



Somalia Rural Development Center

Strategic Vision



Welcome to Somalia Rural Development Centre (SRDC)

Somalia Rural Development Centre (SRDC) is an internationally registered non-profit organization founded by Somali scholars, practitioners, community leaders, and policymakers with a shared vision to enhance the lives and the livelihoods of Somalia rural communities. This collaborative approach ensures diverse perspectives and expertise in addressing rural development challenges. SRDC focuses on restoring the livelihoods of rural communities, poverty alleviation, food security, and building resilience against chronic droughts and frequent climate-related shocks. Through its platform, SRDC facilitates dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge exchange among stakeholders, fostering a conducive environment for collective actions, and promoting peace and stability within the rural communities. SRDC also monitors trends and issues affecting rural areas and promoting best management practices for sustainable rural development. SRDC is committed to work collaboratively with Federal, State, and local Governments, as well as International Development Organizations to restore the livelihoods of rural communities.

SRDC promotes innovative solutions to restore the livelihoods of Somalia rural communities, including:

- **Local Economic Development** - food security and poverty alleviation through economic development by enabling and supporting small farmers and producers, promoting local economic development and small-scale agri-business enterprises to generate income and employment opportunities.
- **Climate Change Resilience** - building resilience against climate change through proactive climate-smart solutions including sustainable land management practices, water and nature conservation, restoring degraded lands and biodiversity, promoting conservation agriculture practices, affordable energy solutions, establishing early warning system to reduce impacts and risks.
- **Governance & Institutions** - good governance is a critical for the rule of the law, trust of public institutions, and effective public service delivery. SRDC aims to enhance the capacity and the skills of local leaders, and administrators to enable them to plan, execute and evaluate development initiatives.
- **Youth Employment & Entrepreneurship** - The country's economy is not creating enough jobs for young people entering into the labor market. Despite the increased youth unemployment in urban centers, the rural economy has tremendous employment opportunities for young people. SRDC is committed to engage youth (boys and girls) in agriculture entrepreneurship through vocational skill development, mentoring, facilitating access to micro-finance and other resources.



Somalia Rural Communities at Glance

Somali rural communities are facing a complex and multifaceted challenge. The combination of climate change, environmental degradation, political conflicts, and social instability has created a dreadful humanitarian crisis with severe consequences, specifically in rural areas.

More than 2.5 million of rural people are internally displaced in major urban centers. Acute food insecurity, malnutrition, and widespread poverty are the emerging trend facing rural people. The reliance on international food aid for an extended period reflects the chronic nature of the problem and the failure to address the underlying causes effectively. The long-term presence of displaced camps without proper education and skill development opportunities for children perpetuates cycles of poverty and unemployment, posing a significant threat to the country's stability. The inadequate provision of basic services in overcrowded displaced camps further compounds the challenges, leading to increased risks of disease outbreaks and social problems.

Despite decades of humanitarian aid efforts, raises questions about the effectiveness and sustainability of the current humanitarian aid. It is crucial to critically examine the impact of foreign food aid on the social, economic, and political dynamics of the country. While immediate food assistance is essential in emergency situations, it is equally important to address the root causes of poverty, hunger, and starvation in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.

Although factors such as the occupation by Al-Shabab contribute to the challenges faced by rural communities, it is evident that even in relatively safe states like Somaliland and Puntland, similar issues persist. This suggests that a broader approach is needed, beyond just addressing security concerns, to tackle the underlying socio-economic and environmental factors that perpetuate poverty and food insecurity.

Addressing the crisis in Somali rural communities requires a holistic and integrated approach that encompasses long-term development strategies, conflict resolution, environmental sustainability, and building resilient communities. Collaboration between the Somali government, UN agencies, international NGOs, and regional actors is crucial to developing comprehensive solutions and ensuring that the assistance provided is effective, sustainable, and addresses the root causes of the crisis. Investing in sustainable development is crucial for breaking the cycles of poverty, hunger, and displacement in Somali rural communities.



Legacy of Civil War

the recurrent civil conflicts in Somalia since 1991 have had a profound impact on the country's rural population, affecting various aspects of their lives and livelihoods. Here are some key ways in which these conflicts have detrimentally influenced Somalia rural communities.

- 1. Quality of Life:** The persistent conflict has severely compromised the quality of life for rural communities in Somalia. Displacement, disruption of basic services, and the lack of security have led to inadequate access to essential resources such as clean water, sanitation, education, and healthcare.
- 2. Economic Impact:** The ongoing conflicts have disrupted economic activities in rural areas, affecting agriculture, livestock, and other livelihood sources. Insecurity and displacement disrupt farming practices, making it challenging for rural communities to sustain themselves and contribute to broader economic development.
- 3. Social Unrest:** Civil conflicts often result in social instability and unrest. Displacement, communal tensions, and the breakdown of social structures contribute to a sense of insecurity and a lack of social cohesion in rural areas. This can further exacerbate existing challenges and hinder community resilience.
- 4. Climate Change and Land Degradation:** Conflict has exacerbated the impacts of climate change including land degradation, deforestation, soil erosion, overuse of nature resources, and increased social conflicts over scarce resources. All these factors affecting the agricultural productivity of rural areas.
- 5. Humanitarian Crises:** The combination of conflict, displacement, and disruptions to essential services creates humanitarian crises in rural communities. Food insecurity, malnutrition, and the spread of diseases become more prevalent, posing significant challenges to the overall well-being of the population.
- 6. Impact on Livelihoods:** Rural livelihoods, often dependent on agriculture and pastoralism, are severely impacted by conflict and climate change. Livestock, a key asset for many rural families, may be lost or become difficult to manage due to insecurity and displacement.
- 7. Access to Education:** Conflict disrupts education systems, making it difficult for children in rural areas to access regular schooling. Displacement and the destruction of educational infrastructure further hinder educational opportunities for the younger generation.
- 8. Human Rights Abuses:** Civil conflicts are often accompanied by human rights abuses, including displacement, violence against women and minorities. Rural populations may be disproportionately affected, leading to a heightened sense of vulnerability and injustice.

Addressing these challenges requires not only efforts to bring about peace and stability but also comprehensive strategies for post-conflict reconstruction, economic development, and social cohesion. International assistance and cooperation, along with a commitment to addressing the root causes of the conflict, are essential for rebuilding the lives of Somalia's rural population and fostering sustainable development.



Rationale for Rural Development Priorities

The rationale for rural development priority is rooted in the recognition that sustainable and inclusive development must encompass rural areas. About 49% of the population still live in rural areas, and about 46% of employed people work in Agriculture sector. The rural economy contribute about 75% of the country's GDP and the generates about 93% of the country's export. Indeed, the rural economy play a pivotal role in the reconstruction of the country's economy, social stability and overall development. The following highlights the rationale for rural development priorities:

- **Food Security** - Rural areas are critical for ensuring food security. Priorities in rural development include initiatives that strengthen the agricultural productivity, value chain, improve storage and distribution systems, and promote sustainable farming practices to ensure a consistent and reliable food supply for both rural and urban populations. The value of food imports reached about \$1.5 billion in 2015, up from an annual average of about \$82 million of the early 1980. The majority of rural people rely on international food aid, while the local production covers only 22% of the country's food demand.
- **Poverty Alleviation:** A significant proportion of the country's population resides in rural areas and depends on agriculture and related activities for their livelihoods. By prioritizing rural development, policymakers aim to alleviate poverty by improving income-generating opportunities, providing access to resources, and enhancing the overall standard of living for rural communities.
- **Agriculture Development** - The World Bank estimated that the potential agriculture growth to reduce poverty is four times greater than the potential growth from other sectors. Agriculture sector produces significant multiplier effects through employment opportunities, income generation, inclusive growth and value-added enterprises. Agriculture development is critical solution to poverty alleviation and food security for the fast growing population of the country.
- **Infrastructure Development:** rural areas in Somalia lack basic infrastructure such as roads, energy, and water supply. As consequence, it is estimated an annual loss of \$20 million in post harvest. Prioritizing rural development involves investing in infrastructure to connect remote areas with urban centers, facilitating the movement of goods and people, and improving overall connectivity and reduce the post harvest loss.
- **Resilience and Environmental Sustainability:** Somalia rural communities are directly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods. Prioritizing rural development involves incorporating sustainable practices to preserve the environment, prevent land degradation, building resilience, and promote conservation efforts.
- **Job Creation:** Rural development initiatives aim to create employment opportunities within rural areas. This includes supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, promoting agribusinesses, and facilitating the growth of local industries to generate income and reduce migration to urban centers.
- **Empowerment of Women:** Women play a crucial role in agriculture and rural economies. Prioritizing rural development involves initiatives that empower women by providing access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, contributing to overall community development.

Rural development is also a solution for the growing internal displaced people in Mogadishu by returning people to their communities and engaging in economic production.



Our Strategic Focus

SRDC will focus on the following interconnected and interrelated strategic priorities to revive Somali rural communities:



Rural Economic Development

The revival of the rural economy is crucial for ensuring food security, employment opportunities, and income generation. Given the significant contribution of the rural economy to the country's GDP, focusing on agricultural and livestock production can address food security, poverty alleviation, and reduce rural exodus. By promoting sustainable farming practices, access to markets, rural investment, and value addition in the agricultural sector, rural communities can harness the potential of their economic activities for their own prosperity and the country's development.

The following are key priority actions to support in reviving rural economic development:

- Empowering small farmers and producers to enhance their capacity, resilience and productivity by providing training, extension services, and best management practices.
- Facilitate access to credit and financial services for small farmers and producers to invest in improved seeds, fertilizers, and equipment.
- Improve transportation and logistics infrastructure to reduce post-harvest losses and facilitate the efficient movement of agriculture products to markets.
- Support and promote small-scale agribusiness enterprises to create diversified and market ready products.
- Promote the formation of agriculture cooperatives and community-based organizations to collectively manage resource pool, share information, and create a vision for their community
- Promote local economic development for small town and villages to create a value-chain for agriculture producers.



Environment & Climate Change

Rural communities in Somalia face significant environmental challenges, including natural disasters and human-induced environmental degradation. Droughts, floods, land degradation, deforestation, soil erosion, and biodiversity loss pose serious threats to livelihoods and exacerbate tribal conflicts over scarce resources. Addressing climate change and implementing environmental conservation measures are crucial for restoring rural livelihoods, ensuring social stability, and reducing conflicts. Climate change adaptation strategies, such as sustainable land and water management practices, can enhance resilience and contribute to long-term sustainability.

The following are key priorities to reduce the risks of climate change impacts:

- Building awareness of risks of climate change, land degradation, flooding impacts, soil erosion, and potential impacts of deforestation, and overuse of natural resources.
- Promoting community-based climate change adaptation strategies including water resource management, harvesting rainwater, conservation agriculture practices, climate-smart solutions, restoring degraded land, planting tree to reduce soil erosion, managing grazing lands, and protecting biodiversity.
- Encourage rural communities to diversify their livelihoods to reduce vulnerability to climate-related shocks.
- Establish early warning system for climate-related events, such as droughts and floods to enable small farmers and producers a timely responses and preparedness.
- Implementing “Nature-Based Solutions” to harness the power of nature (ecosystems) to reduce climate change impacts, including tree planting, protecting and restoring natural water storage systems, rotation of grazing lands, reforestation of degraded lands.





Governance and Institutional Building

Establishing good governance and robust public institutions in rural areas is crucial for sustainable, social equity, and effective service delivery. Somali rural communities have been without functioning public institutions for the past three decades. Until recently, many communities were subject to Al-Shabab rule. With the liberation of many areas from Al-Shabab, rural communities are facing a significant risk of power struggles and inter-tribal warfare. Addressing these risks requires comprehensive approaches to rebuilding and inclusive public institutions.

SRDC is committed to support rural communities by providing:

- Support in capacity building on governance to build an effective and inclusive government structures.
- Facilitate community reconciliation processes to address grievances and foster social cohesion.
- Engage community leaders, traditional elders, and community groups to build trust and promote dialogue.
- Support in implementing projects that promote local economic development to improve living conditions of rural people.
- Support in establishing mechanisms for dispute resolution and access to justice at the community level.
- Support in seeking international support and cooperation for the reconstruction of the local infrastructure including roads, hospitals, schools and water points.
- Conduct civic education programs to inform and empower community members about their rights, responsibilities, and the functional mandate of the local government.

By focusing on these elements, rural communities can establish a foundation for good governance, creating an environment conducive to sustainable development, poverty alleviation, social justice and improved quality of life. These strategies will be tailored to the specific context and needs of each community.

Youth Engagement & Entrepreneurship

Somalia has a youthful population, with a significant percentage (~70%) under the age of 30. The current urban economy is unable to absorb the growing youth labor force. Indeed, youth unemployment is estimated over 70% and many of them are seeking to undertake dangerous migration to other countries. Engaging rural youth in economic activities and entrepreneurship ensures that this demographic group, which represents the future workforce, can actively contribute to the development of the agricultural sector and the overall economy. To harness the full potential of youth engagement in agriculture, SRDC will address barriers such as access to land, access to finance, and provide education and training opportunities that equip young people with the necessary skills and knowledge for successful participation in the agricultural sector.

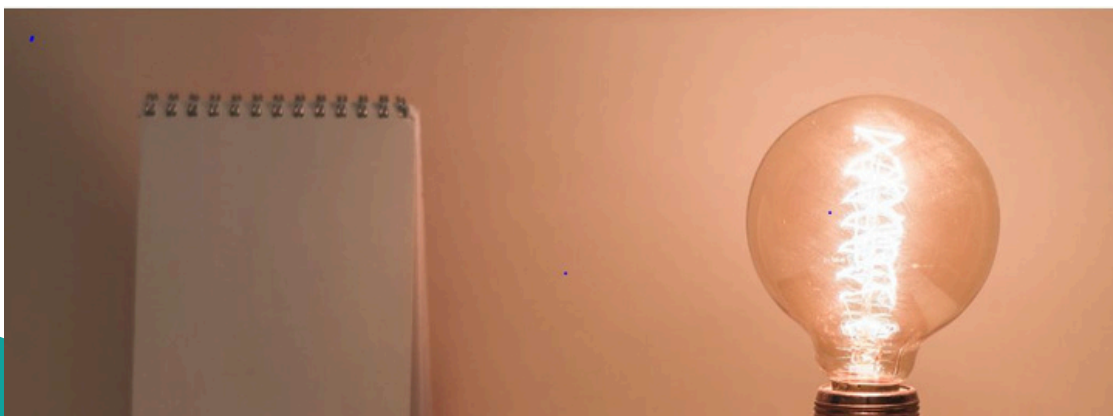


SRDC Consulting Services

While maintaining its non-profit scope, the Somali Rural Development Network will undertake consulting services to generate operational income to support its noble cause of improving the lives and livelihoods of rural people. Globally, it has been acknowledged that engaging consulting services is a strategic way for non-profit organization to diversify their revenue stream and enhance financial sustainability, while staying true to their mission.

Somali Rural Development team has accumulated over 100 years of expertise in managing and delivering development projects. Leveraging this extensive experience can significantly contribute to generate funding to our non-profit initiatives. Specifically, we have proven expertise on the following:

- **Needs Assessment** - conducting a thorough assessment to understand the current challenges and opportunities, and priorities in the target rural areas. This will guide the development investment to be tailored to effective interventions.
- **Program evaluation and Monitoring** - establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the impact of development projects.
- **Capacity Building** - focus on building the capacity of institutions to enable them plan, design and manage development projects. We provide them training and resources that empower them to sustain and expand the benefits of project intervention.
- **Environmental and Social Impact Assessment** for development projects - to ensure that communities and the environment are protected from adverse impacts of the proposed projects. Collaborating with project teams to identify potential environmental and social risk, and develop inclusive strategies to mitigate and offset significant adverse impacts. Our expertise include integrated impact assessment, stakeholders engagement, risk mapping and analysis, and developing mitigation hierarchy - avoid, minimize, rehabilitate and offset impacts.
- **Project Management expertise** - we have extensive experience of providing a total project management for development projects. Our expertise include project planning, design, and implementation in timely delivery.
- **Water Resource Management** - implementing water resource management practices to ensure the conservation and responsible use of water, rainwater harvesting, and watershed planning.
- **Climate change Resilience** - We provide nature -based solutions to reduce the impacts of climate change including climate-smart agriculture, restoration of degraded land, grazing land management, protection and conservation of biodiversity.
- **Community Development and Livelihoods** - we design and implement community development programs that enhance local livelihoods and well-being. This includes skill development, job creations and support for sustainable economic activities.





About Us

Somali Rural Development Centre was established in 1996, by Somali Scholars and practitioners at the University of Guelph, in Canada. As a think tank and community of practices, SRDC aimed to share ideas, information, knowledge to support the promotion of sustainable development for rural areas. Here are some aspects of the initial work of SRDC:

- **Research and Analysis** - facilitated knowledge exchange among rural development practitioners. The object was to explore innovative policies and planning methods to enhance the lives and the livelihoods of rural people. Particular priorities were given to food security solutions, poverty alleviation, sustainable land management, conservation agriculture, water and watershed management, protection of biodiversity, climate-smart solutions, and rural entrepreneurship. The research and analysis work laid the foundation for a holistic and community-centered approach to rural development in Somalia.
- **Convener and collaborator** - organizing forums and conferences where practitioners meet to share information, research findings, best practices and lesson learned. Our aim was to develop a collective vision and understanding of various needs priorities, and perspectives for rural development.
- **Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation** - focusing on climate-smart solutions such as drip irrigation, rainwater harvesting, conservation agriculture practices, grazing land management, restoring and preserving ecosystem, and nature-based solutions to alleviate poverty.
- **Turning knowledge into actions** - in the early 2000, SDRC had undertaking several community-based projects to empower small farmers and producers in peri-urban areas in Mogadishu and Lower Shabelle Region. The work included community-driven collective management of grazing land, restoring degraded land, rainwater harvesting, establishing local cooperatives to restore and management rural roads and other infrastructure, dispute and conflict resolution mechanism. These community-driven solution had successfully filled the gap of government services and created a spirit of collaboration and sense of ownership of common resource pool. The work also enhanced community resilience against the reoccurring droughts and flash floods.

The SRDC work was suspended for many years, because of safety concerns. With the current safety improvements, SRDC will strive to uplift the capacity and productivity of rural communities by promoting sustainable development, climate-smart agriculture solutions, engaging women and youth in economic production, and advocating policies and priorities for rural development. We envision rural development is a solution for the country's food insecurity, poverty alleviation, youth employment and overall wealth creation for the country.

We embrace community-driven solutions and bottom-up approach to enable rural people to own solutions to revive their lives and livelihoods.





Our Vision, Mission & Strategies

Our Vision

We envision a sustainable, resilient, socially stable and economically prosperous Somalia rural communities.

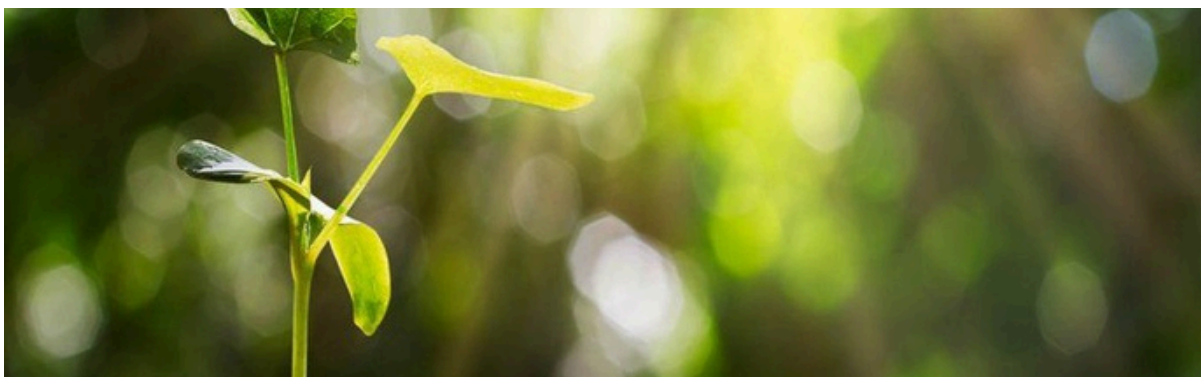
Our Mission

Through community-driven and bottom-up approach, our mission is to enable rural people to restore their lives and livelihoods, become resilient against the growing climate change, capable managers of their natural resources and local institutions, optimize economic productivity and growth and youth engagement.

Our Strategies

The following key strategies will be pursued to achieve the above vision and mission:

- Poverty alleviation through economic development - promoting local economic development, enhance the resilience and productivity of family and small-scale farmers and producers, restoring rural infrastructure, promoting job creations, employment, and entrepreneurship, and engaging youth in economic activities, effective marketing of rural products, promoting small-scale agro-processing enterprise to diversify the rural economy.
- Promoting good governance at local level - is a prerequisite to social stability, inclusive development and economic growth.
- Promoting nature-based solution to mitigate and adapt climate change risks, restore degraded lands, improve water availability and protecting watershed and biodiversity, as well as promoting sustainable use of natural resources and implementing climate-smart solutions to build the resilience of local farmers and producers.
- Food security priorities - enabling women and minority group to have access to land, equipment and necessary support to benefit development initiatives.
- Outreach and communication - act as a proactive and professional knowledge and best practice convener and mobilizer by turning available research into an active asset or business opportunity for rural communities,
- Policy advocacy to support rural development priorities.
- Resettlement of internal displaced people back into their communities.
- Facilitate access to micro-finance and explore creating rural micro-finance institutions.





Our Governance Structure

Governance Structure

SRDC has a two-tier governance founded on the principles of sound governance and effective organizational model.

- **Board of Directors** - responsible for providing strategic oversight, policy formulation, financial oversight, risk management and overall leadership.
- **Executive team** - responsible for operational leadership to implement the strategic vision, develop programs, manage day to day functions to achieve the organizational goals, , monitoring and evaluation and reporting.

Our Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles are our foundational beliefs and values that shape our vision, mission and day-to-day operations. These principles provide a framework for ethical behavior, responsible governance, and effective service delivery:

- **Mission-Driven** - we exist to fulfill a specific mission that is to restore the lives and livelihoods of Somalia rural communities.
- **Integrity and Ethical Conduct** - we uphold high ethical standard in all our interactions and operations.
- **Public Interest** - we exist also to serve public interest and contribute to the well-being of Somalia rural communities.
- **Diversity and Inclusivity** - we embrace diversity and inclusivity in all aspects of our work. We ensure a policy of equal opportunity and equal access and benefit to our programs.
- **Collaborative and partnerships** - we are committed to build and nurture effective partnership to achieve shared goals.
- **Accountability and Transparency** - we are accountable to our stakeholders including donors, beneficiaries and the public. We provide transparent reporting on organizational activities, finance, and outcomes.
- **Continuous learning and improvement** - we foster a culture of learning, adaptation, and continuous improvement.
- **Community Participation** - we are committed to community participation in decision-making process.
- **Privacy and Confidentiality** - we safeguard the privacy confidentiality of individual and organizations served by this organization,

