

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



CONTENTS

Letter from the Executive Director	1
Key 2022 Highlights	4
About SPA	5
Research Outputs and Publications	7
Research Report	7
Policy Papers	9
Governance Briefs	11
Commentaries	12
Programmes and Centers	13
SPA Policy Lab.	13
Centre for Learning and Development	14
Public Agenda Forum	15
Internships	18
Podcasts	19
Outreach and Impact	20
Partnerships and Collaborations	21
Financial Highlights	22
Institutional Capacity Development	23
2023 Projections and Priorities	24
Appendices	25
Staff	25
Fellows	25
Board of Advisors	25

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2022 was a very productive year for Somali Public Agenda (SPA). We published 15 papers, held a record 19 forums (including 6 Gaxwo & Gorfeyn meetups), produced 22 podcast episodes, trained 30 bloggers, engaged and talked to local and international media, trained 4 interns, and started working with other like-minded institutions.



In 2022, SPA conducted and published various extensive studies. We published 3 research reports, 4 policy papers, 3 governance briefs, and 5 commentaries. We undertook research and analysis on key governance and public service issues in Somalia including contentious domestic political questions, education, public health, public budget, security, climate change, displacement, transitional justice, and religion and politics. SPA researchers traveled to all Federal Member States and conducted interviews and focus group discussions with 550 key informants in Kismayo, Baidoa, Garowe, Qardho, Gaalkacyo, Beledweyne, Afgoye, Dhusamareb, and Mogadishu.

SPA produced joint research reports with other think tanks in 2022. We published a study with the Rift Valley Institute (RVI) on the role of religious actors in contemporary Somali politics. SPA also published a joint study with the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) on data sharing and third-party monitoring in humanitarian response.

Moreover, SPA introduced policy papers in 2022. Three of the 4 policy papers published in 2022 focused on contentious political issues in Somalia including Mogadishu's status and power allocation. These papers were jointly published with the Somali Dialogue Platform, a programme, implemented by the Rift Valley Institute, that works to facilitate agreement amongst Somalis on contentious political issues. SPA researchers, together with the Somali Dialogue Platform team, convened a series of policy dialogues and traveled to capital cities of the Federal Member States and presented the 'Revitalizing the negotiation of contentious political issues' paper to key political stakeholders in Somalia.

The name of our policy and service design center was changed from SPA Center for Public Policy and Service Design to SPA Policy Lab in August 2022. The SPA Policy Lab started working on design projects in 2022. The SPA Policy Lab partnered with the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) on designing human-centered, evidence-based programmes for displaced communities in Somalia. Moreover, the Lab, with the collaboration of Interpeace, has started working on evidence-based and locally-owned transitional justice interventions for the community in Galkayo. The director of the SPA Policy Lab wrote a reflection on how running this relatively new policy lab - which aims to bridge the gap between policies and people - is both challenging and exciting, and how knowledge about policy design is fresh and needs constant updating.

The SPA Center for Learning and Development (CLD) conducted two successful blog writing trainings in January and July 2022 for 30 talented young bloggers. During the two trainings, participants wrote over 100 blog posts and shared them with their social media networks. Throughout the 4-week long training, eight renowned Somali bloggers mentored the trainees, shared their blogging journeys, and gave invaluable advice. The SPA Center for Learning and Development is committed to conducting similar blog training and will introduce research training in 2023, in addition to its public sector training. These activities are all in pursuit of the center's wider objectives that include the inculcating and advancing the culture of writing in Somalia.

Four interns (two male and two female) completed three-month internships in 2022. Four other interns (two male and two female) also did a monthlong internship with credits from their universities. The eight interns contributed to the work of the different SPA departments and research productions. The internship provides much-needed experience for recent university graduates. Three interns who took the three-month-long internship wrote reflections (published on the SPA website) about their internship experiences. The reflection of the fourth intern will be published in early January 2023.

In 2022, we produced and released 22 podcast episodes. The Maamul Wanaag Podcast produced a record of 18 episodes. The Maamul Wanaag Podcast delves deep into various governance matters in Somalia. The guests of the Maamul Wanaag Podcast broadly discussed and analyzed governance topics including Mogadishu's status, power allocation, fiscal federalism, national security architecture, elections, petroleum resources, and transitional justice. SPA also launched the Adeeg Wanaag Podcast on October 1st, 2022. Adeeg Wanaag provides in-depth discussion of public service matters in Somalia. The 4 episodes released in 2022 focused on access to education and healthcare, the rise of ciyaal weero youth gangs, and durable solutions for displaced communities. In 2022, these podcasts were downloaded over 3,100 times.

Our Public Agenda Forum organized 19 events in 2022. We partnered with International Media Support (IMS), Somali Dialogue Platform, and Urur Kaab to convene a series of forums on public services and governance issues. We convened 7 forums on social services with IMS and 2 on governance issues with Urur Kaab. Two of these forums convened to disseminate and present some of our studies; we also convened 2 Twitter Space discussions on elections and the state budget. In addition, we were able to convene 6 Gaxwo & Gorfeyn meet-ups. In total, 783 persons attended our forums in 2022 both physically and virtually. This is almost double the 415 persons who attended our forums in 2021.

SPA maintained a collaborative relationship with our partners and donors and started new relationships. We are currently working with the Rift Valley Institute's Somali Dialogue Platform on research and engagement related to contentious political issues in Somalia. We continued working with Interpeace on peace and transitional justice. We also renewed and strengthened our partnership with International Media Support (IMS). In 2022, we also started new working relationships with additional institutions including the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS), Life and Peace Institute (LPI), Research and Evidence Facility (REF), Urur Kaab, and Tana Copenhagen.

We maintained a good relationship with the media and were regularly interviewed by international and local outlets. BBC, VOA, Goobjoog, and Kalfadhi were some of the media houses that regularly interviewed or invited our team members to participate in debates. Our researchers and analysts were invited and presented our work at forums and conferences including the Greater Horn Horizon Forum (GHHF), ReDSS learning forums, the Costs of War Conference organized by Brown University, and the HIPS Annual Forum for Ideas held in Djibouti.

Our work also shaped policy-making in Somalia in 2022. The recommendations of our joint policy paper with the Somali Dialogue Platform titled ‘Revitalizing the negotiation of contentious political issues: Key considerations going forward’ was extensively used by the National Consultative Council (NCC). Our election observation work in the Benadir region injected some level of transparency and accountability into the indirect elections.

Contributing to our significant achievements in 2022, four competent and committed core team members joined the organization over the last year. Each has contributed conscientiously to the work SPA performs.

Our work in 2023 will focus on public participation in political processes, fiscal and service decentralization, civil service reform, local council formation, reconciliation, durable solutions, transitional justice, climate change, and education. Studies, briefs, policy papers, commentaries, forums, and podcasts on these issues will be our priorities in 2023.

It has been an honor for me to lead our talented, youthful, and competent SPA team. Despite the limited financial resources, the electoral impasse in the first five months of the year, security concerns, and other challenges of 2022, SPA has been able to consistently produce high-quality papers and create a space for important discussions both online and in-person.

Finally, we are grateful for the unwavering support of our distinguished Board members and our fellows. Special gratitude goes to Peter Chonka who spends many hours reading and editing our work every year. Many thanks are also owed to our supporters and readers whose confidence and encouragement inspire us to do more work for the common good. As we enter our sixth year, we are looking forward to producing quality research outputs, creating space for discussion on key national issues, offering training, and helping public and civic institutions design human-centered public services.

Mahad Wasuge

is the Executive Director of the Somali Public Agenda.

KEY 2022 HIGHLIGHTS



SPA produced 15 publications, including 3 research reports, 4 policy papers, 3 governance briefs, and 5 commentaries.



SPA researchers traveled to all Federal Member States and conducted interviews and focus group discussions with 550 key informants in Kismayo, Baidoa, Garowe, Qardho, Gaalkacyo, Beledweyne, Afgoye, Dhusamareb, and Mogadishu.



The SPA Policy Lab partnered with the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) and Interpeace on designing human-centered, evidence-based programmes for the displaced communities in Somalia and evidence-based and locally-owned transitional justice interventions for the community in Gaalkacyo respectively.



The SPA Center for Learning and Development (CLD) conducted two successful blog writing training in January and July 2022 for 30 talented young bloggers. During the two training, trainees wrote over 100 blog posts and shared them with their social media networks.



We redesigned our website in 2022.



Four interns (two male and two female) completed three-month internships in 2022. Four other interns (two male and two female) also did a monthlong internship with credits from their universities.



In 2022, we produced and released 22 podcast episodes. The Maamul Wanaag Podcast produced a record of 18 episodes.



SPA launched Adeeg Wanaag Podcast on October 1st, 2022. 4 episodes were released in 2022 discussing access to education and healthcare, the rise of Ciyaal Weero youth gangs, and durable solutions for the displaced community.



Our Public Agenda Forum organized 19 forums in 2022. In total, 783 persons attended our forums in 2022 both physically and virtually.



We started a new working relationship with new institutions including the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS), Life and Peace Institute (LPI), Research and Evidence Facility (REF), Urur Kaab, and Tana Copenhagen.



BBC, VOA, Goobjoog, and Kalfadhi were some of the media houses that regularly interviewed or invited our team members to participate in debates.

ABOUT SPA

Somali Public Agenda is a non-profit public policy and administration research organization based in Mogadishu. Its aim is to advance understanding and improvement of public administration and public services in Somalia through evidence-based research and analysis.

At Somali Public Agenda, we believe that all Somalis deserve better public services including access to affordable education, healthcare, housing, security, and justice delivered via transparent and accountable authorities.

Our Methods

To advance the understanding and improvement of public services and governance in Somalia, we apply policy-oriented and evidence-based research. We design public programmes and projects at both the service delivery and policy-making levels. We also conduct practical and sustainable training on governance and service delivery.

Research: Somali Public Agenda contributes to the understanding and improvement of public administration in Somalia through research and analysis of various issues that affect public policies and the provision of public services. SPA regularly publishes research reports, policy papers, governance briefs, and commentaries (always in both the Somali and English languages) on decentralization, public bureaucracy, and local administration; democratization and elections; financial governance; security, justice, and rule of law; urban planning and land administration; employment; and, education system and health services. These publications often inform citizens, policymakers, practitioners, and international actors on governance and public service issues in Somalia.

Dialogue: Public Agenda Forum is a platform and space for discussions on governance and public service issues in Somalia. The Forum (including Gaxwo & Gorfeyn monthly meetups) serves as an avenue for critical examinations of issues of public priorities. Different segments of society including researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners are invited to meet and discuss issues on equal terms. The Public Agenda Forum convenes dialogue with policy-makers and public figures and organizes workshops, seminars, and book/report launches. Often the findings of the Forum discussions help inform Somali Public Agenda's briefs and commentaries.

Podcasts: We regularly produce Maamul Wanaag and Adeeg Wanaag podcasts. Maamul Wanaag Podcast delves deep into governance issues in Somalia. Adeeg Wanaag Podcast provides in-depth discussion of public service matters in Somalia.

Public Service Design: Based on the findings and policy recommendations of our studies, we design public policies, programmes, and projects with the relevant authorities through our SPA Policy Lab. In collaboration with policymakers, public administrators, and the community, we design knowledge-based public services. Before government invests resources in the policies, programmes, and projects designed, we experiment with

the public service at a small-scale level to test the efficacy of the services designed.

Training: Based on the findings of our research and our co-designing work, Somali Public Agenda through its Center for Learning and Development offers short training courses to contribute to the building of administrative cadres that can deliver public policies and programmes to the community. The Center for Learning and Development's aim is to connect civil servants, policy makers, and non-profit sector workers with communities and provide administrations with the technical skills necessary to formulate and implement solutions for public service challenges. Moreover, the center offers training to Somali professionals who have the desire and passion to join the public sector as well as professionals engaged in the civil service and non-profit sectors.

RESEARCH OUTPUTS AND PUBLICATIONS

2022 was a very productive year for Somali Public Agenda (SPA). SPA conducted and published various extensive studies. We published 3 research reports, 4 policy papers, 3 governance briefs, and 5 commentaries. SPA produced joint research reports with other think tanks – Rift Valley Institute (RVI) & the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in 2022. We also introduced policy papers as a new type of publication.

Research Report

During 2022, SPA produced three reports.



Turkey's Role in Public Service and Infrastructural Development in Mogadishu

The first report was published on March 30, 2022. It investigated Turkey's Role in Public Service and Infrastructural Development in Mogadishu. Although Somalia has experienced interventions from multiple actors, Turkish involvement stands out and is evident in Mogadishu. After it helped reduce the severity of the humanitarian catastrophe, it turned to other means that can make the conflict and famine-prone country leapfrog the misery and transition to stability. It gave a large number of fully-funded scholarships to Somali students at all levels of education. Turkish organizations, formal and informal, were involved in cleaning the garbage and debris piled on Mogadishu streets and followed on by the reconstruction of a 23-kilometer road that brought back the cleanliness of the city and has made the traffic and business along these reconstructed roads possible. Turkish organizations opened schools both for-profit and non-for-profit and hospitals such as Erdogan and Yardimili hospitals. Besides these, Turkish has enterprises in construction, furniture, and other sectors. However, the Turkish presence is limited to Mogadishu where its presence area is felt by Mogadishu residents who are the primary beneficiaries of the aid and services provided by the Turkish organizations.

The Role of Religious Actors in Contemporary Somali Politics: Key Dynamics and Opportunities for Engagement

The second report was published on September 8, 2022. SPA carried out the study in partnership with the Rift Valley Institute. The study focused on the Role of Religious Actors in Contemporary Somali Politics: Key Dynamics and Opportunities for Engagement. The study concluded that religious organizations – and the leaders associated with them – have for a long time wielded considerable influence on, and been intermeshed with, Somalia's political landscape. These groups are fluid and dynamic, sometimes acting in opposition to each other and often operating as loose networks rather than as clear organizational blocs. Likewise, since the collapse of the Somali state in 1991, religious organizations have demonstrated strong staying power when compared with the rapidly changing mosaic of non-faith-based actors. In so doing, they have acted as a source of institutional stability in Somalia. There is also a widely-held and somewhat cynical, belief amongst mainly Western actors that Somalis employ religion mainly as an instrument for personal gain. This is coupled with a broader skepticism regarding the interaction of religion and politics, which have become largely separated in secular Western societies, at times leading to ill-conceived policies.

Data sharing and third-party monitoring in humanitarian response

The third report of 2021 was published on September 15, 2022. The study was conducted in partnership with the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI). The study examined data sharing and third-party monitoring in humanitarian response. The study found, among others, that data risks relating to TPM mirror wider patterns of risk around data sharing in the humanitarian sector. While this process introduces new external (often for-profit) actors into humanitarian activity, the main risks to aid users and to humanitarian activity that emerges are the same as those of the wider sector. Issues of data responsibility, trust, well-being, and meaningful consent remain, though with specific inflections tied to the nature and conditions of the activity. This commonality indicates the potential value of sharing lessons learned on data risks and their mitigation across different actors and areas of activity in the humanitarian sector. Risks to the safety and well-being of those involved in TPM (including aid recipients, data enumerators, humanitarian organizations, and funders) do not relate solely to data sharing. There is insufficient attention paid to wider risks that are often heightened at the point of data collection. Since TPM is often justified on the grounds of the unacceptably high-security risks to programme staff, risks are often carried by actors at the local level, including data enumerators and aid users themselves.

Policy Papers

Policy papers are a new addition to the SPA's publication sets introduced in 2022. During this period, SPA produced 4 policy papers. The four policy papers zoomed in on issues that are of particular significance for Somalia's policy-making institutions. SPA published three of the four papers in partnership with the Somali Dialogue Platform.



Revitalizing the negotiation of contentious political issues: Key considerations going forward

The first policy paper was published on September 2, 2022, in partnership with the Somali Dialogue Platform. The paper honed in on revitalizing the negotiation of contentious political issues: Key considerations going forward. The paper argues that the start of a new political cycle presents a fresh opportunity for Somalis to address the contentious issues obstructing the country's path toward a more stable and prosperous post-conflict future. This can build off the successful conclusion of a meeting between FGS and FMS leaders on 12 June, which took place soon after the election of President Hasan Sheikh Mohamud. This can be achieved through a careful revival, enhancement, and institutionalization of effective and inclusive political negotiation and dialogue mechanisms. This paper outlined several options to support these objectives, including considerations for how to design an effective negotiation architecture, as well as an outline of key thematic areas on which to focus dialogue.

Options for allocating powers in Somalia's federal system

The second paper was published on September 10, 2022, in partnership with the Somali Dialogue Platform. It paid its attention to options for allocating powers in Somalia's federal system. The paper contended that the absence of agreement on the distribution of powers has contributed to conflict and tension between different levels of government, especially the FGS and FMS. In October 2017, for example, disputes over Somalia's foreign relations – on which the Provisional Federal Constitution is ambiguous – fed into emerging conflict when five FMS established the Council of Inter-State Cooperation, before going on to suspend relations with the FGS the following year. Other areas of tension related to power allocation center around the distribution of international aid and the role of the FGS and FMS in education. Such tensions have contributed to wider struggles between the FGS and FMS. Reaching clarity on the allocation of powers in Somalia's federal model

is, therefore, a critical priority when it comes to advancing the country's post-conflict trajectory. To achieve this, meaningful and inclusive political dialogue on the allocation of powers is essential.

Policy options for resolving the status of Mogadishu

The third paper was published on September 14, 2022, in partnership with the Somali Dialogue Platform. The paper was carried out to look for policy options for resolving the status of Mogadishu. To stimulate renewed dialogue on the issue, the Somali Dialogue Platform and Somali Public Agenda (SPA) have produced this policy paper outlining options for resolving Mogadishu's status. The product has been developed in consultation with a range of technical experts and political influencers as part of the Platform's 'F2O' initiative, which collaboratively explores solutions to contentious issues in Somalia's political settlement. The paper was intended to serve as a tool for Somalia policymakers and the wider public.

Decentralized but contested: Examining the federal government's decentralization of educational services in Mogadishu to the Benadir Regional Administration

The fourth paper was published on November 20, 2022. This paper looked into the federal government's decentralization of the Benadir educational services to the Benadir Regional Administration. This study has found that due to the decentralization, the BRA Education Directorate now administers over 600 schools, both private and public in the Benadir region with approximately three thousand students. It is responsible for the grade 8 examination and certification and collects and stores Benadir region education data in its Educational Management Information System (EMIS). The education decentralization to Benadir Regional Administration has achieved some success. Nonetheless, the implementation of the MoU has not gone smoothly. It has been beset by problems mainly stemming from public school expenditure and administration. The dispute continues unresolved though parties have made unsuccessful efforts to bring it to an end. The study recommends, inter alia, that the incumbent FGS administration establish legitimate and accountable administration through forming an elected local council that in turn will elect a mayor and governor; that the parties of MoU undertake a review of the MoU to further clarify the provisions that invited the existing ambiguity; and that FGS to allocate an appropriate budget for BRA to cover public schools' expenditure.

Governance Briefs

In 2021, SPA published three important governance briefs that focused on different issues demanding the current attention of both think tanks and policymakers. These briefs gave attention to the yet unresolved Gedo dispute, the federal government's 2022 budget, and the raise of Ciyaal Weero (youth gangs) in some districts of the Benadir region.



Greed or Grievances: The Gedo Conundrum

The first governance brief of the year was published on April 28, 2022, and focused on the continuing deadlock in Gedo. Gedo region has recently become the contested focal point of Somali political debate. Garbaharey, the capital city of the Gedo region, was designated as the site of the election of 16 lower house seats. However, the Federal Election Implementation Team (FEIT) issued a letter changing this constituency to Ceelwaaq on 14 April 2022, the same day the majority of the members of the 11th parliament were sworn-in in Mogadishu. A parallel process produced 32 MPs elected in Ceelwaaq and Garbaharey. Before the beginning of the indirect federal parliamentary elections in Somalia, Gedo became a key arena for political squabbling between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and Jubaland. Although the region falls under the jurisdiction of Jubaland, only one district in Gedo (Ceelwaaq) is currently controlled by Jubaland authority. This brief examines how Gedo became a key battleground for the center-periphery rift in Somalia's federal politics. It investigates FGS control of Gedo, the complications and challenges surrounding the holding of elections in Gedo, and the triggers of the dispute. Following his arbitrary decision by the federal government while on visits to Adaleh, the FGS moved quickly to force control of the Gedo region (International Crisis Group, 2022). A delegation of district commissioners of the Gedo region led by Ishmael Abdullahi Garbah, the son of the late General Garbah, met with several relatives with Adaleh and they had agreed to comply with the government in Mogadishu and authorize the federal army to enter in FGS. But there was no inclusive administration. Garbah later passed away and the federal government would not authorize Garbah's relative, Adaleh's, security forces in the region, and no inclusive administration was formed. On May 28, 2022, the federal government changed all of the district regional governor after gaining a firm grip on the region. This is with the exception of Garbaharey which has been under Adaleh's control since the only district in the Gedo region controlled by Adaleh. The government now needs to be the federal government's ally of Adaleh's administration. However, the federal government has been to legitimate its political appointment.

Reviewing the Federal Government of Somalia's 2022 near billion-dollar budget: development priorities and donor dependence

The second brief was published on July 27, 2022, and it analyzed the federal government of Somalia's 2022. The federal government of Somalia's budget for 2022 was approved by the parliament in a joint session on 30 June 2022. This approval would ideally come in the last week of December last year. However, due to the protracted indirect elections,

the budget approval process was delayed for six months. The 2022 budget totals \$929.9 million, a 72 percent increase on last year's \$671 million. Although the theme of this year's budget is 'Reliance on our domestic revenue', 73.2 percent of the budget (\$694.7 million) is expected from donors through project support (\$485.5 million or 52 percent) and budget support (\$209.2 million or 22 percent). 34.8 percent of the budget goes to social service delivery; 18.3 percent goes to defense and security sector institutions, while 8.9 percent was allocated to economic development institutions. Although the annual government budget has progressively increased by around \$816 million over the past 9 years, more than half of the budget (52 percent of the total budget) is made up of donor-funded projects. This brief examines the 2022 federal government budget for security, social services, and economic development and puts forward policy considerations.

The Rise of Youth Gangs (Ciyaal Weero) in Mogadishu

The third governance brief was published on October 27, 2022. It particularly raised and analyzed the rise of Ciyaal Weero in some neighborhoods in the Benadir region that caused problems for the people. Youth gangs (aged between 15 and 35 years) – known as Ciyaal Weero – emerged in Mogadishu's periphery districts in late 2021. The gangs use small and light weapons as well as pistols (and bright torches to shine in people's eyes) and sometimes bajaj (tuk-tuks) to rob people, mostly at night. Unemployment, the use of drugs, and weak local government are seen as the main causes of the rise of Ciyaal Weero. The powerless judicial system, communications technology, social media, and the use of out-of-court settlements are also believed to have contributed to the rise of Ciyaal Weero in the Somali capital. Although the police forces launched the 'Samakaab' operation against Ciyaal Weero, the government has not yet managed to reduce the threat of the youth gangs. Since its emergence, Ciyaal Weero have killed people in Mogadishu including teachers and students, and limited the mobility of people in the peripheral districts of Mogadishu. This governance brief examines the factors that contributed to the rise of Ciyaal Weero, their impact on security and mobility in Mogadishu, and puts forward some policy considerations including control of the import of drugs, development of a government strategy to tackle the youth gangs, and the creation of job opportunities.

Commentaries

SPA published four commentaries in 2022 and these are as follows:

1. Whose Security? A Tale of Three Cities in Mogadishu
2. New president, familiar problems: Can Hassan Sheikh Mohamud get it right the second time?
3. Decentralization of Essential Public Health Services to the Benadir Regional Administration: Status, Achievements and Challenges
4. Milking the Somali government: the politics of the status quo
5. COP27 outcomes and their implications for Somalia

PROGRAMMES AND CENTERS

SPA Policy Lab

The SPA Policy Lab (previously the SPA Center for Public Policy and Service Design between August 2020 and August 2022) is an action tank at Somali Public Agenda (SPA). The Policy Lab was established with the mission to help Somalia's public and civic institutions design human-centered, evidence-based interventions and services using context-specific design tools and primary data.

Somalia's governance system has been recovering over the past decade following the protracted civil war in 1991. Government institutions that provide public services have been reinstated gradually. However, the capacities of public institutions in designing sound policies and delivering effective public services are restricted due to the shortage of human capital, limited financial resources, and security fragility. Moreover, the formation of policies and provision of services in creative ways that particularly suit the citizens are rare in Somalia's public sector. Most policies and service provisions are framed in line with the donors' priorities and interests since more than half of the government budget is subsidized by donors through project support.

Besides, Somalia is provided billions of dollars of official development assistance, most of which is received through projects implemented by international organizations. However, the projects are designed mainly by foreign professionals who often lack the knowledge and understanding of the actual needs of the local population. Therefore, the SPA Policy Lab, with its partners, diverse staff of design researchers, strategists, and network of experts, has been established to help design innovative, and easy-to-implement interventions and services by Somalia's public and civic institutions and as well as international organizations.

For the design of policies and services, the SPA Policy Lab formed a consortium partnership with the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) in 2022 to design human-centered, evidence-based interventions for the displacement-affected communities in Somalia. The Lab has also partnered with Interpeace in conducting a human-centered and evidence-based transitional justice intervention for the local community in Galkayo.

The Policy Lab has also contacted organizations engaged in design work and successfully convinced them to collaborate on design issues and share experiences. It is expected that some organizations, like the Public Policy Lab based in New York, will cooperate with the SPA Policy Lab in developing design skills and sharing design tools and information. In addition to partnering with like-minded organizations, the SPA Policy Lab has connected with several Somali government institutions and explored ways to co-design interventions and services with them including the Durable Solutions Unit of the FGS Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development.

The Lab also works to expand Somalia's knowledge and information on policy and service design among citizens, policymakers, and international actors. As a result, in 2022, the director of the SPA Policy Lab has written a reflection about the work of the lab in the past one and a half years and discussed how running this new and distinctive institution is both challenging and exciting, and how knowledge about policy design is dynamic and needs constant updating.

Centre for Learning and Development

The Center for Learning and Development is a training and capacity development facility run by Somali Public Agenda (SPA). It aims to train civil servants, policymakers, youth, and non-profit sector workers by providing them with the technical skills necessary to engage, formulate and implement solutions to public service challenges. The Center was established in August 2020 to help breach the capacity-building gap in public service. The Center for Learning and Development offers short training courses to help develop skilled and knowledgeable civil society, youth, and civil servants who can contribute to the discussions of key public policies and programmes. Since its inception, the Center for Learning and Development has designed and delivered vital training for Somali youth to enhance their skills.

In 2022, the center provided two slots of training pieces to young trainees in January and July 2022. For the January-February training, 72 applicants applied for the training and after a screening process, 25 candidates were shortlisted who met the requirement for the training. Of the 25 shortlisted candidates, 14 trainees attended and successfully completed the one-month training. The training required each trainee to write 4 mandatory blog posts and publish each one on his/her own blog site after going through a review process. Consequently, trainees published 56 blogs.



Similarly, in the July-August training piece, 42 candidates applied for the training but 25 applicants were shortlisted. 16 trainees committed to the training and successfully finished it. During the 4-week training, trainees published 64 blogs; 4 blogs for each trainee, which was the minimum threshold required from each trainee to satisfactorily complete the training. These blogs touched on a wide range of human stories and related topics.



Further, the Center for Learning and Development invited and brought 8 mentors (4 for each training piece) to work with the trainees. Mentors were invited considering their experiences in blogging and each mentor met with the trainees for one hour a week and shared their blogging history, experiences, and tips on how trainees can improve their blogging skills and communicate impactful messages to the concerned audience.

After trainees completed each of the training pieces, the Center awarded trainees with competition certificates and urged them to sustain the habit of blogging as a gateway for engaging in complex and advanced writing exercises.

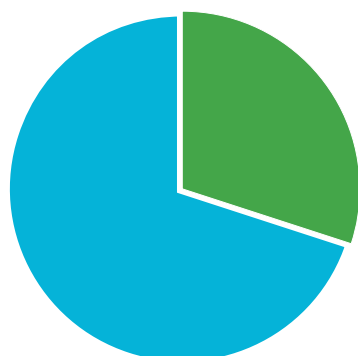
Public Agenda Forum

The Public Agenda Forum is a platform and space for discussions on governance and public service issues in Somalia. The Forum serves as an avenue for critical examinations of issues of public priority. Different segments of society, including researchers, policymakers, and practitioners, are invited to meet and discuss issues on equal terms. Often, the findings of the forum discussions help inform Somali Public Agenda's governance briefs.



The year 2022 was a successful year for the Public Agenda Forum, and a record number of forums were held. The PAF held six Gaxwo & Gorfeyn monthly meet-ups, in which diverse groups of people participated. We usually hold such forums at the end of each month to create a space for healthy discussion and for people to talk and exchange ideas about a trending issue that month. Moreover, we held seven Public Service Series forums, where we focused on the issues of public services and good governance in Mogadishu. Additionally, we held two forums for some Somali Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Mogadishu and other regions to support the CSOs on how they can incorporate their advocacy plans and activities with evidence-based research to better influence policymakers and amplify their messages. In addition, we hosted the launch of reports attended by policymakers and public figures, as well as two Twitter Space discussions.





Gaxwo & Gorfeyn Monthly Meet-ups Participation by Gender

 Male 70%  Female 30%

In 2022, we formed a collaboration with International Media Support (IMS) and Urur-Kaab to organize forums. The number of forums and forum participants set a new record. We held a record-setting 19 forums (including two virtual discussions) and nearly half a thousand participants attended our in-person forums in the past year. 115 (31 females and 84 males) attended our Gaxwo & Gorfeyn monthly meet-ups, while 221 attended our Public Service Series forums (89 females and 132 males); 78 participants (25 females and 53 males) attended other physical forums. On the other hand, 317 participants attended our Twitter Spaces, which makes the total number of participants 783 persons, both physical and virtual.

Public Service Series Forums Participation by Gender



Different issues were discussed in these forums, including elections, the new government's priorities, droughts, floods, security operations, and public services in Mogadishu such as education, health, security, employment, housing, transportation, and documentation.



Internships

In mid-2020, Somali Public Agenda started a 3-months internship programme aimed to give valuable experience in research and writing to recent university graduates and current students in the last year of their studies.

In 2022, four interns (two male and two female) completed three-month internships. The interns contributed to the different SPA departments and research productions. The internship provides much-needed experience for recent university graduates. The three interns wrote reflections (published on the SPA website) about their internship experiences. The reflection of the fourth intern was published in early 2022.



Furthermore, SPA provided 50 hours of internship opportunities to 4 interns (two female and two male) as part of their university graduation requirement. Since we started the internship programme in July 2020, over 15 interns have graduated from the scheme. A separate SPA internship alumni WhatsApp group was created in 2022 to strengthen the connection between the interns as well as the interns and SPA. An annual internship alumni dinner was also started in 2022. The annual meeting is an opportunity to get our internship alumni to know each other and to reflect on their internship experiences.

Podcasts

In 2022, we were able to produce 22 podcast episodes. Maamul Wanaag Podcast was launched on 23 August 2021 and produced 3 episodes last year. The Maamul Wanaag Podcast delves deep into various governance matters in Somalia. In 2022, Maamul Wanaag Podcast produced 18 podcast episodes. The guests of the Maamul Wanaag Podcast broadly discussed and analyzed governance topics including Mogadishu's status, power allocation, fiscal federalism, national security architecture, elections, petroleum resources, and transitional justice. The Maamul Wanaag Podcast was downloaded by 2719 times. The top three were the historical legacies of Somalia's governance system with historian Lee Cassanelli, power allocation with Ahmed Abass and Omar Dhagey, and the historical legacy of the Italian administration with Mohamed Haji Mukhtar.

SPA also launched Adeeg Wanaag Podcast on October 1st, 2022. Adeeg Wanaag intensely discusses public service matters in Somalia. The 4 episodes released in 2022 discussed access to education and healthcare, the rise of ciyaal weero, and durable solutions for the displaced community. Adeeg Wanaag Podcast episodes were downloaded close to 450 times in 2022.

SPA PODCASTS



MAAMULWANAAG

All Podcasts
TOP 50%
Downloads
2,886
Countries
64
Episodes
18
Minutes
673



ADEEG WANAAG

All Podcasts
TOP 50%
Downloads
925
Countries
41
Episodes
5
Minutes
254

Overall, in 2022, our two podcasts were downloaded and listened to over 3,150 times. Since its introduction in mid-2019, our podcasts have been downloaded over 6,700 times. Moreover, our podcast studio was refurbished in 2022. Video recording of the podcasts is expected to be started in early 2023.

OUTREACH AND IMPACT

SPA's online audience has increased in 2022. We maintained a good relationship with the media. We were regularly interviewed by many international and local media outlets. BBC, VOA, Goobjoog, and Kalfadhi were some of the media houses that regularly interviewed or invited our team members to participate in debates.

Our researchers and analysts were invited and presented our work at forums and conferences including the Greater Horn Horizon Forum (GHHF), ReDSS learning forums, the Costs of War Conference organized by Brown University, and the HIPS Annual Forum for Ideas held in Djibouti.

Our audience and outreach increased in 2022. Our website was redesigned and the Search Engine Optimization (SEO) of our work was advanced. Our Twitter followers increased to 7,252 from 5700 in 2021. Our Facebook page followers increased from 30,000 in 2021 to close to 33,500 followers in 2022. The number of followers of our LinkedIn page significantly increased from 910 in 2021 to 2,690 followers in 2022. We also created a new TikTok account, which has 480 followers.

The SPA podcasts also significantly increased in 2022. 22 podcasts were produced. Our podcasts were downloaded over 3,150 times in 2022.

Our work also shaped policy-making in Somalia in 2022. Most of the recommendations of our joint policy paper with the Somali Dialogue Platform titled 'Revitalizing the negotiation of contentious political issues: Key considerations going forward' were used by the National Consultative Council (NCC). Our election observation work in the Benadir region injected some level of transparency and accountability into the indirect elections.

In 2022, two of our team members published reflections about their work. Mahad wrote a reflection on his frightening experience in Beledweyne in early October. Aweis wrote a reflection on his experience working at SPA Policy Lab in September. In addition, four interns – Hinda (January), Naima (June), Adam (July), and Ibrahim (November) – wrote and published reflection blog posts on their internship experiences with Somali Public Agenda. These blogs were published on the SPA website and were shared with the growing SPA social media followers.

Most of the feedback we received on our 2022 publications has been positive. We received favorable and encouraging feedback from different segments of society. Somali Public Agenda published papers on contentious political issues. The feedback we received was positive and highlighted the objectivity of our analysis. SPA is not affiliated with any political association, and its employees are determined to produce high-quality, evidence-based, and balanced analyses on crucial governance and service delivery issues in Somalia.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

In 2022, we strengthened our collaborative partnerships and working relations with several institutions. We continued our partnership with the Rift Valley Institute's Somali Dialogue Platform on research and engagement related to contentious political issues in Somalia. The Somali Dialogue Platform (Madasha Wadahadallada Somaaliyeed) is a programme implemented by the Rift Valley Institute to facilitate agreement amongst Somalis on contentious political issues.

We have also maintained a working relationship with international NGOs including Interpeace and International Media Support (IMS). SPA's Policy Lab collaborated with Interpeace on designing a transitional justice intervention for the community in Gaalkacyo. SPA also received support from the International Media Support and held seven Public Service Series forums in 2022. We produced commentaries, governance briefs, and podcasts from the Public Service Series discussions.

In 2022, we also started a new working relationship with new institutions including the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS), Life and Peace Institute (LPI), Research and Evidence Facility (REF), Urur Kaab, and Tana Copenhagen. The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) supported a study on fiscal and service decentralization in Somalia in 2022.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Somali Public Agenda's financial status has been growing for the last five years. In 2022, Somali Public Agenda earned an income mainly in research from various institutions. In addition, Somali Public Agenda secured project-based funding from the Rift Valley Institute's Somali Dialogue Platform (RVI-SDP), the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), International Media Support (IMS), Creative Associates International, SOAS University of London, Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and Finish Consulting Group (FCG Sweden).

Following the 2021 Audit's recommendations, Somali Public Agenda emphasized strengthening the organization's overall financial stability as well as its cash management, procurement, and logistics procedures.

In all aspects of the organization's financial operations, SPA strictly adheres to transparency and accountability standards. As a result, we prevailed in a recently completed external audit conducted by an auditing firm.

We intend to improve the efficiency and standard compliance of our financial system in 2023 by developing our financial and accounting systems.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Through the Human Resources department, in 2022, SPA hired seven employees and trained eight interns. In general, SPA accommodates 17 full-time staff and an intern. To ensure operational effectiveness and transparency, SPA follows a set of HR policies and procedures that comply with the local and international laws of labor rights and workplace well-being.

In 2022, SPA's HR department conducted a staff assessment, covering overall courses for developing their areas of research and writing. Moreover, SPA has received a scholarship for two researchers from the Rift Valley Institute (RVI). The researchers will write a full research paper after the completion of the 6-monthlong research training by March 2023, which is planned to be published by RVI.

Two SPA researchers also attended the RVI Horn of Africa Course in Naivasha, Kenya, in 2022 as part of our mission to build the capacity of our staff. The course provided insights and analysis on politics, economy, society, and culture in the Horn of Africa region. The course also provided the opportunity to interact with other researchers in the Horn.

In terms of policies and procedures, we developed utility and property policies to ensure that employees have the tools and equipment they need to do their jobs while protecting the organization's assets.

With the increasing challenges of work-life balance and the relatively risky environment that Somali researchers in general and SPA researchers in particular work under, the organization sees that it is important to focus on this staff safety and well-being. Therefore, the department will focus more on mental well-being programs for the staff and will continue the staff capacity-building efforts. Also, the department plans to implement a health insurance policy in 2023.

2023 PROJECTIONS AND PRIORITIES

As we enter our sixth year, we are looking forward to producing quality research output, creating space for discussion on national issues, offering training, and helping public institutions design human-centered public services.

Our work in 2023 will focus on the following thematic issues:

- 1.Public participation in political processes
- 2.Fiscal and service decentralization
- 3.Civil service reform
- 4.Local council formation
5. Reconciliation
- 6.Durable solutions
- 7.Transitional justice
- 8.Climate change, and
- 9.Education.

The Public Agenda Forum will continue the Gaxwo iyo Gorfeyn series. We will also plan to convene 9 forums in 2023, one every 45 days. We are also planning to convene closed-door discussions with policy-makers. We will convene some forums on Twitter spaces.

The Center for Learning and Development will continue the bi-annual blog writing training. The Center will start qualitative research training in 2023. It will also prioritize developing training materials for public servants, convene the annual SPA Internship Alumni gathering, engage and train civil servants, and create a roster of trainers and mentors.

The SPA Policy Lab plans to develop design tools for its policy and service design work. These tools will be tailored for designing policies and services for the government as well as localizing projects designed and run by international organizations. The SPA Policy Lab also plans to design and pilot transitional justice and durable solutions-related interventions in 2023. The Lab will also produce several briefs and commentaries on policy design-related issues to expand Somalia's knowledge and information on policy and service design.

SPA will continue the two podcast programmes (Maamul Wanaag & Adeeg Wanaag) and will introduce a video version for some podcasts. We will aim to produce a podcast from our publications and invite guests to our podcasts on key governance and social service matters.

APPENDICES

Staff

Mahad Wasuge, Executive Director

Farhan Isak Yusuf, Deputy Executive Director, Director of SPA Center for Learning and Development

Sadia Ma'ow, Finance and Administration Officer

Farhia Mohamud, HR Officer and Researcher

Qamar Osman, Cash and Logistics Officer

Mohamed Isack Ahmed, Researcher

Aweis Ahmed, Director of SPA Policy Lab

Hassan Guled, Researcher and Communications Officer

Mohamed Adam, Forums Coordinator and Researcher

Naima Hussein, Research Assistant

Fellows

Peter Chonka, Lecturer in Global Digital Cultures at King's College London (UK)

Mohamud Garre, Director of Research and Head of Department for Social Work at City University of Mogadishu

Partha Moman, Team Leader, Platform for Political Dialogue, Somalia

Tobias Hagmann, associate professor of international development at Roskilde University in Denmark

Sahra Ahmed Koshin, the Founder and Director of the Somalia Gender Hub and the Puntland Women Writers Association

Ahmed Muse, a postdoctoral researcher at the Diaspora Humanitarianism in Complex Crises research project

Lisa Rudnick, a strategic design consultant and Principal and Head of Research at The Policy Lab.

Derek B. Miller, the Director of The Policy Lab®

Abdihakur Hassan, founder and lead consultant of Abyane, an Urban & Geospatial consulting firm based in Somalia

Mohamed Abdimalik, data journalist and founder of Jaantus

Board of Advisors

Zainab Mohamed Hassan, Founder & Chairwoman of the Somalia Gender Equity Movement (SGEM)

Ahmed Yusuf, Former Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor for Somalia's National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC)

Ahmed Elmi, an Independent Senior Strategist, and Private Sector Development Specialist

Hodan Hassan, the executive director of Kulan Consulting



 somalipubagenda

 somalipubagenda

 somalipubagenda

 somalipubagenda

 somalipubagenda



www.somalipublicagenda.org
info@somalipublicagenda.org