those who begged in Qorioley town and were going from door to door, in mosques, etc.; those who went into the farms and worked as labourers either paid in money by piece of work or by sharing the produce.*

*Some people have lost their camels but most of the camel herders have come through the crisis unscathed. Unlike cattle, camels eat a variety of vegetation so they were moved to the bushes between Qorioley, Diinsoor and Buur Hakaba. They were watered from the wells in that area. The cattle couldn't go that area because there was no grass left and cattle do not eat leaves and other vegetation.*

*This describes the Garre and the Reer Hassan perfectly; however the Jiddo were all cattle herders and they have no camels so they suffered as much as the cattle herders in the area, but they are all cattle herders so it was much worse for them as whole. But you have to realise that the camel herders are small minority when you look at the whole population of Qorioley district. For Jareer (Duubane Digil), they always depended on their muscle and never had that much livestock so they continued their ways of depending on their labour. That is what they used to do before the crisis, that is what they did during the crisis and that is what they are doing since the crisis until today.*

*Many people have died from all clans. The number of people who died is more than can be counted.*

## ***The drying river***

The situation in 2011 in Lower Shabelle was distinct and unusual compared to other areas and past times. The drying up of the river was probably much more significant than the failure of the rains. The reduced water in the river was captured upstream and therefore the disaster faced in these three downstream districts was not faced to the same degree in any of the upstream areas. The river did rise late along its length but it was only from Qorioley that it was blocked from going any further.<sup>30</sup> What had been a place of last resort for people and animals became one of the worst-affected areas in 2011.

As the various respondents above confirm, the Jiddo were among the worst affected and, in many ways, the least prepared. As a result of their heavy dependence on cattle, long managed in the lower reaches of the valley, with its permanent availability of water, their wealth and assets became liabilities. Anecdotal reports suggest that the Jiddo as a people, are facing considerable impoverishment and their ability to recover their livelihood as a social group has been severely undermined.

In comparison, while many of the Jarer are minorities and include very poor households, they had transferable skills and were able to move to Mogadishu or to larger-scale commercial farms as labourers, and were not so tied to their areas trying to keep their animals alive. While many of the Jarer are very poor, and many of the poorest, and would also have faced extreme difficulties, their vulnerability is different from the Jiddo.

Respondents from the Garre and the Reer Hassan provide a slightly different picture, with both groups having significant camels among them, which mitigated to some extent the impact of the local conditions. Some Reer Hassan were also able to mobilise resources from distant diaspora kin, although, in some cases, this came more as aid for recovery than to mitigate the worst impact of the crisis at its peak. The Garre in Kenya are a relatively wealthy and diversified clan, but this is less the case in Somalia, where they are a distinct community and do not seem to have close ties with their neighbouring kin.

Many members of all of these clans moved to relatively nearby Mogadishu, especially when word of large amounts of humanitarian resources being available reached them. Several of these respondents, again all from clans different than those who hold power in Mogadishu, refer to the terrible conditions of the IDP camps and the role of 'gate-keepers' there.

## **The Juba valley – From Jamame to Luuq**

The Juba valley extends from the Ethiopia-Somalia border in the far north of Gedo region down to Kismayo and the Indian ocean. The local environ-



ments, populations and clans that live along and close to the river vary over this long distance. The southern areas of Lower and Middle Juba have some similarities with Lower Shabelle, where the river Juba is a key economic resource and where there are many commercial, irrigated farms that, while having displaced indigenous Somali Bantu populations over time, also provide labour opportunities in difficult times. This valley area varies enormously, from the agro-ecologically rich lower Juba (with some of the highest rainfall levels in Somalia and holding considerable forest) to the notoriously dry northern borders of the Mandera triangle.<sup>31</sup>

In the areas around Jamame where research took place, two main population groups exist, the Biyomaal (from the Dir clan) and the Somali Bantu. Other clans were also consulted in this area.<sup>32</sup> To the north, Gedo is politically dominated by the Marehan, although many other clans also reside there, particularly the Gabaweyn, a Somali Bantu sub-clan of the Rahanweyn, as well as various Rahanweyn sub-clans.

Along the Juba valley there are close connections with Kenya. These include the trade of many goods, including a lucrative cross-border cattle economy. Many Somalis also access education in Kenya, and several NGOs access Somalia from bases in Kenya.

### **A male farmer and herder, from Jamame (05-001)**

*I live from what I grow in my farm. I only had two cows before the crisis so not much in terms of live-stock. In the crisis, I couldn't grow anything because there was no rain and the river didn't bring enough water. In addition, the dry season was extra hard as the deyr preceding it didn't rain enough. All the food and money I had run out by Ramadan (July) and we couldn't fast because we didn't have anything to break our fast with. People started to move to the refugee camps in Kenya and it was clear that there will not be a crop in this season as it was already almost harvest time and there was no harvest. We decided that we will move with people. My two cows and a calf were in good shape as I kept them in my farm on their own. I sold all three and used it as fare to the refugee camps*

*in Kenya. My thinking at this time was that we may never come back as many people who left before never came back. I went to Kenya through Dhobley and arrived in Dadaab refugee camps.*

*We were welcomed there by different agencies and organisations, some of them Somali, some Arab and some non-Muslim. There were so many people there from different corners of Somalia. I then came back to Jamame and prepared my farm for the deyr season which was good. I sold part of my first harvest and stored most of it. In the jilaal I went back to my family in the refugee camps and then came back in the gu to my farm. When the gu harvest was ready, I then asked my family to come back and they are all here with me.*

*Yes, I have distant relatives abroad but they didn't help me at all. Those who have stayed back struggled; is that coping? You could say I coped too. There were not many deaths in this district as far as I know. There was lot of death in the refugee camps.*

### **A woman from Jamame (05-002)**

*Our food [comes] from farming and milk from cattle. In the spring, we grow maize and beans. This is basically our food throughout the year. In the autumn, we grow sesame, which we sell so that we have cash with which we can buy other things we need such as sugar, other foods, and clothes. We also sell few bulls every few years and use the money to buy more cattle if there is nothing pressing at the time.*

*In the difficult time, we had we put our trust in God and did all that we could to survive. It was really a time of hardship where the few cattle we had were dying and we couldn't grow anything because there were no rains or floods. When people were moving to the refugee camps, we considered this very seriously but in the end decided that it would be bad for the health of our children and we might lose some of them in the disease outbreaks that always happen when people go to camps. So we decided to put our trust in God and stay put. My husband and our second eldest son moved the cattle around, moving from one place to another looking for pasture. In the end most of them died. We had eight cows remaining by the end of the crisis. I and the rest of the children remained in the village. We used some money we had from the last harvest of sesame, but food became very expensive and the*



money we had quickly ran out. My husband's cousin who had a shop in the area allowed us to take food on credit. He also called some distant relatives they had abroad and they sent money twice. I didn't receive money directly as it was sent to my husband's cousin. Each time he deducted some money for the debt, kept some for us and gave us small amount for the things we need. Normally we leave our money with him anyway, for safekeeping. So it was this good man that kept us alive in the drought.

### **A young male farmer, from Jamame (05-003)**

*I am the youngest of a large family. Both my parents died long time ago. I grew up with one of my brothers. At the time of the crisis, I had young family consisting of me, my wife and our eldest daughter who was only one year at that time. I was given part of my family's farm and I used to grow maize and sesame. In the crisis, I was not able to grow anything and most of my extended family went to the refugee camps in Kenya. I stayed back in Jamame because my family was small and we thought we could manage. However, food became so expensive as one suus of maize (2 kilograms) sold at more than US\$2 dollars. We run out of money and didn't know what to do. We then decided to go to Kismayo and we went into an IDP camp in Kismayo [there] where we found some temporary and random support. I managed to trace some of my distant relatives in Kismayo, and through them I traced my nephew who was in Kenya. We also left the camp and found some relatives we could stay with. My nephew sent us US\$100 every month for seven months. During this time I was going back and forth from Jamame to make sure that my farm was ready for the next season. When we had the first harvest, the whole family returned to Jamame. Some of my extended family are now back but many are still in there. Yes, [I have family members abroad] but I had no connection with them before. People abroad do not like receiving calls from Somalia.*

### **A woman from Jamame district (05-004)**

*I am Jareer (Biyomaal); they say we are Biyomaal but I really see myself as Jareer only. We have a farm and keep livestock. We normally grow maize in our farm. Rains and the river flooding are important for our farm. In drought time, the rains failed and the river*

*was almost empty. There was a little rain so we sowed some seeds. No more rains came and the stalks started to dry up. Most of the people then started to move to the refugee camps in Kenya. Some walked all the way to Mogadishu and some went to Kismayo but most of the people went to Kenya. Only those who had strong belief and trust in God remained and thanks to God not many people died of hunger. Few died of weakness and diseases but not many died of hunger. Thanks to God, I have not lost any of my children. They have all survived and are with me now. On the other hand, those who fled to Kenya have lost many of their children on the way.*

*Before the crisis, we had twenty-five sheep and goats. My husband took the goats and sheep to faraway places to save them from dying. In the end, all perished except seven. This meant the job of saving our six children was left to me. I first went to Jamame town where I ground maize for people in there. They paid me money. I then moved to Kismayo where I moved in with a woman whom I knew before. She took me around to show me all the places where I can find cheap food. Then she showed me many families whom I could work for. I was washing clothes, cleaning houses, clearing frontcourts, and doing many other labour works. The woman has really helped me out by showing me around, finding me accommodation and jobs, and in the end saying: 'Here you are: I showed you around and now it is up to you to make sure that you and your children survive!'*

*We did survive and I was actually doing well for a while. Then the fights started in Kismayo again so I moved back to my place since the rains have started again and my husband was back at our village.*

### **A male rain-fed farmer (05-005)**

*I live off the produce of my farm and my livestock. We grow maize and sesame and that is what we always did. I had twenty cows and forty-five goats and sheep before the crisis. I also had a farm. I don't have a pump [for irrigation] so I totally depend on the rains. When the rains failed, I couldn't grow anything so I moved around with my livestock to keep them alive. I didn't go far away, I just moved around in our area. Then seventeen of my cows and thirty of my goats and sheep died and I was left with only three cows and fifteen sheep and goats. I had to provide for my family*

so I worked as a labourer for the farmers who had pumps. Most of the people from my village did the same. I was paid between 50,000 and 60,000 Somali shillings a day. This saw us through the crisis.

#### **A male farmer from Jamame district (05-006)**

*My farm is rain fed. We grow maize, beans and sesame and that is what we always did. During the crisis I had no livestock to sell or to save and my farm was no use because there was no rains so I had to do whatever I could do to make sure my family survived. The only thing available to me was to burn trees to produce charcoal and this is what I did throughout the period of the crisis. Each big tree I burned produced a charcoal worth about 1million Somali shillings (US\$40). The process from burning to selling took me about a week. I did nothing else other than this.*

*There are about 700 families in this village. They are from various clans. The largest clan is the Biyomaal followed by the Darood (Majerteen and Ogaden) and the Gaadsan. About 100 families have gone to the refugee camps in Kenya because they couldn't cope. Those who had families abroad received money from abroad and coped well while the rest of us have to struggle doing odd jobs and labour jobs around the area.*

*Al-Shabaab were the authority here in the time of the crisis. They basically did nothing positive or negative. They didn't give us any help, they also didn't harm us.*

#### **A foreman on a large, irrigated farm (05-007)**

*In the crisis, I continued to be a foreman for the farm I was working in. The farm is a big farm and it is irrigated by pumps. It is a plantation and part of it is used to grow, maize, vegetables, etc. The farm was irrigated before the river dried up. Then later the water levels rose to a level where pumps could be used again. So the farm was productive and it employed many people. There was more labour available during the crisis and the owners understood this so they used more people doing many jobs that were needed to be done. How much of this was exploitation or being kind to the people of the area, I don't know. I think it is a bit of both. I am normally given some of the product as well as being paid US\$100 per month. This continued and my family were okay but we had to support*

*more people due to the crisis. We didn't support anyone permanently but we had to support different people in short time bases.*

#### **A male farmer and money transfer agent (05-008)**

*I am a farmer. I am also an agent for the money transfer companies. I am a farmer who grows maize and sesame and this depends on rains and floods. In the crisis, the deyr rains were not good. Then it didn't rain in the gu at all. The water levels in the river also went so low. In any way, I didn't have a pump so I only survived on what I get from being an agent of the money transfer company which is about US\$50 dollars a month. I have eight children so it was really tough. However, it was enough to keep in my village until the next rainy season. Many in my village were not so lucky though. Normally there are about 350 families living in my village, Miigwaa. More than 150 families from this village went to the refugee camps in Kenya, many of them are now back. In this village more than twenty children, most of them under five years old, died in the time of the crisis.*

*Many people in this area became labourers for the few who had water pumps and could irrigate their farm. I would say about 300 families are back in the village now and only fifty are still in the refugee camps or in IDP camp in Mogadishu.*

#### **Another male farmer and money transfer agent (05-009)**

*I am a farmer and I also get US\$50 every month from my job. In the gu season we grow maize and in the deyr season we grow sesame. I have eleven children and depend on my farm for food. In the crisis as rains failed and river was almost empty, hardship set in. The US\$50 I get as a salary was not enough to feed us all. So I had to do other things to make sure the survival of my large family. I went with other people from my village hunting game. We shared whatever we got. We also fished from the areas of river that had water. The fish was more plentiful than game. Another thing we did frequently was to go outside into the bushes and dig for something called dhoomal' to eat.<sup>33</sup> This is how we survived in the crisis.*

*The village where I live is home to 500 families. All of them are Mushunguli except three families. More than*

*250 families were forced to flee the area and went to the refugee camps in Kenya. Many of them came back but there are about 100 families still in Kenya. I have stayed in Moofi. Many children, most of them younger than five years old, have perished during the crisis but I can't remember the exact number.*

*Of the 500 families in Moofi, about thirty to forty families have close relatives abroad. Most of them in the USA. They sent money to their families but no money was sent collectively. I can say that the money sent to these family was shared by many others who had no one abroad. Those who had someone abroad or were earning some money in a way that had no connection with farming were better off.*

### **A woman shopkeeper from Jamame town (05-010)**

*[My income is] the remittance I get from my children and profits of my shop. I normally receive money from my son in Sweden and sometimes from my daughter in Australia. I don't have a farm or livestock so I was not affected by the crisis directly but the depopulation of the area meant that I was selling less initially, but later many people from the countryside of the district filled this gap and we are back to normal. I can't tell you exactly how much I used to sell but we are back to normal now. I don't have many relatives who are nomads or strictly farmers but I have many friends and customers who are. I supported many people during the crisis by giving them credit or actually giving them free food. However, this didn't put any pressure on my children and they did not need to send extra money for this. I buy most of my supplies from Kismayo. My son lives there and I have many relatives. I send money there and then receive my supplies.*

*Security is the most important factor for me. Rainfall is important also but security is more important because lack of security will restrict the flow of trade and may cause remittances to be halted or delayed.*

*Most of the things remain the same in this part of the country, the only change being the groups who control the area. During the crisis, I continue my business, selling groceries in my shop in Jamame town. Yes, my son lives in Sweden and my daughter lives in Australia. A son of mine and a daughter also live in Nairobi. Those who had support from abroad or elsewhere in the country or whose their livelihood was*

*not completely dependent on small-scale farming or livestock were, as can be expected, much more able to cope with the crisis. Having said this, many people who had support or other means to survive have in the end went to the refugee camps. There were too many people going and the district was almost empty of people so many people just flowed, the people who were moving without really thinking.*

*It is not the local authorities; the problem is that this whole area had hardly had any stability. It changes hands a lot since the start of the civil war and this plays havoc on our business and livelihood.*

### **A male agro-pastoralist (05-011)**

*I am pastoralist but I also have a farm in which I grow maize, beans and sesame. I had forty cows before the crisis which I have all lost during the crisis. I also had eighty goats and sheep; only twenty remain now. I have gone back to farming and I am trying to rebuild my livestock but it will take me long time.*

*During the crisis when the rains failed, I moved my animals to the bank of the river so that we can get water and use the vegetation around the river. Many people did the same so there was not much vegetation, and the constant bites of flies and other insects prevalent around the river further weakened the animals. I sold two bulls and I used this money for the basic supplies needed for the spring and the summer that followed it. There were many people who were starving so I slaughtered few cows to feed them since I thought that they will not make it anyway. I saw this as very good charity that will help me in the hereafter. The rest of it perished in the drought. Then I moved my family to Waaddo, a small village that is not far from Jamame town where I rented a sewing machine and started sewing clothes for people. I didn't have much sewing skills so I started with sewing torn clothes only first; then I progressed. I also did some charcoal production to top up my income. I did many other things such as labouring at the wells and bringing water out for people, watering animals, etc.*

*Al-Shabaab was the local authority in this area. They collected money from the town dwellers who have more resources and they gave it to us, the poor nomads or farmers. Sometimes they did water trucking for us.*



## ***Diversity of responses***

These narratives, in the Jamame area, provide a very mixed picture of how people managed in 2011. While the situation was undoubtedly severe, particularly in relation to the drought, it appears to have been less extreme than in Bay, Bakool and Lower Shabelle. For example, people talk much more about livestock deaths than human deaths. Food security monitoring reports at the time confirm this.<sup>34</sup> A number of reasons may account for this, as indicated in the above narratives; there were many ways to supplement or find alternative sources of food and income, particularly through agricultural labour (especially on the larger, irrigated farms) and engaging in charcoal production. The collection of wild foods, fishing and hunting are also evident.

However, this was still clearly a time of serious hardship and a number of the interviews refer to the process of finding distant relatives, particularly in towns or other countries. This is a defining feature of the 2011 situation and one that the authors have analysed in more detail elsewhere.<sup>35</sup> A number of respondents reported that they have distant relatives abroad but many are not in contact with them; however, due to the extreme conditions in that year many people were forced to try to find such connections.

The Mijirteen female (05-010) trader provides an example of a different clan identity, specific to an urban location. It is often the case that certain clan identities are more associated with urban settlements and will have good diaspora connections but are also embedded in the local social context where, as this woman states, she was providing credit to many people.

Dadaab refugee camp, which is relatively close by, provided an important opportunity for people in this area. While we focused on the Rahanweyn and their journeys to and experiences in the refugee camps, many other people, also struggling in the conditions of 2011, also went or sent some family members to the refugee camps. The extent to which this was opportunistic rather than desperate is difficult to distinguish but nevertheless highlights the position that refugee camps come to take in such contexts; they become urban centres with resource

and service possibilities that are incorporated into the diversified livelihoods of local people. Transport and trade links between Dadaab and towns within Somalia are well established, and many people keep their farms going in Somalia while keeping a presence in the refugee camp, and either move back and forth or, as indicated above, have moved back to Somalia.

## ***Luuq, North Gedo***

Luuq district in North Gedo provides a very different context than that of Jamame, in the southern reaches of the Juba valley. The socio-political identities covered in the following narratives include the Marehan, the Gabaweyn and the Dir. The Marehan are pastoral (especially camel herders) and urban by background and have been increasingly investing in riverine land.<sup>36</sup> The Gabaweyn are largely a rural, riverine, farming population. The Dir are a relatively small group, with a significant diaspora population but also known for cattle herding and engaged in farming.

### **A male Marehan farmer with a diverse livelihood (06-001)**

*[I am a] farmer with free grazing livestock of cattle, goats and sheep. [I] also have a tea shop that sells cold and hot drinks in Luuq town. I had twenty cows and 160 goats and sheep. [In 2011] the gu rains failed [and] we started to feed the animals. Because of their high value, I have decided to make sure that my cattle survived and I brought them to the farm. I started feeding them with stalks at the cost of 15,000 per bunch (US\$0.6). I also fed them with sorghum (700,000 per 50 kilograms) and maize (750,000 per 50 kilograms) (US\$28—30 per 50 kilograms). I left the 160 goats and sheep grazing freely but was feeding them 25 kilograms of maize every day for all of them.*

*Water became a huge problem especially for the nomads. After seeing the magnitude of the problem, the businessmen in the town collected around US\$5,000 and started water trucking. After this was exhausted luckily [an NGO] have started water trucking and have continued doing this until the rains came. I actually helped with the organisation of the water trucking. The water trucking continued for about sixty days. I have received US\$100 from my brother in*



Birmingham and another US\$100 from my brother in Kuwait. I have not received any other help. I have used my savings and have borrowed heavily. I have lost only three cows to the drought but at the end of the drought the first rains killed sixty head of goats and sheep.

Many people have called their relatives, which they normally do not call, to get help and they did get help. The people who did worst were those who had livestock only and had no farms and no business in towns. Now many of them are buying land in towns and farms near the river because they realise that this will increase their resilience in crisis.

One of those days when I was doing water trucking, a man came to me and asked me to help him carry 10 half quintals of maize to his dwelling outside the town. This was not normal but the man was in great distress and he was a nomad. I asked the guys who were doing the water trucking to help him and we carried all the maize for him. When we went to his place, we found twenty of his cows unable to stand up and carcasses of his goats and sheep scattered all over the area. I was saddened by this sight and I asked him from where did you get the money you bought with this maize. He told me that he called his wife's brother who he never called before and told him that if he did not support them through this crisis he might end up supporting them for many years to come because they will lose everything and then he sent them US\$200. There were many cases like this.

### **A male pastoralist of the Marehan (06-002)**

I was originally from Negelle, Ethiopia, and came to this country in 1977 as a refugee.<sup>37</sup> I then stayed although most of my relatives and close clan live in a place that is about 15 kilometres from Negelle. I have no relatives who live abroad and I never had help from diaspora group or individual. When I was young in Negelle I used to hear that Gedo is drought prone. I found this to be true. All the time I have lived in Gedo, I never saw two plentiful consecutive years. It is always one good year followed by a drought. But I am used to living here and would not go back there.

The last crisis was really bad. It was really harsh drought followed by heavy rains with cold wind that in some cases have killed more than the drought. You

see the drought have weakened the animals so they were not strong enough to withstand such cold winds. I myself did not have any problem with the windy rains but I was walking in the countryside and coming down from high ground I saw what looked like a lot of paper scattered in the ground below me. When I came down it was not paper but so many dead sheep and goats! So although it did not happen to me personally I saw the devastating effects of this wind.

In the crisis, people's responses were very different. Some had money and could save their animals by buying enough maize, sorghum and stalks; some had farms and took their animals to their farms; some went [to] areas close to the farms which had more grass and water close by; some bought the fruits of a tree called ali garoob and some decided to just wait and see what comes to them. There are areas where the ali garoob trees are many, so some people actually took over these trees as [if] it was their farm and were selling its fruits which was fed to the goats and sheep. The price was 40,000 shillings for 1 quintal of these fruits. When I saw how bad this crisis was becoming, I moved to a village near the river so that I can get the ali garoob fruits and easy access to water.

There are also farms that are called burjuwazi farms where someone with farm and pump offers people to work in his farm and share the stalks and the maize.<sup>38</sup> Sometimes they just give you land; they divide it physically, half yours and half his and sometimes if they fear that one half may be better than the other they will divide the produce. So for example if you take 100 bunches of stalks he will also take the same. Many people used this method to save their livestock and/or children.

Before the drought I had seventy sheep and goats, I lost all except fifteen. Now they are back to seventy. The goats are more hardy, and the sheep bounce back quickly in numbers. That is, they are less resistant to drought but reproduce quicker. I had also four cows. Camel is more resistant to the drought but it is expensive and hard to rear. You have to be dedicated to rear camel. People nowadays do not want to be very far from towns.

Some nomads have no skills and watch until their livestock is completely wiped out. Many people have saved their animals by borrowing heavily but then

*they have all those saved animals later to pay back the debt so they saved nothing! If you lose your livestock, it doesn't matter how you lose it.*

*The current administration was in place at the time of crisis. They did nothing. We don't expect anything from them. These guys are just warlords and thugs. If the bridge in town is destroyed, this administration will just sit and watch. You see they will still tax and take money from people no matter how much problems they are facing. The business community and diaspora community may help but not the administration.*

*The humanitarian organisations have done a lot of work, I give them 90 percent. But they are also thieves. [An NGO] gave us plenty of rice, flour, cooking oil and sugar. Different people had different rations. These guys have made a difference. [A UN agency] was a corrupt organisation. [Another NGO] distributed money but the way they distributed it was not fair. Twenty cousins just register themselves. I have never been registered. They were paying US\$125 every month but some corrupt people were registering, say, twenty people. These people would later queue for the money and collect it. Outside then they will take only US\$25 and give the remaining US\$100 to the man who registered them.*

*Aid and support was distributed according to the strength of the power you hold in the area. Most of the power is in the hands of two sub-clans of the Reer Hassan Marehans, namely Waqmashe and Reer-Yusuf. The rest of the clans in this area, Marehan or non-Marehan, are called 'others' and are treated as such. For example, I am Marehan and Reer Hassan but not from either of the strong sub-sub-clans and I am treated as a foreigner, so what chance do others have? You could see one family that is registered each member as a family so they take the share of ten families. On the other hand, you could see a whole large extended family who had nothing and the only difference is their clan and the power they have in the administration.*

*The man who was in charge of the [NGO] distribution was Ogaden and my wife is from Gode. There was also my sister-in-law who was visiting us at that time. Both my wife and sister-in-law went to the Ogaden man and pleaded with him. He told them he couldn't give them more than one family and we*

*shared that. So we were sending US\$60 each month to my sister in law who returned to her home in Gode, Ethiopia through hawala and we kept US\$60 for ourself.*

*If you are clever, you would look at you livestock, sell the best ten animals that can fetch good price in the market and use this money to save the rest of your animals; otherwise you risk losing the whole lot.*

### **A male riverine farmer (06-003)**

*I grow maize to feed my family and onions for cash. I have two cows. At the time of the crisis, I was still growing corn and have harvested more than 10 quintals. There were people from every corner who were in really bad state that were asking for help. This one comes with one animal and asks you to save this animal for him since it is the only one remaining from his herd, this one asks for one bunch of stalks, this one asks for food to survive that day and this one asks for just one meal so you give one or two cobs. So more than half of the produce was consumed before it was harvested. The farm was a sight of people sitting there eating cobs, others sitting there burning cobs to eat them and so on. The people were in such a state that you couldn't resist assisting them. Then when I harvested, so many people came asking for help again, give this one a quintal, this one few kilograms and the whole harvest with the exception of 1.5 quintals was gone. Some of them come with one cow and ask you to just allow them to leave this cow in your farm. In the crisis, I had ten cows in my farm and people thought that I had gained many cows but it was other people's cows.*

*In this region, the people who suffered most were the Rahanweyn who in big numbers passed us here suffering so much that they were even leaving their children on the way. There are many children in this area that were found alone and are now growing up not knowing their parents. Can you imagine walking on the road and finding a child sitting there alone not able to walk or even stand up and left behind by his parents.*

*The Gabaweyn lived near the river but many of them did not have [water] pumps and many who had could not buy fuel. Many of them worked as labourers for the better off farmers. They also cut many trees, selling them as building material or charcoal.*

*All my children and my brothers are here with me. No one from around here is abroad. I have many relatives in Mandera. Many cousins from both sides of my family are there. Some people send their children there and to Dollo for education. Many of them have integrated into the Kenyan Gabaweyn. Some of them are in education and some are working there.*

#### **Another male riverine farmer (06-004)**

*In the crisis, I was collecting wood for fuel to sell them so that I can feed my eight children. I was also working in other farms as a labourer. They paid me daily about Somali shillings 50,000 to 60,000.<sup>39</sup> I had a farm on other side of the river but there is no security for me so I can't cultivate it. Working for someone else is one thing but working in your farm is entirely different in terms of security.*

*I have two daughters who are married and two sons who were old enough to go to Ethiopia. They didn't do much there. They came back after five months and now they are both married. My brothers are in Mandera, Kenya. Some of my relatives are in Hagardhere refugee camp in Kenya. They can't offer us any help as they have nothing.*

*We had a co-op of fifteen families before the crisis but we have consumed all the money saved in the crisis. The pump broke before the crisis. I survived by cutting trees in our area and selling it in Luuq town as a building material. We used the river to transport the material. We normally come together as a group of three to five men and build a floating platform made from big trees such as palm trees and we use this to transport our material in the river. I have done about six trips of this kind during the crisis and had a profit of about 200,000 each time (US\$8). I also burned trees for charcoal and sold it in Dolo and Ged Weyne. All the NGOs are in the hands of the Marehan also.*

#### **A male farmer with a larger family (06-005)**

*I have three wives and seventeen children. Two wives and ten children are still with me while one wife and seven children are in Dollo refugee camps. Two-thirds of the population in this area first went to the refugee camps but the strong first returned and then more and more are returning as the situation gets better. [I managed] by borrowing from friends, [doing] labour*

*using donkey cart and sending one of my three wives with seven children to the refugee camps in Dollo. I also sold 50 (luuns) of my land for US\$2,500 to a Marehan buyer. This has contributed towards my survival but I lost this land permanently. Within our village, having friends with money or animals helped. We took loans and some of us begged others. We begged people with better means to help us survive this crisis and promised to repay them by selling land if necessary. Those who had animals could sell their animals after rains quicker while farmers need at least three months to harvest. Many nomads have also savings even after losing animals. The Dir have many traders, lorry owners and many of them are in diaspora so they were better than us in that way, and many of us depended on them to survive. Also the Marehans have money from diaspora and they control many NGOs; their friends borrowed money from them or sold land to them. The Rahanweyn are far from the river and they have rain-fed farms so they are more vulnerable than anyone else.*

#### **A male livestock owner of the Dir clan (06-006)**

*I am single and have no children of my own but have to provide for my mother and my deceased father's nine children. I was not an agent for Hormuud and Amal at the time of the crisis. Most of the Faqi Mohamed in this area rear cows. We have a saying that our common ancestor, Faqi Mohamed, said to his children – 'Lo' iyo loox baan idinku ogahay' – meaning 'keep rearing cattle and learning the Quran'. So cattle rearing is a tradition that we inherited from our forefathers and we seem to continue with it even though we know that cattle is not the best livestock to keep in this environment.*

*The rainfall of the deyr just before the crisis (2010) was very little. In addition, the neighbouring areas have all moved to our area to share the pasture produced by the little rains, and in short time there was not much pasture left. Then it didn't rain in the following gu and the hardship continued until the following deyr.*

*Before the crisis, we had thirty-three cows and we lost three cows during the crisis, so we came out of the crisis with thirty cows. However, saving these cows cost us a lot of money on top of the effort and the fact that the*



children who went with the cows had to miss on their education. The children also came back suffering from malaria. We sent all our cattle to the Ethiopian side in the end with adults and children to take care of it while it was there but first we bought stalks, beans and wheat to keep the cows alive in Bohol Garas. We had to cook the wheat and the beans so that the cows can digest them easily. The cost was more than the total worth of the cows. We always thought that the end is near and it will get better soon so we kept spending money to keep the cows alive. It looked as though these cows were our children. The money we used was cash saved from cows sold previously. I also took loans from friends. We also had support from my father's cousins who live in Mogadishu. They were sending me money and sometimes just telling me to take 300 kilograms of wheat from stores and x bunches of stalks and they would pay for it. The wheat was smuggled from Ethiopia. It was the wheat that was given as food aid to the Ethiopians and the Somali refugees. The Ethiopian government doesn't allow this food to be taken across the border so it is smuggled into our area.

The people who lost most animals were those who had no savings and no one to support them. Everyone in the area lost some livestock, but the loss of human life was not much in our area. The Rahanweyn died in great numbers and you could see their bodies lying almost everywhere on the way to Dollo. Al-Shabaab were in control in their area and they did not have security like us, so they suffered more. Everyone went through this crisis but in the case of the Rahanweyn [people say] 'abaartii nabdgal yo xumaa luq qabatay', meaning 'in the wrestling between the Rahanweyn and the drought the Rahanweyn were weakened because of the insecurity'.

There are about 300 families in Bohol Garas town and many, many more in its surroundings. Of these 300 families, I could say that only about fifteen families receive regular remittance from abroad most of it from UK (London) and USA. The well off of the clan are mostly in Mogadishu and Dollo-Ado. Some went to Kenya and some businessmen went to Juba, South Sudan. I know three people who send regular remittance from Juba. In the crisis, more people received money from abroad but I can't put a number to it but definitely people received more. Many people receive one-off remittances. The diaspora community did

not do much in the crisis. For example, I have many relatives abroad, maternal cousins of my father some of whom live in your town, and I have not received a cent from them before during or after the crisis.

They did not do much collectively as well. There was a man in Mogadishu who brought us a lorry full of food (150 quintals – 15 tonnes – every three months, starting from the Ramadan of the time of the crisis. He continued to do so until a year ago. It was given to the worst off and most needy. However many people may tell you that a certain sub-clan may have taken more than their fair share but that is the usual thing around here where everyone always claims that someone have taken more than their fair share.

### **A disabled man (06-007)**

[I am] unable to work because of my disability. Polio damaged my nerves and I cannot stand up. My family live in village and rear cattle. Not many lives have been lost in the crisis in this community though many of us have lost a great number of livestock. Most of the population here keep cattle and we say the numbers are always six to sixty and then back to six. Meaning that we start with six cows and then when the number reaches sixty a crisis wipes out the cattle and only six or so will make it through the crisis and we start again, and again, and so on.

There was no humanitarian organisations operating in our area and there are not many people from this area who are abroad. Of about 300 in this area, there about ten people who are abroad. As a result there around ten families who get regular remittance from abroad and maybe double of that who get help from abroad in time of crisis.

Myself I have a brother in Baidoa town. He also rears cattle and we can't get any help from him as we always have the same problems. I also have three sisters who are married and live in Mogadishu and I never had US\$10 from them. I had thirty cows before the crisis and I lost only two in the crisis while my friend who had ten had lost all his calves (five in total). Because he lived outside the village and didn't know much people so he couldn't get anyone to give him loan. So he struggled to save the older cows.

Some people went close to the river so that they can get water and buy [fodder] stalks from the Gabaweyn. I



couldn't do that because of my disability so I used all my savings to buy cereals (sorghum, wheat and maize) to feed my animals. I spent more than 80 percent of all the money I had on buying these cereals. I also borrowed money from friends in town. When the food aid started arriving, the cereals got cheaper because people were sourcing them from the areas that received aid. We had ordered cereals from, Luuq, Baidoa and Ethiopia. I later had to borrow money to keep the cows alive. I also had to seek help from relatives and friends. Saving these animals was very expensive.

The diaspora community have collectively built us a school, a clinic and a mosque but they did not do anything during the crisis. I think each one of them was busy saving his family and that exhausted their capacity.

### **A man from the US Diaspora of the Dir clan (06-008)**

The drought has had a huge effect especially on the Bay side, Rahanweyn being the worst affected. The problem was that the humanitarian organisation are always dependent on the strongest clan in the area and in the case of Gedo they are always to not cross to the Bay side. They are given the reason that their security cannot be guaranteed if they cross to that side but in reality, many areas on the Bay side have always been more secure than the Gedo side. For example, the Dir areas have never been controlled by Al-Shabaab and you can't say the same for the Gedo side.

The Faqi Mohamed diaspora built two schools, two clinics and a police station in the area. We also built the administration's offices in Bohol Garas. One school in Bohol Garas and the other is Qooney. The two clinics are also in Qooney and Bohol Garas. The police station is in Bohol Garas. We paid the salaries of fifteen police officers for three months. We still pay for the salaries of teachers and the staff of the clinics. Later after the end of the crisis, Adesso paid ninety families US\$70 each for six months as a measure of correcting the error of not including the Dir areas in their programme.

As the deyr rains were very poor, the Dir diaspora community have done some water trucking from December 2010 to February 2011. The money collected for this purpose was more than US\$20,000. Later also members in UK sent about US\$3,000 to feed the

weakest. We also pay the salaries of fifteen teachers and health posts staff.

### **A male teacher from Luuq district (06-009)**

[I depend on my] salary [as a teacher], trading and farming (sorghum, maize, beans). Salary is little and isn't sufficient so I depend on other things. My cows have all died in the last drought (2011) and I don't have a single cow now. Before I had eight cows that grazed freely in addition to the calves that stayed at home. They were all lost in the last drought. I have eleven children from two wives and one child died four years ago.

[I manage in difficult times by] the diaspora community sending me patchy/irregular salary here and there as I am teaching in a school they support. [Also, in 2011] I befriended a Gabaweyn man who is a farmer living closer to the river and borrowed maize from him. I have one son in education in Mogadhisu, completing secondary now. Only distant relatives of mine live abroad. My cousin used to send me some money some times when in difficulty, like US\$50, but he returned to Somalia now. One time we received food from Ethiopia that was sent by the diaspora members of the clan. There was also water trucking as the water had run out and wells dried out. The water was sold to those who could pay and given for free to those who could not pay. Everyone in the area regardless of their clan benefited from this help. Not many people died in this area. In this area, it is the animals that have died not the people.

### **A single mother (06-010)**

[I am a] housewife, head of household with ten children, two of them left, a son who works somewhere else in Somalia and a daughter who is married and lives somewhere else. [My] husband passed away so [I am] a single mother and head of household. What I get is from my grown up children especially my son who works somewhere else in Somalia, livestock, rain-fed farming and my labour as the rest of the children are still young.

The farms in the area are all in a plain that is flooded every rainy season. In the last few years, the area was not flooded at all as the flood waters now go straight to the river. We have no means of stopping the water and

*this has affected the area and there is far much less production than used to be.*

*In difficult times I run to relatives, sell things like tea, gather salt from salt mines and sell it, sometimes gather fuel wood and sell it, etc. One has to be versatile and innovative in hard times. Those who have relatives abroad are very few in this area. The ones who suffered most were those who did not have various skills. The only thing they knew was to milk their animals, selling them and to sow seeds when it rains and when all this failed they had no other skills. They didn't know how to sell things or provide services. For example in the crisis I was selling tea in the town only eight days after having a child; they were standing around waiting for help that have never arrived.*

*There was no local authority at the time. We never had Al-Shabaab in our area and the government had no influence in our area. So it was only the clan and they didn't have much influence.*

*There are many other clans in our area such as the Ogadens, the Rahanweyn, the Marehan and the Gabaweyn. The Ogadens and the Dir were the same. The Gabaweyn lived nearer to the river and had some harvest and used the stores to feed their animals so were in much better position. The Marehan had very good support from the international community and the Rahanweyn were the ones who suffered most of the death and had to flee their land to get support. At least we stayed in our place and didn't have to flee. The Ogadens have some support from the Ethiopian side. The Marehans have blocked the international community from supporting us because we fought with them earlier. The support rarely crossed the river. It stayed in the Marehan side.*

*We had some water trucking from our diaspora community at the last days of the crisis. We had this for four days, each day we had two jerry cans of water. On the fourth day it rained, so we didn't need it any more. They also took the water to another village near to us.*

*It is the responsibility of all Somalis starting from our cousins, clan and so forth. There is no government so it is the responsibility of every Somali. The humanitarian organisations did nothing for us and I think it is because they were stopped from helping us by the Marehans; that is what I think even though I have nothing against them and we are in peace now.*

## ***Away from the epicentre***

These responses from Luuq in North Gedo, neighbouring Bakool region, clearly confirm that things were much worse among the Rahanweyn passing through than among the resident population, with people stressing livestock deaths – and the extraordinary measures taken to protect livestock – rather than human deaths (apart from those travelling through). A number of key informants in other interviews point out that the regional drought of 2005–06 was worse in these areas – of the Mandera triangle – than the 2011 drought. Ironically this is an area where much of the humanitarian response was targeted as access was much better due largely to the long-term influence of Ethiopia, limiting the presence of Al-Shabaab. However, humanitarian aid is also strongly associated with bias and corruption from the perspective of those interviewed, with certain clans and sub-clans (of the Marehan) controlling resource flows.

The three clan identity groups interviewed reflect significantly different livelihoods and coping strategies, with the Marehan keeping camels, developing commercial, irrigated farming, having a significant diaspora (in Kenya and further abroad) as well as strongly present in urban-business and controlling aid resources. The Gabaweyn, in contrast, are much more reliant on riverine farming and reverted to labouring, producing charcoal and collecting firewood to manage in 2011. They also have some kinship links to Kenya (especially over the border in Mandera, rather than Nairobi) and were able to access the refugee camps in Ethiopia for further support. The Dir are predominantly cattle herders but do have a significant diaspora, as well as cross-border connections (with the Ethiopian side) and a business population that resulted in various forms of assistance. As well as moving to Dollo-Ado to access support from the refugee camps, some food aid is also brought back to Somalia across the border.

## **Businesses, diaspora and the Nairobi mosques**

As indicated in a number of the preceding narratives, the Somali business community and the

Somali diaspora responded to the growing crisis in 2011, particularly through their kinship-based connections. The following narratives reflect a broader solidarity beyond narrowly defined kinship connections. Some of the mosques in Nairobi frequented or led by Somali religious leaders were also mobilised to respond to the famine, particularly as a result of the influx of refugees into Kenya (and Dadaab). These mosques also became hubs through which the wider Somali diaspora and the Somali Kenyan business community raised resources and delivered assistance.

### **A Rahanweyn trader in Baidoa (07-001)**

*I am a businessman and I have a business in both Mogadishu and Baidoa. I was in Baidoa from February to June 2011. When the IDPs moved into Baidoa, I was among the business people who were helping the IDPs with some money sourced from within Baidoa as well as from ourselves. This was from mid-May 2011.*

*In the first week of June 2011, I was asked to head a local emergency relief committee that was being planned. I resisted but I was influenced and pushed by friends and business colleagues. Finally I accepted it but with a condition that I will select the people to be working with me and they accepted. Our work was to coordinate the aid coming in to Bay region from the diaspora and aid agencies. We were meeting all the agencies on a daily and weekly basis to plan where to go or who to target. We were also the centre of diaspora assistance. Most of the diaspora assistance was sent to me and the Baidoa Mosque Committee. Our committee received more than US\$800,000. We used all this money to buy food.*

*The first response was from the Somali community, especially the business people, the local population, and even the first arriving IDPs who were able to share what they had with others. The second response was from the Somali diaspora and the big business companies. In Baidoa, Concern was the first organization, followed by Islamic Relief and other Islamic organizations like Manhal and Zamzam Foundation.*

*We also received money from a mosque in Nairobi, Kenya (US\$80,000 in all, received in July 2011); the Somali business community in Mogadishu in July 2011; Rahanweyn groups in Saudi Arabia, Syria, Kuwait, and Dubai (June and August 2011). Money*

*came from the Somali diaspora in Europe, USA, Canada, Australia, and South Africa.*

*We face many challenges including having no knowledge in the humanitarian response and Al-Shabaab policy and restrictions. International humanitarian organizations have given us a lot of problems (they target a number of beneficiaries and don't want to assist new arrivals who are dying. They are very rigid.)*

*I will never ever be part of such a committee anymore because it is full of blame and I fear that I might have denied somebody food while he/she is in need, which is a sin. I will contribute but not manage.*

### **A director of a major Somali national private company, based in Mogadishu (07-002)**

*We have centres in all districts and most of the bigger villages in South-Central Somalia. Our staff in all these places had been following reports of what is happening in their districts. Every centre was reporting to me and any community issue was followed up and we see what it is possible to do.*

*When the deyr 2010–11 failed, almost all our centres in Bay, Bakool, Gedo, Middle Juba, Lower Juba, and the Shabelles reported critical need for water. In March 2011, we had a managerial meeting here in Mogadishu. Before we had the meeting, there were staff contributing and doing water trucking at their respective district levels. This was what made us feel that things were serious. At the meeting it was decided five of us would go to Bakool (Wajid and Hudur), Bay (Baidoa, Dinsor, Burhakaba, and Qansaxdheere), Gedo (Bardera), the Jubas (Sakow and Buale), and the Shabelles (Qorioley and Aw Degle). We came back to Mogadishu after twelve days. We had the mandate to start water trucking in all these places and to do food distribution where possible, but Al-Shabaab refused us and we came back without doing anything. We were worried very much. They [Al-Shabaab] wanted 30 percent of money allocated to do trucking or food.*

*By April and May 2011, things continued to deteriorate in all the districts we had visited and people started moving out to refugee camps or IDP camps. We would have stopped the movements if we had been allowed to assist people by March 2011. When people*



*started moving out in mass by May 2011 and Al-Shabaab could not stop it or control it anymore we started helping the people in all the places we visited. We also started helping people where they were displaced to, especially Baidoa, Kilometre 50, Mogadishu, and Afgooye. In Mogadishu, we targeted mainly Badbaado camp, which was the main camp for Bay region IDPs. In Kilometre 50 we spent more than US\$600,000 in food only. In this place [K50] almost half of the people taken there died, especially children. We assisted them to be moved to Badbaado and we followed them with the assistance. You know it is not easy to contain the situation once people are displaced.*

*We provided water and food as well as cash. In K50 and Badbaado we were giving 25 kilograms of rice, 25 kilograms of wheat flour, 3 litres of oil, and 200,000 Somali shillings for milk, vegetables, and meat. We started mid-May and continued until January 2012. We have used more than US\$1.8 million.*

*Our focus was Bay (Dinsor and Qansaxdheere) where the main 'halaag' [disaster] happened, Bakool, Lower Shabelle, Lower Juba, and Middle Juba populations. We were paying attention to Dinsor, Qansaxdheere, Qorioley, and Baidoa because these were the worst affected.*

*We faced different challenges including Al-Shabaab refusing the people to be assisted in their village at an early stage, no government participation in emergency response, but they also put many road blocks to loot the assistance. If you work in an Al-Shabaab area, the government will say you support Al-Shabaab and the same if you work in the government area. This puts our staff in a bad situation of security.*

*Yes, in terms of learning, we need to reduce duplication of beneficiaries but for us it is 'sadaka' – so as long as the person is needy and we give it to him/her, we have no problem. No, we don't want to work with government because they are very corrupt and this is our own money that we are giving as 'sadaka' or charity, so we please Allah and get his rewards.*

### **A Somali religious leader based in Kenya (07-003)**

*The crisis happened in our neighbourhood. We heard what was happening from the media and from the people. We then went to Dadaab, in July 2011, to see*

*the affected people for ourselves and from there we sent an appeal through the media as we were accompanied by crews from several TV stations. We have raised the issue in the mosques and talked about it a lot. We created a committee to manage the money. I was a member of this committee. We held fund raising functions at this mosque and other mosques in Nairobi and Mombasa.*

*We bought food with the money raised. We negotiated with the food storeowners to get goods discounted. Transport companies and truck owners have also offered us free transport. The money transfer companies (the hawalas) have made all transfers for this purpose from anywhere in the world free. They also donated large sums of cash.*

*We have known Dadaab refugee camps for a long time and we were well connected to them. We had people in the refugee camps that we trusted so we used them to distribute the aid. They gave each household a card and gave them rations of food. These men worked also with the UN agencies in the refugee camps so they were allowed to use the UN stores and distribution centres.*

*The first people who responded to the needs of the new arrivals were the refugees who were already in there. They shared with them the little food they had and gave them some clothes. We requested the food stores owners to package food in rations of five to ten kilograms of rice, flour, and sugar, and also provided tea and cooking oil. The new arrivals were very much malnourished and the weakest – the children and elderly – were on the verge so we purchased dates and nutritious powdered milk as rich foods for quick recovery. Then came Arab and Muslim NGOs who have gone the same path we have gone through and used the same methods we have used. They came with money, bought food from the same stores and distributed them to the refugees. Some of them moved into the camps and made their own camps there. The Turkish organizations were the best. They made their camp in the middle of the refugee camps. The UN and other international NGOs then arrived. By this time, the refugees were much better and well nourished. Most of the Arab and Turkish NGOs then left.*

*We realized that many people were dying before reaching Kenya so we started to send help to the areas people were coming from and to the IDP camps in*



southern Somalia, in Kismayo, Bardere, Beledweyne, Baidoa, Elasha Biyaha, etc. We were sending money to people we trusted so that they can buy food locally and distribute to the IDPs. The total money they brought was about US\$700,000, of which US\$300,000–400,000 was spent on refugees in Kenya and the rest in Somalia.

We obtained about US\$3 million in cash as well as food and other [in-kind] support such as free transportations and money transfer, in two months. In Somalia, we faced problems in Al-Shabaab controlled areas. In Kenya's Dadaab refugee camps (Ifo and Dhagahley), members of the local clans administer the area and they tried to take a share of the aid using 'the system' sometimes, and bandits in other times. They looted lots of aid. They came into the camps and intimidated those who were administering the aid distribution and looted some food. We had to use the police. We also asked the UN agencies to support us to protect the aid. Also in the local administration there some people who are not from the local clan so we used them also to stop this looting.

#### **A senior employee of a money transfer agency (07-004)**

We have a department that always deals with emergencies and supports affected people. We have been involved in community support activities since 2009 when there were a lot of IDPs in the Afgoye Corridor. When the 2010–11 deyr failed we started water trucking in many parts of southern Somalia. These places were many but I remember Bardera, Dinsor and Burhakaba. But there were a lot of challenges, mainly from Al-Shabaab. They were asking for money because they were used to getting money from NGOs. We started water trucking March 2011 and continued until April 2011. You know we planned [to continue water trucking] until the start of the gu 2011 but the rains failed. The money allocated [also] got finished. However we could not ask for more money and continue because of Al-Shabaab pressures, asking for money. In the 2011 drought, we did a lot in terms of water trucking and food distribution.

We were the first Somali company that assisted people both at their places (their homes) and in the IDP camps. We became involved because it was our people that were suffering. It is the same people that our

business depended on. I think it was our responsibility to respond to the crisis. We cannot look at the business part when people are dying. I can't quantify the amount of money [we] invested because: from June to September 2011, we have not been charging any commission for all the money transferred to the drought affected areas; we were not charging for money sent by diaspora groups to support the affected people; the money that was invested in water and food is also very high.

#### **Resource mobilisation across society**

Much of this report has highlighted the mobilisation of resources within kin and clan networks. However, the narratives here capture how religious identity and solidarity, the diaspora and the business community can and do also act beyond clan-based identities. Larger businesses have customers throughout Somalia and therefore are motivated to retain or expand their customer base, and therefore must be seen as cross-clan. They also have a philanthropic and Islamic identity and therefore expectations on them, as representing the wealthier segment of society and therefore able and obliged to support the poor. Similarly, two Somali led mosques in Nairobi have prominent sheikhs, well known across Somali society around the world. These mosques and their religious leaders became prominent actors during the famine, stimulated by, and themselves stimulating a focus on, the plight of incoming people to Dadaab refugee camp. Funds raised in 'Somali' mosques around the world were sent to these religious leaders. The mosques also linked with the Somali business community in Kenya to raise funds and transport assistance. One particular Somali NGO (with a Rahanweyn identity), based in the UK, played a major role in fundraising and resource distribution in 2011, and was assisted by a Somali religious leader in the UK and received contributions from the Rahanweyn and many other non-Rahanweyn around the world. The responses by these actors also highlight that they were not immune from many of the challenges and difficulties of attempting to support people in extreme times, including those of Al-Shabaab.

## Discussion

The preceding narratives provide a record and an account of the experiences of many people who were closest to the horrendous events of 2011, events that led to the deaths of over a quarter of a million people. One of the purposes of these narratives is to bring out the 'voice' and agency of Somali people and local populations where that voice is seldom heard in humanitarian, public and policy circles on Somalia. These narratives therefore represent, on the one hand, voices of suffering, and even at times exploitation, but they also represent voices of strength, survival and social solidarity in the most extreme of times. Selections of these narratives have been presented in a variety of other publications and provide the empirical basis or 'data' for other publications that have been released or are forthcoming.<sup>40</sup>

To briefly recap, these narratives provide fairly detailed descriptions of individual, household and wider 'community' or clan-based experiences and activities from late 2010 onwards, many of which might be termed 'coping' strategies. The main factors that affected populations throughout central and southern Somalia were common: consecutive very poor rain seasons; the presence and restrictions of Al-Shabaab across virtually all of this area; the high prices of food commodities; the lack of humanitarian assistance and then its concentration in particular areas (Mogadishu and northern Gedo). The impact of some of these factors was common across much of South-Central Somalia but the ability to cope varied significantly according to both geography, livelihood and clan identity.

Livestock losses, particularly of cattle, a major asset holding (but the species most vulnerable to drought) were considerable across the whole of southern Somalia (and neighbouring regions).<sup>41</sup> There is a major cattle-based livestock trading economy between southern Somalia and Kenya, with cattle being exported from Somalia to Kenya.<sup>42</sup> While cattle losses were widespread, dynamics around cattle asset protection, destitution and famine were a major part of understanding the famine more generally, but especially in some of the worst affected areas. The Jiddo – primarily

cattle pastoralists in Lower Shabelle – experienced enormous cattle deaths, destitution and displacement, a situation that had not happened to them in living memory. Similarly, people in the sorghum belt had invested in cattle with their sesame earnings. In both cases, local people spent enormous effort (in time, food, energy and other savings) attempting to keep these valuable animals alive, in order to preserve their assets and livelihoods. They did this in expectation of the gu rains arrival in April, only to be disappointed by the severe failure of these rains. A number of these narratives have suggested that people recognise this vulnerability and that some are thinking of investing more in camel ownership. However, herd management and labour requirements are quite different in both cases and, among many other issues, cattle fit better with a more sedentary lifestyle and livelihood. The extent to which people have recovered their assets from pre-2011 levels is not well-known, even many years later.

Mass displacement – nationally and internationally – was also a general characteristic of this time, with most people moving to Baidoa, Mogadishu, Dadaab and Dollo-Ado, although many other smaller movements took place. These movements were initially constrained by Al-Shabaab and, in fact, people took longer, more energy sapping, routes around Al-Shabaab, due to the inability or unwillingness of Al-Shabaab to recognise the evolving crisis in a timely manner, and the restrictions they placed on aid coming in. Only when all other options had collapsed did people move en masse regardless of the fear of Al-Shabaab. These journeys were associated with more trauma and deaths, and the conditions upon arrival and during their stays in IDP and refugee camps was often equally horrendous, with ill-prepared camps and, in the case of Mogadishu, extreme levels of exploitation. One of these smaller movements (05-004) describes one woman's mobility, moving from her rural village home to Jamame to Kismayo, finding assistance in these places. This type of individual mobile livelihood strategy would have been commonplace at the time. The mass international displacement of the Rahanweyn marks an important historical moment in the social geography of this clan, where international movements have not been a major

part of their history previously (unlike some other Somali clans). Taking the long view, this might be part of a new phase in the international migration and livelihood diversification of the Rahanweyn.

Another important phenomenon and finding of these narratives is the role that clan identity and associated patterns of livelihood *and* risk diversification within social networks plays in the vulnerability and resilience of Somali society. Narratives 01-001 to 01-005 provide a compelling case of the relative wealth and economic diversification of two sub-clans of the Hawiye, that have benefitted from processes of urbanisation, migration and diversification over time. They have also been fortunate in terms of their geography, as the capital of the country, Mogadishu, falls within their clan territory, and where Mogadishu, for all its tensions and conflict, is a source of significant wealth and resources. While many tensions and differences exist within the Hawiye, during 2011 the Murasade and Duduble were able to raise considerable resources from within their clan-based social networks – from Mogadishu, Nairobi and their wider diaspora – and this appears to have been a decisive factor in mitigating the worst impact of the famine.<sup>43</sup>

The situation of the Hawiye of the central regions is in stark contrast with the marginalised Rahanweyn and the epicentre of the famine. The Rahanweyn are divided into many sub-clans and while they also have a strong culture of sharing and mutual support, they do not have the same migration history, urbanisation and education levels, and size of business and diaspora communities as the major clans, and this appears to explain part of their vulnerability. However, within the Rahanweyn and within , there were also significant geographic variations in how different sub-clans and areas were affected and coped, as indicated in narratives 02-001 to 02-004 and 03-001 to 03-006.

The situation along the Juba valley, while very serious at the time, is not described by respondents in the same terms as the situation among the Rahanweyn, and in fact many respondents point out this difference, referring much more to livestock deaths than human deaths in their areas. This difference in humanitarian severity is consistent with formal reports. However, people from these areas did

also access the refugee camps, which were relatively nearby, and took the opportunity to lessen their own difficulties by making use of alternative resources. The importance of clan identity is again highlighted, notably in the northern Gedo narratives (06-001 to 06-010) where many respondents are as concerned about the capture of aid and aid agencies by particular sub-clans, than by the conditions in 2011 itself.

As the Somali private sector and the diaspora have grown over the last twenty-five years, so has their ability to engage in all areas of society from near or far; the private sector has been the driving force of the economy, in the absence of a state, and the diaspora is actively engaged in politics and the economy. Both – diaspora and private sector – also fund social services and short-term ‘emergency’ support.<sup>44</sup>

The authors have discussed a number of implications for humanitarian policy and practice elsewhere. Adopting a socio-political lens is a critical aspect of understanding the local context, relevant to understanding the role that agencies (or their staff) play in local politics but also to deepening an understanding of vulnerability and resilience across Somali society. These are inevitably sensitive and complex issues but are arguably only well understood by a minority of organisations.

For early warning and food-security information systems, including identity and the relative strength of clan-based wealth and diversification are important aspects of famine prevention; it is now a fact that two famines within twenty years have affected the same population groups (the Rahanweyn and the Somali Bantu). Food security monitoring protocols to incorporate socio-political factors would be different, although complementary, than those used currently. Understanding post-disaster livelihood recovery, particularly at the social group level (rather than household or livelihood group) where redistribution and sharing takes place, requires improvement. Almost five years after the famine, it is not known to what extent the most affected social groups/clans – the Jiddo, the Hubeer, the Yantar, the Jareer in different areas – have recovered or transformed their livelihoods and therefore what their vulnerability and resilience is today. For

implementing organisations, these issues are all highly relevant, as they affect principles of ‘do no harm’, targeting, programme impact and advocacy.

These and the several hundred more interviews conducted as part of the study have also generated new insights into the nature of social capital and food security ‘coping’ strategies, among Somalis, although we should stress that many of the more typical coping strategies for Somalia and the Horn of Africa are also very evident.<sup>45</sup> Adopting a socio-political lens has been a necessary component of this perspective. While identity and territory are

often understood as synonymous in Somalia, who lives in any local area varies considerably, and this may imply significant tension and competition in some areas but also long established co-habitation and good relations in other areas. Regardless of the nature of the relations, the history and economic evolution of different social groups also frequently vary considerably. The authors have highlighted elsewhere three facets – flexibility, diversification and social connectedness – that are helpful concepts in understanding issues of vulnerability and resilience.



# Annex I. Interviewees

- 01-003. Female. Hawiye-Murasade. Gaal Hareeri district, Galgadud region. July 2014
- 01-004. Male. Hawiye-Murasade. El Dheer district, Galgadud. July 2014
- 01-005. Male. Hawiye-Murasade. Bristol, UK. June 2014
- 02-001. Female. Rahanweyn-Hubeer (Jareer Qansaxdheere. December 2013
- 02-002. Male. Rahanweyn-Hadame. Baidoa town. undated
- 02-003. Male. Rahanweyn-Leysan. Baidoa town. December 2013
- 02-004. Male. Rahanweyn-Elay. Burhakaba. December 2013
- 03-001. Female. Rahanweyn-Lawai. Dollo-Ado (Hilaweyn), Ethiopia. April 2014
- 03-002. Male. Rahanweyn-Hadame. Dollo-Ado (Hilaweyn), Ethiopia. April 2014
- 03-003. Female. AwraMale. Dollo-Ado (Hilaweyn), Ethiopia. April 2014
- 03-004 Male. (Rahanweyn-Gelidle. Dadaab Refugee Camp (Ifo 2), Kenya. July 2014
- 03-005 Male. (Rahanweyn-Macalin Weyn. Dadaab Refugee Camp (Ifo 2), Kenya. July 2014
- 03-006. Female. Rahanwey-Leysan. Dadaab Refugee Camp (Ifo 2), Kenya. July 2014
- 04-001. Male. Digil-Dubane/Jarer. Qorioley district. January 2014
- 04-002. Male. Digil-Dubane/Jarer. Qorioley district. January 2014
- 04-003. Male. Digil-Jiddo. Qorioley district. January 2014
- 04-004. Male. Digil-Jiddo. Qorioley district. January 2014
- 04-005. Male. Digil-Jiddo. UK. January 2014
- 04-006. Male. Reer Hassan. Qorioley district. January 2014
- 04-007. Male. Digil-Garre. Qorioley district. January 2014
- 05-001. Male. Dir-Biyomaal. Jamame district. February 2014
- 05-002. Female. Dir-Biyomaal. Jamame district. February 2014
- 05-003. Male. Dir-Biyomaal. Jamame district. February 2014
- 05-004. Female. Biyomaal/Jarer. Jamame district. February 2014
- 05-005. Male. Dir-Biyomaal. Jamame district. January 2014
- 05-006. Male. Dir-Biyomaal. Jamame district. January 2014
- 05-007. Male. Dir-Biyomaal. Jamame district. January 2014
- 05-008. Male. Jarer/Bantu (Mushunguli) Jamame district. January 2014
- 05-009. Male. Jarer/Bantu (Mushunguli) Jamame district. January 2014
- 05-010. Female. Mijirteen. Jamame district. February 2014
- 05-011. Male. Ashraf. Jamame district. January 2014
- 06-001. Male. Marehan. Luuq district. November 2013

06-002. Male. Marehan (Reer Hassan Luuq district. December 2013  
06-003. Male. Gabawein. Luuq district. November 2013  
06-004. Male. Gabawein. Luuq district. November 2013  
06-005. Male. Gabawein. Luuq district. November 2013  
06-006. Male. Dir-Faqi Mohamed. Luuq district. November 2013  
06-007. Male. Dir-Faqi Mohamed. Luuq district. November 2013  
06-008. Male. Dir-Faqi Mohamed. Minnesota, USA. November 2013  
06-009. Male. Dir. Luuq district. November 2013  
06-009. Female. Dir. Luuq district. November 2013  
07-001. Male. Rahanweyn-Leysan. Businessman. Mogadishu. March 2014  
07-002. Male. Mogadishu. Business figure. March 2014  
07-003. Male. Nairobi. Religious leader. October 2013  
07-004. Male. Mogadishu. Business employee. March 2014

# Notes

1. See Maxwell et al. 2015.
2. The context within which the famine took place has been well analysed elsewhere – see Global Food Security 1, no. 1 (November 2012), and Maxwell and Majid 2016 (forthcoming).
3. See Duffield 2012. See also Donini and Maxwell 2014.
4. See Maxwell and Majid 2016 (forthcoming) and Maxwell et al. 2015.
5. For more on the urban-based trading economy and the Somali diaspora, see UNDP 2001, Lindley 2007, and Hammond et al. 2011.
6. See Maxwell and Majid 2016 (forthcoming).
7. See Lewis (1961) for an anthropological analysis of Somali society and the clan system and (1980) for a history of the Somalia State.
8. See Lewis (1961).
9. See De Waal (1997).
10. See Majid and McDowell (2012).
11. See Maxwell et al. 2015.
12. The Nairobi workshop included the full research team as well as Mark Bradbury of the Rift Valley Institute.
13. See the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification maps for early 2011 at the FSNAU website: [www.fsnau.org](http://www.fsnau.org).
14. Hormuud is one the largest private companies in Somalia.
15. Birkas are concrete water storage containers.
16. See UNDP 2011 for information on the importance of Mogadishu as a trading centre for Somalia and the wider region.
17. See Maxwell et al. 2015.
18. This is referred to as the 'sorghum high potential agro-pastoral' in the FSNAU livelihood zone map, see [www.fsnau.org](http://www.fsnau.org).
19. It is not clear which militia people are referring to but it was generally reported that various clan militia or 'mooryan' (armed, unmanaged groups of young men) were a threat at the time.
20. Majid and McDowell 2012.
21. See Bryld et al. 2013, Menkhaus 2012.
22. A bakara is a grain storage facility.
23. Wabarka and Yubow were the names of the registration and reception centres respectively, at Dollo-Ado.
24. An approximate figure of 25,000 Somali shillings to 1 US dollar is used.
25. See Bhattacharjee 2012, UNHCR 2011.
26. See UNDP 2001.
27. Kilometre 50 was controlled by Al-Shabaab at this time but large amounts of resources were coming in to government held areas, so people were trying to move on through Kilometre 50.
28. 'Last' implying worst.
29. The Digil and Mirifle may also be referred to as the Rahanweyn more generally. For some, Digil and Rahanweyn are more appropriate.
30. See FSNAU 2013.
31. The Mandera triangle refers to the area around the intersection of Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya which has a history of poor humanitarian indicators. See, for example, HPG 2006.
32. The Ogaden are an important clan in the wider rural areas of Middle and Lower Juba and, more recently, also in Kismayo town. Harti and Marehan clan identities and dynamics are also important to Kismayo town.
33. Dhoomal is an edible wild root.
34. See the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification maps from early to mid-2011 at the FSNAU website: [www.fsnau.org](http://www.fsnau.org).
35. See Maxwell et al. 2015.
36. Much of the land has been taken by force over the last two decades although some has also been bought.
37. The UN and NGO names referred to in this narrative have been anonymised.
38. Burjawazi are share-cropping groups, where someone provides a pump and agricultural inputs, other people provide the

labour, and the produce is shared between. Variations on this arrangement may also take place, with some people also getting some of their own separate plots irrigated.

39. Equivalent to approximately US\$2–3 at the time.
40. See Maxwell and Majid 2016 forthcoming and Maxwell et al. 2015; a very small selection of these narratives were read out at venues in Mogadishu, Nairobi, London, New York, Washington and Boston, as part of the wider presentation of study findings.
41. Accurate figures are extremely difficult to obtain and many respondents to this study reported well over 50 percent of their livestock holdings having perished.
42. See Little 2006.
43. The authors cannot fully prove that clan identity, social networks and the diversification of this group were the main factors that explain the containment of the crisis vis-à-vis other potential factors, but it is a strong hypothesis.
44. See UNDP 2001, Lindley 2007, Hammond et al. 2011.
45. See Table 1 in Maxwell et al. 2015.



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