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The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

APPLIED POLITICAL ECONOMY ANALYSIS REPORT

MANDERA CLUSTER



Kenya's Permanent Secretary for peace and cohesion Mr Hussein Yussuf during a peace dialogue in Bambo village, Lafey sub county, Mandera County.

DISCLAIMER

This report was produced at the request of the Cross-Border Community Resilience (CBCR) Activity implemented by Chemonics and ACDI/VOCA through funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The report was prepared independently by Delta Africa. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the USAID or the United States Government



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FOREWORD

Humanitarian interventions such as the Cross-Border Community Resilience (CBCR) Activity operate within the context of diverse actors with different power positions and interests. If the CBCR Activity is to have an impact and achieve its overall goals of enhancing resilience among the Mandera cross-border communities, it is imperative that the Activity ‘thinks and works politically.’

This Applied Political Economy Analysis (APEA) helps the CBCR Activity and its implementing partners in ‘thinking politically’ or understanding the context in which the Activity will operate, and ‘working politically,’ or understanding how to navigate the risks and take advantage of the opportunities within the context to achieve Activity objectives and results. In so doing, this APEA maps and identifies 1) facilitators and disruptors in the implementation of activities, 2) the most controversial issues / topics (within the scope of the project) in decision making and in the implementation of planned activities, and 3) the windows of opportunity for the project to have an impact on decision-making and implementation. The APEA goes further to explore how the CBCR Activity will interact with the socio-economic and political conflicts in the Mandera cluster.

Overall, the political insights in this APEA are useful for political sensitive programming. The assessment considers the diverse actors within the context of the CBCR Activity, together with their positionalities as either enablers or hindrances to the Activity’s implementation. Hence, this APEA is an instrumental tool for designing programmes across the social cohesion, livelihood and natural resource management (NRM) domains that the CBCR Activity intervenes in.

Jebiwot Sumbeiywo, Chief of Party (CoP),

Cross Border Community Resilience Activity (CBCR).

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to acknowledge the Cross-Border Community Resilience (CBCR) Activity. The Activity valued the importance of having the Applied Political Economy Analysis (APEA) for the Mandera cluster in order to understand the operating context, inform adaptive programming, and understand how to minimize risks while optimizing opportunities within its operating context in order to amplify and achieve results (working politically).

We wish to extend our acknowledgement of the support we received from the County Government of Mandera in Kenya, and district administration officials from Somalia. In particular, we want to thank the government authorities, local communities, religious leaders, politicians and local leaders, community influencers, civil society, youths, and women who participated in the APEA exercise. We appreciate the financial and technical support of the CBCR team, and for entrusting us with the mandate of undertaking the APEA for the Mandera cluster.

ACRONYMS

APEA	Applied Political Economy Analysis
CBCR	Cross-Border Community Resilience Activity
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GESI	Gender, Equity and Social Inclusion
KII	Key Informant Interviews
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CEC	County Executive Committee
ICBT	Informal cross-border trade
PWDs	Persons living With Disability
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents an Applied Political Economy Analysis (APEA) for the Mandera cluster, a region straddling the Kenya-Somalia border, aimed at informing the Cross-Border Community Resilience (CBCR) Activity. The APEA's purpose is to help CBCR understand the political and social context of its operations, identify risks and opportunities, and guide decision-making and implementation processes to achieve its objectives effectively.

The analysis focused on identifying factors that facilitate or disrupt CBCR's activities, controversial issues affecting decision-making, and opportunities to enhance the project's impact. It also examined the socio-economic and political conflicts in the region and their implications for conflict-sensitive programming. The methodology included focus group discussions and key informant interviews across nine locations in the Mandera cluster, engaging a wide range of stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the local context.

The Mandera cluster faces numerous challenges, including marginalization, insecurity due to violent extremism and ethnic conflicts, cyclic droughts, and the recent desert locust invasion. These issues have undermined resilience and exacerbated social and economic vulnerabilities. The report highlights the significant impact of violent extremism, including loss of life, property, and disruption of livelihoods, and notes the efforts of local and national governments and community leaders to address these challenges through security measures, peace agreements, and dispute resolution mechanisms.

Youth radicalization is identified as a critical concern, driven by lack of opportunities, education, and susceptibility to extremist ideologies. The report also discusses the role of gender, noting the particular vulnerabilities of women and girls to traditional roles and exploitation.

Key stakeholders in the CBCR Activity's success include the County Government of Mandera, District Commissioners in the Gedo region of Somalia, clan elders, national government, and local and international organizations. These entities are seen as facilitators of the project through their roles in decision-making, security, and community engagement. Conversely, violent extremist groups, clannism, and mass migration are identified as major disruptors.

The report identifies clannism and perceptions of population transfers as controversial issues affecting decision-making and implementation. It outlines strategies for addressing these challenges, including peace-building initiatives, investment in productive assets and basic services, education programs, and counter-violence extremism strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Africa, cross border clusters have historically suffered from under-investment, and have multiple groups, with less presence of formal governance. This complicates cohesion among the communities inhabiting the borderlands. For example, the communities living in the cross-border towns of Moyale (in Kenya), Karamoja (in Uganda), and Mandera (in Kenya) who often transit across Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, and Somalia's borders are often faced with increased uncertainty due to innumerable external shocks and stressors. Such downside risks include ethnic conflicts, drought, flooding, pest infestations, animal and human diseases, extreme levels of poverty and inequality, and corruption, all of which destabilize communities¹. As a result of these natural calamities, the communities' livelihoods are destroyed and resilience weakened, thus their vulnerability to external stressors and shocks increases.

In response, the Cross-Border Community Resilience (CBCR) Activity, a five-year project implemented by Chemonics International and financed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), was formulated. The Activity aims to build resilience and reduce the need for humanitarian support among communities in the cross-border clusters of Karamoja, Moyale, and Mandera. The Activity focuses on empowering local entities: communities, civil society, private sector, and governments, to chart their own pathways for addressing conflict, improving livelihoods and/or reducing the risks of shocks and stresses. The Activity also fosters local ownership of development investments by supporting local leadership in work planning, implementation, and monitoring. The purpose is to contribute to the resilience of cross-border communities in the Karamoja, Moyale, and Mandera clusters, with the goal of reducing their need for humanitarian support. Overall, the project will:

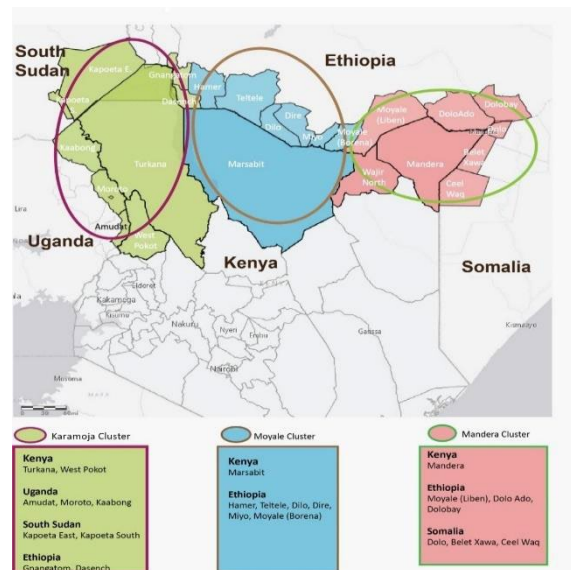


Figure 1: Implementation Areas of the CBCR Activity

- i. Build capacity for locally-led- and -managed programming
- ii. Strengthen social cohesion as a foundation for resilience programming
- iii. Expand conflict-sensitive, inclusive livelihood and employment opportunities in cross-border areas
- iv. Improve conflict-sensitive management and the equitable sharing of natural resources in cross-border areas
- v. Enhance collaboration and learning across all activities and investments, inclusive of cluster stakeholders.

In order to design agile projects that respond to the challenges identified above, the CBCR Activity commissioned an applied political economy analysis (APEA) study in the Mandera cluster (as in other clusters). The overall objective of the APEA was to support the CBCR Activity in a) understanding the

¹ Mixed Migration Centre, 'Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: Q1 2022 East African and Yemen,' 2022, https://mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/229_QMMU_Q1_2022_EAY.pdf (accessed 20 July 2022).

context in which the Activity will operate (or thinking politically), and b) understanding how to navigate risks while optimizing opportunities within its operating context in order to achieve activity objectives and results (working politically). Specifically, the APEA sought to i) identify facilitators and disruptors in the implementation of activities within the scope of the project, ii) identify the most controversial issues/topics within the project's scope that influence decision-making and implementation of the planned activities and, iii) identify opportunities for the project to optimize its impact on decision-making and implementation. The APEA also considered how the CBCR Activity will interact with the socio-economic and political conflicts in the border clusters, as well as the challenges and opportunities that exist for conflict-sensitive programming.

In so doing, the study focused on four main variables or categories of analysis following the USAID APEA framework: 1) structural factors: deeply rooted national, sub-national, and international structures (such as geography, borders with countries that have conflicts, endowments of natural resources, or socio-economic class structures), 2) rules of the game, or the formal and informal rules and norms that determine the quality of the governance system and influence, 3) "Here and now": how current events and circumstances influence the objectives and behavior of key stakeholders, and how they respond to opportunities or impediments to change, and 4) dynamics: interactions between fundamental factors, rules of the game, and here and now, particularly how they affect each other and how they influence and shape the prospects for change.

The APEA also considered Gender, Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) by incorporating gender analysis and mainstreaming aspects. The following strategic gender aspects are incorporated into the research;

- i. Before the assessment, Delta Africa engaged a multi-disciplinary APEA team that mapped stakeholders using the GESI framework.
- ii. Data collection tools were reviewed to ensure that interview questions, structure, and location are GESI sensitive.
- iii. At the assessment/review levels, Delta Africa included a gender marker/indicator to assess the current inclusion of gender mainstreaming by different actors in the Mandera cluster. This was in order to identify barriers affecting GESI in the cluster from a gendered-angle and different opportunities that actors can use to make changes.
- iv. During the finalization/reporting of the APEA, gender components were included to ensure target audiences understand the importance of GESI in their specific programming.

The APEA covered the Mandera cluster, which includes six locations in Kenya: Banissa, Mandera East, Mandera North, Mandera South, Lafey, and Mandera West; and three locations in Somalia: Belet Hawa, El Wak, and Dollow. These locations were strategically selected as they represent the major geographical and administrative units in the Mandera cluster.

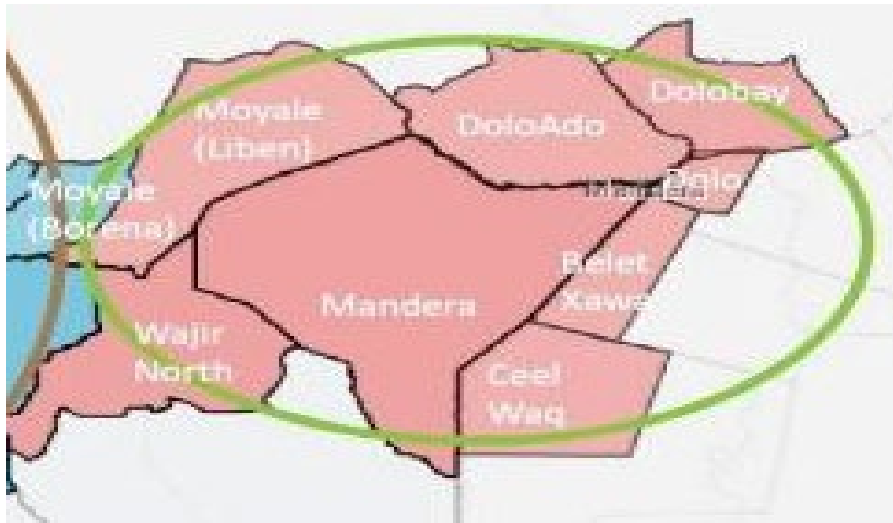


Figure 3: Study Coverage

Source: CBCR Terms of Reference Map Snippet

The APEA brought out some of the facilitators and disruptors of the CBCR projects, the controversial issues, as well as potential opportunities and challenges for implementation of the Activity. The study specifically identified facilitators as the Manderla County Government (in Kenya) and the District Commissioners of Somalia’s Gedo region for the critical role they play in decision-making and resource distribution, security, and establishing an atmosphere conducive to the effective execution of the CBCR Activity. The role of clan elders was also noted as critical to the Activity’s success. The clan elders are highly active in conflict resolution, peaceful discussions, and managing the Manderla cluster's politics, particularly the elected officials in both Somalia and Kenya sides of the cluster. The national government has also been identified as a key facilitator, particularly in Manderla County, where it contributes resources through the exchequer, formulates and implements policies and regulations, controls security by deploying national police reservists, and fighting the Al Shaabab terror group. Furthermore, local and international organizations were identified as essential facilitators of CBCR’s success since the work they undertake is either complementary or additional to the work of CBCR, and so there are numerous chances to partner for maximum impact. Other enablers highlighted include women's and youth networks, as well as diaspora groups.

On the other hand, the biggest disruptors to the CBCR Activity’s success were identified as violent extremist organizations, clannism, and widespread migration of the targeted population. Violent extremist groups radicalize the most vulnerable and naive members of the community, who then turn against their own, destroying lives, livelihoods, and property. Clannism is viewed as a driving force behind fragmentation and inter-clan strife. This is due to the community being divided along clan lines, with major clans dominating lesser clans, resulting in unequal distribution of wealth and power. Clan prejudice, a lack of employment opportunities, and a sense of hopelessness among the youth, encourage their migration to other parts of the world, despite the imminent risks, in the hope of finding better prospects.

The study also reveals that clannism is utilized as a weapon of control by various groups in order to deny the rest of the society access to natural resources and other life opportunities. Because the Manderla cluster’s culture is structured on clans, it is difficult for the community to understand the social impact of leveraging clans to reduce inclusivity and widen the divide between the majority and the minority

clans. Clans that are dissatisfied with discrimination are frequently the organizers of inter-clan violence in the goal of recovering control over lost opportunities and power.

The next section of this report presents the study's methodology, including the steps taken in collecting primary and secondary data, data analysis, ethical considerations during research, and the ways in which risks were mitigated. Next, the findings section focuses on the political economy of the Mandera cluster, beginning with its context, after which it progresses into key actors and institutions (disaggregated as either facilitators or disruptors of the CBCR Activity), controversial issues in decision-making, the implications of socio-economic and political conflicts for CBCR's activities, and the window of opportunities towards achieving the Activity's objectives. The study then concludes and provides a raft of recommendations to be considered in implementing the CBCR Activity, given the foregoing accounts of the cluster's political economy analysis.

2. METHODOLOGY

This section looks into the Applied Political Economy Analysis (APEA) methodological approach, data collection methods, target locations, and monitoring and evaluation indicators. It provides further details on data analysis, quality assurance, ethical considerations, and risks and assumptions applied during the APEA study.

2.1. APEA APPROACH

Applied Political Economy Analysis (APEA) in fragile and conflict-affected cross-border areas often focuses on an understanding of the political and economic drivers of cross-border conflict, and the relative power, exclusion, and vulnerability of different groups over time². It can highlight competing rules of the game in (and between) formal and informal institutions which are often prevalent in fragile and conflict affected settings. Moreover, it can identify shifting coalitions that contribute to, or prevent, state collapse, the nature and sources of state capacity, authority, and legitimacy. It can also identify how and why rent seeking and patrimonial political systems can either contribute to, or undermine, stability. Therefore, this assessment employed USAID's APEA framework, comprehensively covering:

Structural Factors: This was achieved through a rigorous analysis of socio-economic factors that empower or disempower local entities (communities, civil society, private sector, and governments) to chart their own pathways in addressing conflict, improve livelihoods, and/or reduce the risks of shocks and stresses that impact communities' resilience.

Rules of the Game: The APEA focused on formal and informal institutions (rules and norms) that shape the quality of governance and influence actors' behavior and their incentives, relationships, power dynamics, capacity for collective action, and the extent to which public and private actors behave and interact according to rules that are widely known and accepted.

Here and now: The study focused on how current events and circumstances influence the objectives and behavior of key actors and agencies, and how they respond to opportunities or impediments to change. This could include leadership changes, scandals, or natural disasters.

Dynamics: The study also focused on dynamics and interactions between fundamental factors, rules of the game, and here and now. This refers to how they affect each other and how they influence or shape the prospects for change.

2.2. PARTICIPATORY AND INTERSECTIONAL DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

The data collection methods included a wide range of key actors and stakeholders to provide enriched information for better synthesis of useful insights to inform programming by the CBCR Activity. The study engaged the key actors and investigated how the social structures affect the sustainability of cross-border communities' livelihoods and resilience through focus group discussions (FGD) and key informant interviews (KIIs).

The key actors and agencies that were interviewed were identified through a comprehensive desk review and participatory engagements. This step provided a detailed view of the key stakeholders and actors,

² United States Agency for International Development, 'Behaviorally Focused Applied Political Economy Analysis,' May 2021, https://usaidmomentum.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/BF-APEA_Guidance-Memo_FINAL_Sec.508-compliant-REVISED-4_27_2021.pdf (accessed on 22 August 2022).

their influence politically, as well as interests. The following groups, in particular, were considered: local communities, religious leaders, politicians and local leaders, community influencers, civil society, youths, women, persons living with disability (PWDs), and internally displaced persons (IDPs), while incorporating GESI considerations in participant mapping and selection processes.

2.3. DATA COLLECTION

Qualitative data collection methods were used to obtain the requisite information for the assessment. The research team consisted of a lead researcher, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) specialist, enumerators, data analyst, and a note taker. The methods employed to collect data included:

- a) **FGDs** that were held from August 17 – 22, 2022, to countercheck and validate the study questions and research design. Ensuring that a wide range of informants were included in the interviews helped to crosscheck and triangulate the data and analysis from each source. One FGD with 12 participants was conducted in each of the locations. The FGDs had balanced representation of men, women, and special groups of persons, including PWDs, across all the study locations.
- b) **Desk Reviews:** The study employed secondary (desk) research, including reviewing project reports and documentation in order to understand past interventions and understand the study context beforehand.
- c) **Twenty KIIs** were conducted in each of the study locations across the cross-border cluster. The interviews were held from August 17 – 22, 2022. The KIIs were held with a range of actors, including representatives of local communities, religious leaders, politicians and local leaders, civil society, youths, women, PWDs, and IDPs. The interviews unearthed their interests, potential collaborations/contributions to the Activity, and so forth. Using local expertise, and context analysis and recommendations from the FGDs, the participants were identified and selected based on their knowledge and day-to-day interaction with the issue areas under study.
- d) **Gender analysis** was employed in order to explore gender differences across a variety of issues, such as social relations, livelihood activities, access to and control of resources, services and networks of power and authority, and needs.

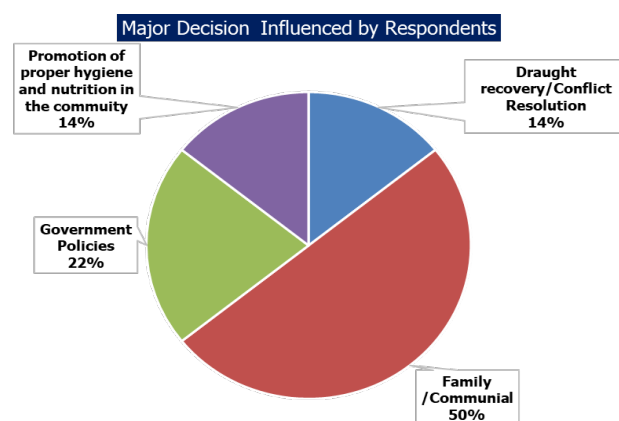
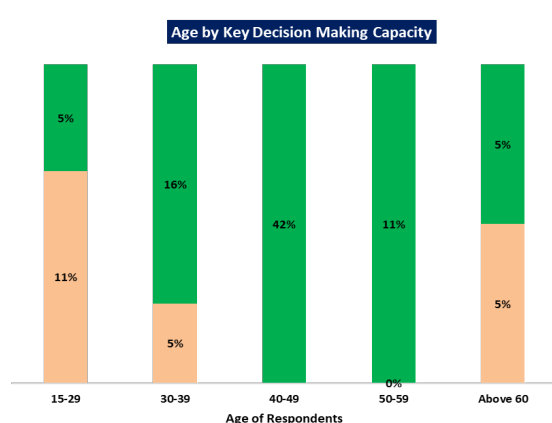
Generally, 79 percent of the respondents were key decision makers across different levels including in government/politics, religion, community, business, family etc.

The respondents were carefully selected from all age groups including 16-29 years (16 percent), 30-39 years (21 percent), 40-49 years (42 percent), 50-59 years (11 percent), and above 60 years (10 percent). The respondents were major decision influencers in cross cutting areas, notably in drought recovery and conflict resolution (14 percent), social/cultural norms and values in family/community (50 percent), government/policies (22 percent), and promotion of proper hygiene and nutrition (14 percent) (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Categories of participating decision makers

Table 1: Interview Locations

Country	Location	Data Collection Method	Number of targeted participants
Kenya	Banissa	FGD	12
	Mandera East	FGD	12
	Mandera North	FGD	12
	Mandera South	FGD	12
	Mandera West	FGD	12
	Lafey	FGD	12
	All target locations	KII	10
Somalia	Belet Hawa	FGD	12
	El wak	FGD	12
	Dollow	FGD	12
	All target locations	KII	10
		Total	128



2.4. CBCR MEL INDICATORS CONSIDERATIONS

The study also provided information on the following key performance indicators (KPIs)

Table 2: Key Performance Indicators

Core Indicators	Data Source/Means of Verification
Percentage of participants reporting increased agreement with the concept that males and females should have equal access to social, economic, and political resources and opportunities (GNDR-4)	Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews

Percentage of youth who participate in civic engagement activities following soft skills/life skills training or initiatives from USG assisted programs (YOUTH-5),	Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews
Number of USG-supported activities designed to promote or strengthen the civic participation of women (DR.4-1)	Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews

2.5. DATA ANALYSIS AND VALIDATION

The key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted using the guiding questions contained in the data collection tool. The data collection tool was digitalized and deployed through Kobo Collect, and responses recorded in real time to pursue relevant lines of inquiry. The utilization of Kobo enforced data integrity by validating data entered on site, and the note taker took real time notes. Similarly, while facilitating the FGDs, note takers recorded responses in real time. In order to create an open and honest exchange around potentially sensitive topics, the facilitator assured participants that all responses would be kept anonymous. The transcripts of each KII and FGD were cleaned and checked by the APEA researchers to ensure that they were complete and accurate.

A data validation workshop was also held on October 3, 2022, in Mandera Palace Hotel, Mandera Town. In attendance were 21 participants drawn from local community-based organizations (CBOs) non-governmental organizations (NGOs), national government/county officials, local community members, and elders. The workshop participants cross-checked the findings of the study, identified gaps, and recommended areas of improvement. The event was also attended by the CBCR Activity staff based in Mandera, led by Abdi Sheikh Harun, the Program Manager for the Mandera Cluster.

2.6. QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality assurance mechanisms for the APEA included: i) triangulation of data and findings from various primary and secondary sources, and ii) an experienced statistician who provided backstopping to the entire team.

2.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The APEA was guided through principles of: a) commitment to producing an assessment of developmental and practical value; b) commitment to avoid harm to participants; c) respect for cultural norms; d) commitment to an inclusive approach and ensuring access and participation of women and socially excluded groups; e) commitment to ensure participation in the assessment is voluntary and free from external pressure and d) commitment to confidentiality and anonymity of participants.

Before undertaking the interviews and FGDs, the respondents were informed about the objectives of the study and consent sought from them. More specifically, the participants were informed that they have the choice to refuse to take part in the study or to opt out at any stage of the data collection without any consequences to them. The research assistants also introduced themselves to the participants and sought informed consent. If a participant refused to take part in the study/interview, then the research assistants thanked him/her, and proceeded to conclude the interview. This data was also used to calculate the response rate for the APEA study.

2.8. RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The research team worked with relevant cross-border government institutions and the CBCR Activity team to mitigate any potential risks during the assessment. The team also developed contingencies and alternative plans to ensure the success of the APEA process within the grant agreement timeline.

2.9. COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

Delta Africa was committed to a process that supports the dissemination and communication around the APEA findings to include all key stakeholders at the cross-borders. The dissemination process was seen as an opportunity to discuss and validate findings and their implications for future responses, systems and processes.

3. FINDINGS

This section explores the context of the Mandera cluster, with specific focus on political, social, and economic factors, and how their interactions impact on the CBCR Activity. The section further zooms into stakeholder mapping, identifying facilitators and disruptors in the implementation of activities.

Specifically, the study identified national and local administrations, clan elders, women and youth networks, and a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as facilitators of the CBCR Activity. On the other hand, the main disruptors to the CBCR Activity's success were identified as violent extremist groups, clannism, and mass migration of the targeted population. More so, the violent extremist groups, notably Al-Shabaab, increase conflict in the Mandera cluster by destroying properties and killing people, leading to retaliatory responses from those affected. Factors such as lack of education and employment, and poverty are major contributors to youths' vulnerability to such extremist groups. The study also revealed that clannism is used by different groups as a weapon of control and to deprive the rest access to natural resources and other life opportunities.

Consequently, the most controversial issues in decision-making and implementation of planned activities in the cluster are violent extremism, clannism, and the attendant 'expansionist' vs. 'expulsionist' perceptions of dominant groups in their quests for domination and control over 'others.' There is, however, a window of opportunity towards achieving the Activity's objectives, given the longstanding interactions among the various groups, peace-building initiatives, and the role of formal institutions and facilitators in reducing the imminent risks of disruptors.

3.1. UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT OF THE MANDERA CLUSTER

In the Mandera triangle, clan identities are major organizing principles in the social and political life of the population, especially regarding communal claims to land and political representation. The hardening of clan identities in the triangle dates back to the colonial period but took on another level of significance in the early 1990s.

Since then, clan identities and supremacies in the region have raised inter-clan tensions fueled by two factors. These are: (i) political devolution in Kenya since 2013, and (ii) the Ogaden ascendancy at the expense of the Marehan power in the Jubaland administration. These factors have driven most clan conflicts in the triangle, caused human displacement, and influenced political and social dominance. More than any other clan in the Mandera triangle, the Marehan and, more recently, the Garre, are heavily focused on high stakes political arenas, a fact that has added to local tensions. The Marehan clan gained a foothold in political power in Jubaland during the Siad Barre regime through the support of their diaspora³.

As a result of the increased dominance of the Marehan clan, the Garre, the numerically stronger clan in Mandera County (Kenya), with its links to the Ethiopian government, has also increased its firepower. The Garre have been used by the Ethiopians to control the activities of the Ogaden National Liberation Front on the Ethiopian-Kenya border. Increased Garre power in Mandera County, evidenced by their domination of the recently-established Mandera County Government, has come at the expense of the

³ Abdi Muktar, 'Dynamics of Inter-clan Conflict between the Degodia and the Garre of Mandera County, Kenya; 2008-2015,' 2017, <https://ir-library.ku.ac.ke/handle/123456789/18735> (accessed 23 August 2022).

Degodia clan, who have links with fellow Degodia in the Dollow *woreda* of Ethiopia. It is these cross-border dimensions of political competition among clans that result in conflict with regional implications, causing the displacement of people and loss of livelihoods.

The main economic activity in the Mandera cluster is nomadic pastoralism, and households heavily rely on camels, goats, sheep, and cattle to meet their daily needs. Cattle are not kept in large numbers because of the harsh climatic conditions and lack of sufficient water resources required to maintain substantial herds of cattle. At times, conflicts erupt among cross-border communities over access to, and use of, scarce water resources and pasture⁴. There are also occasional moments of ‘cross-border attacks and retaliation, played out among large pastoralist clans’⁵.

Although livestock rearing remains the main economic activity in the triangle, there are few agro-pastoralists along the two major rivers: Dawa and Genale. Among the crops grown in the region are maize, cow peas, onions, watermelons, fruit trees, tomatoes, etc. Most of this produce is locally consumed and whenever there is surplus, especially for watermelons which are widely grown, there is a challenge with marketing. The region is a net importer of cereals since what is locally grown cannot meet the demand. Most of the cereals are imported through Somalia ports

The Mandera cluster has three official border points along the Kenya-Somalia border, at Belet Hawa, Damasa off Mandera-Arabiya-Fino-Lafey road, and at the town of El Wak. The rest of the border between Mandera and Gedo region is porous, and numerous unofficial crossing points exist⁶. Cross-border trade, including lucrative smuggling, is one of a number of “affordances” created by borders for local communities.

The major commercial trade that takes place in the triangle includes consumer goods imported through Mogadishu into Kenya; cattle trade from lower and middle Juba regions of southern Somalia into Kenya; the cross-border camel trade, which includes movement of camels from northern Kenya into Somalia and Ethiopia, often for export to the Gulf states; and the overland trade of khat from Kenya and Ethiopia into Somalia.

The towns of Mandera and Dollow Addo heavily rely on goods that are smuggled from Somalia. This form of cross-border trade has recently been discouraged by the authorities⁷. For instance, the Kenya-Somalia border is currently officially closed, despite Kenyan Somalis moving their goods across the borders to the markets. Foodstuffs and household items, including motor vehicles, arrive in Mandera from Somalia, while wheat, beans, natural herbs, and cement, mostly arrive in Mandera from Ethiopia⁸. The town of Mandera is also a transit zone for goods destined for Ethiopia from Somalia, such as tea leaves, sugar, and processed products like biscuits, juice, and cooking oil⁹. Goods from Mandera that are sent to Somalia include construction materials such as timber, metallic items, steel, iron sheets, paints etc.

⁴ Ken Menkhaus, ‘Conflict Assessment: Northern Kenya and Somaliland,’ February 2015, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2589109> (Accessed 24 August 2022).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Farah Dribrahim, ‘Small Arms and Border Controls in The Horn of Africa: The Case of Malkasufta, Ethiopia; Mandera, Kenya; And Bula Hawa, Somalia,’ 2005, <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/49469> (accessed 16 August 2022).

⁷ Interview with community leader, Mandera, Kenya, 18 September 2022.

⁸ FGD participant, Mandera, Kenya, 19 August 2022.

⁹ FGD participant, Mandera, Kenya, 19 August 2022.

The region's commercial sectors are major pillars of their economies and typically involve cross-border business partnerships. As such, they are usually sources of resilience to conflict, as these business partnerships have a vested interest in maintaining peaceful and secure trade arteries. In some cases, cross-border trade has been the source of competition and exclusivist claims by one clan¹⁰. Rival business people have been responsible for fomenting communal conflict in a number of border crossings, including El Wak on the Kenya-Somalia border, and further north on the Somaliland-Djibouti-Ethiopia border areas, where the Afar and Somalis are competing over smuggling routes.

Gun smuggling and human trafficking are two of the most serious forms of illegal trade across the region's borders¹¹. Major smuggling and trafficking routes include those of Ethiopians into Somalia and Djibouti, with the aim of securing their passage by boat to Yemen and onward to the Gulf or other destinations, and Somalis into Kenya, with the aim of onward travel to South Africa, Europe, or North America¹². Efforts to crack down on this business have been limited due to weak government capacity and powerful interests profiting from it. Cross-border gun smuggling has long been a lucrative business, and is most active between Somalia and Kenya, but reaching as far as Yemen (as the main source of small arms) and South Sudan and Uganda¹³.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned commonalities in the cluster, a closer examination of both the Kenyan and Somalia sides of the cluster illuminates a number of particularities that deserve attention. The Kenyan side of the cluster consists of several locations which collectively fall under Mandera County, while the Somalia side comprises Belet Hawa, El Wak and Dollow in Jubaland.

3.1.1. MANDERA COUNTY

Mandera County is one of 47 counties in Kenya created in March 2013 following the adoption of Kenyan Constitution 2010. It is situated in the very eastern most tip of Kenya, bordering Somalia and Ethiopia, and is around 25,991 km² in size. The county has an estimated population of 1,025,756 people in 2009, with 125,497 houses and a population density of 39 people per km¹⁴. Before devolution, the delivery of public services was provided mainly by the national government at minimal levels, leading to underdevelopment and marginalization. With the introduction of devolution, the county government is more placed to provide services such as health, road infrastructure, markets, early childhood education, and so forth.

The county government is supported through disbursements from the National Treasury, which is the main source of its revenue. The county government also derives its revenue from other diverse sources consisting of its own revenues, national government conditional grants, and conditional grants from development partners. The income from local revenue collection only accounts for 2 percent of the total revenues, and comes from sources such as land rates, business permits, market stalls and shades, etc.¹⁵

¹⁰ FGD participant, Mandera, Kenya, 19 August 2022.

¹¹ Nassim Majidi, 'Community Dimensions of Smuggling: The Case of Afghanistan and Somalia,' *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 676(1) (2018): 97–113.

¹² John Salt, 'Trafficking and Human Smuggling: A European Perspective,' *International Migration*, 38(3) (200): 31-56.

¹³ Interview with clan elder, Mandera, Kenya, 18 September 2022.

¹⁴ Mandera County Government, 'Mandera County Integrated Development Pan (CIDP) 2018-2022,' April 2019, <https://mandera.go.ke> (accessed 30 December 2022).

¹⁵ Ibid.

Every year, the county government fails to fully utilize its budget allocations due to delays in the release of funds by the National Treasury¹⁶.

Mandera County Government consists of two arms: the County Assembly, which exercises the representative, legislative, and oversight authority of the government; and the County Executive which exercises the executive authority of the county government¹⁷. The County Executive consists of the Governor and the Deputy Governor who are elected every five years by the citizens of the county¹⁸. The Governor appoints County Executive Committee (CEC) Members, and these appointments are approved by the County Assembly. The executive authority of the county government is vested in the CEC, comprising the Governor, Deputy Governor, and CEC members¹⁹. The Governor is the Chief Executive of Mandera County Government and the head of the CEC. The Governor's role is to provide leadership, represent the county, and assent or dissent bills passed by the County Assembly.

The County Assembly's roles are to represent citizens, exercise the legislative authority of Mandera County Government, and oversee the County Executive. It comprises elected and nominated members referred to as Members of the County Assembly (MCAs). The elected members represent, and are elected by, the citizens at the county ward level. Nominated members are appointed by the political parties in order to ensure that no more than two-thirds of the members are from the same gender, and to include representatives from marginalized groups i.e., persons with disabilities and youth. The Mandera County Assembly Speaker presides over all assembly sittings. The Assembly administration is headed by a County Assembly Clerk and is appointed by the County Assembly Public Service Board. The County Assembly Clerk is responsible for day-to-day administration of the County Assembly.

The rollout of devolution resulted in the creation of more lucrative and powerful posts and control of significant budget amounts in Mandera County. Consequently, clan supremacy has escalated inter-clan altercations. Major clans such as the Garre, Degodia, and Murule control resources and power at the county level, as the minority (Merehan clan and other migrants) complain of discrimination in resource and power allocation²⁰. Elections and appointments to political seats are also dominated by clan supremacy battles as weaker or less popular clans are left out in critical decision-making platforms.

The clan supremacy battle for political and economic control historically dates back to the colonial era. However, the current strife for political control at the county level escalated after the 2007 elections when Abdikadir Mohamed from the Degodia clan was elected as the Member of Parliament for Mandera Central Constituency²¹. Mohamed ousted Billow Kerow from the Garre clan, the majority clan in Mandera. This election result had wider ramifications on the politics of Mandera in that the political domination of the Garre clan was broken, and the political presence of the Degodia clan was established.

The elections deepened supremacy mentality amongst the Mandera County residents and migrant clans. The Garre and Murule clans are considered the "resident" clans, and the rest of the Somali clans, due to their "minority" or "migrant status" are clustered into an alliance called "corner tribes"²². These distinctions play a major role in the conduct of politics in the area as the resident clans historically win

¹⁶ Mandera County Finance Committee, 'Mandera County Government Budget for 2021/2022,' 2022, <https://www.manderaassembly.go.ke/storage/downloads/July2021/Q400NbqE1c5b2H4j5GWS.pdf> (accessed 29 August 2022).

¹⁷ Mandera County Government, 'Mandera County Profile,' 2020, https://mandera.go.ke/pm_profile/ (accessed 26 August 2022).

¹⁸ Interview with County Government Officials, Mandera, Kenya, 18 September 2022.

¹⁹ Interview with County Government Officials, Mandera, Kenya, 21 September 2022.

²⁰ Interview with Community Members, Mandera, Kenya, 21 September 2022.

²¹ Interview with County Government Officials, Mandera, Kenya, 19 September 2022.

²² Neil Carrier and Hassan Kochore, 'Navigating Ethnicity and Electoral Politics in Northern Kenya: The Case of the 2013 Election,' *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8(1) (2014): 135-152.

parliamentary seats and the majority of the local county seats. The election of Abdikadir Mohamed went against this rule, thus setting the pace for the political dominance of the minority tribes.

The 2013 general election saw the introduction of negotiated democracy in Mandera County, through which clan and sub-clan leaders vetted and nominated candidates for competition with those of rival clans. Clan members were required to respect the will of the elders, while the losing candidates were requested to step down and “accept the blessings of the elders.”

With the changes in political dynamics and higher stakes in subsequent county elections, new cycles of political antics emerged. Unsurprisingly, subsequent election campaigns have been characterized by hate messages, displacement of voters, formation of inter- and intra-clan alliances, and the magnification of resident-migrant dynamics. Among these was a political pact between the Garre and Murule clans²³, which resulted in the Garre clan not only regaining more parliamentary seats in the 2017 and 2022 elections, but also winning an overwhelming majority of other seats in the county, including the key posts of Governor and Senator²⁴.

In the 2017 and 2022 elections, the political space expanded with the concept of negotiated democracy losing fame. More political aspirants vied for various elective posts without the blessings of the elders. Politicians created alliances in order to attract support for given seats. For instance, in the 2022 elections, the creation of the United Democratic Movement (UDM) party saw strong political elites cooperating to secure given seats.

As a result, the UDM won the majority of the seats including Governor, Senator, some parliamentary seats, MCA posts, and secured nominations in parliament. The party gained popularity not only in Mandera but in the rest of the country, thus giving it a platform to join political alliances such as Kenya Kwanza Alliance, which is the ruling alliance post 2022 elections. Efforts are underway to popularize the party in other counties such as Wajir and Garissa after it unsuccessfully vied for the Garissa Township parliamentary by-elections in January 2023. In the upcoming 2027 elections, experts predict that the UDM and other new parties or existing national parties will be used as avenues for political competition in Mandera County and far beyond.

The introduction of devolved governance has also led to devolution of corruption at county level. Cases of corruption and mismanagement of public funds are on the rise, and a few political elites at the leadership levels are misappropriating financial resources intended for grassroots development, leaving the majority of the population with no or sub-standard government services.

As mentioned above, the main source of support to the current county government are traditional elders from different clans who played a key role in the winning of the elections. However, there are no organized and effective opposition groups that are able to effectively put the government in check because of the wide acceptance of clan-based politics. The norm of the politicians in Mandera County is to wait for the next election period to work hard and secure a seat. However, while opposition strongholds are well known to the current government, there are reconciliation processes and a county-wide service delivery approach that prevent discrimination in the provision of public services in opposition-led areas.

Despite the challenge of establishing a fully representative workforce, the county government has implemented measures to ensure youths, women, and persons living with disability (PWDs) are given audience. As part of the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) considerations, the county

²³ These two clans have a history of conflict, and this pact was meant to temporarily address this.

²⁴ Menkhaus, supra n 4.

government allocates 30 percent of the county positions to women²⁵. In elective positions such as MCAs, where the women quota has not been reached, the county assembly nominates women for majority of the nominated MCA seats²⁶.

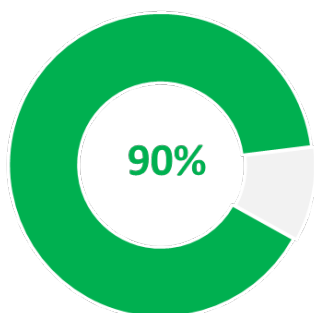
However, implementation of some of the policies to accelerate inclusion is slow. The two-thirds gender rule, in particular, has seen slow progress in implementation, and inclusion of youths, women, and PWDs at decision-making levels has not gained significant traction. The clan-based mentality which heavily depends on clan elders plays a role in slowing down inclusivity, as most elders do not prioritize youth, women, and PWDs²⁷. The county government also has departments focused on these marginalized groups, but due to underfunding, nepotism, and corruption, the government has not developed or implemented initiatives to address challenges faced by these groups of individuals.

Beyond the clan rivalries and exclusionary politics, the conflict dynamics in the region are further complicated by the emergence of new forms of conflict such as terrorism and the problem of radicalization. Conflict in Mandera comes at a time when the attention of the Kenyan state is focused on such security threats, which are spillovers from the Somalia side of the cross-border cluster.

Economically, Mandera County depends majorly on nomadic pastoralism, with camels, goats, sheep, and cattle the main livestock reared. The region's vast pasture land has made livestock rearing viable, with trade in livestock commodities catalyzing cross-border trade. Informal cross-border trade (ICBT) contributes to the reduction of poverty and the sustenance of livelihoods for borderland communities in Mandera County. Nearly 70 percent of informal cross-border traders are women who trade in low value, low profit goods such as raw or semi-processed basic and luxury goods as their only source of livelihood²⁸.

Despite 95 percent of the cross-border trade being conducted through unofficial channels, it has significantly impacted the income, and food and human security for communities in the Mandera cluster. ICBT in agricultural and livestock commodities and consumer goods encourages entrepreneurship, provides employment, constitutes a source of food security, and is an important source of capital and savings for communities and individuals with vulnerable livelihoods. It also has critical gender implications as it provides an avenue for women's entrepreneurial activity and economic empowerment.

Proportion of Employment and Family Income from Livestock Sector



ICBT is dominated by trading in livestock commodities, and has reduced cross-border communities' dependency on donations and promoted self-reliance through trade. For example, in El Wak, peaceful co-existence between the different community members was only possible because of inter-communal trade on livestock commodities²⁹.

²⁵ Interview with County Government officials, Mandera, Kenya, 19 September 2022.

²⁶ This follows the national gender rule which obligates parties to nominate women in order to fill up the gender quota.

²⁷ FGD participant, Mandera, Kenya, 21 August 2022.

²⁸ County government of Mandera, 'Mandera County Integrated Development Plan,' 2021, <https://www.manderaassembly.go.ke/storage/cidp/cidp.pdf>.

²⁹ FGD participant, Mandera, Kenya, 21 August 2022.

Figure 5: Percentage of households employed by livestock sector

of employment and family income in both the Somalia and Kenyan sides of the cross-border cluster.

As per the study's respondents, livestock production plays an important socio-economic role in the Mandera cluster by accounting for about 90 per cent

Unfortunately, the extensive livestock production system and pastoralist households have been hard hit by recurrent drought shocks. This has led to a large scale migration of households in search of water and pasture, with some traveling to as far as Kajiado, Nairobi, and Mombasa Counties, and even crossing over to Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Somalia³⁰.

According to FGD participants, the livestock sector has experienced a major setback due to the ongoing drought. The decline of pasture and water availability is negatively impacting livestock production, thus reducing the purchasing power of the pastoral communities. Livestock deaths persist due to increased starvation, escalating cases of diseases (e.g., goat pox, camel pox), and drought related deficiencies. Livestock market also continues to deteriorate and has been fluctuating within the same range for the last two years³¹. Some of the key informants argued that the drought and limited resources have increased incidences of out migration, especially due to constraints in pasture and browse conditions, which could heighten inter-clan conflict.

The effect of drought on livestock can be controlled through the adoption of climate smart agricultural practices such as rearing drought resistant animals, rational grazing, and planting of drought resistant fodder crops. Despite pastoralism being the main livelihood source for the people of the Mandera cluster, there are other economic activities which support the locals. These are mainly small-scale businesses dominated by women, fish farming, bee keeping, subsistence crop farming, and tourism.



Hundreds of animals change hands in the Mandera livestock market

According to FGD responses, the main water sources in Mandera cluster are River Dawa, a number of shallow wells, and few major earth pans. The region has small-scale agricultural producers supplying mangoes, watermelons, pawpaw, onions, kales, and bananas to the local market.

The local markets are predominantly occupied by women men who conduct small scale businesses to fend for their families³². Urban centers have attracted a huge number of investors who have ventured into the hospitality sector, setting up hotels and resort centers, as well as in the transport, banking and oil industries, and other small businesses³³. The combined effect of these economic activities is diversifying the economy of the cluster, but the rural areas remain heavily dependent on nomadic pastoralism.

³⁰ FGD participant, Mandera, Kenya, 21 August 2022.

³¹ FGD participant, Mandera, Kenya, 18 August 2022.

³² Interview with Community Members, Mandera, Kenya, 18 September 2022.

³³ Interview with Community Members, Mandera, Kenya, 18 September 2022.

Although certain measures have been taken by governments to formalize ICBT, especially in livestock, a number of challenges remain. These challenges center on restrictions to movement for people, their animals, and trade goods. This has vital consequences on livelihoods and resilience, and also on the general well-being of communities.

The restriction on movement is, at its root, a result of these borderlands being sites of inter- and intra-state conflicts, and spaces of insecurity with trafficking in small arms and illegal goods, and human smuggling. This trafficking has, over time, contributed to labor movements across the Mandera cluster as people search for better opportunities. Ethiopians, in particular, move to Mandera County in search of informal jobs to meet their daily needs, while Somalis migrate to different parts of the world both formally and informally in search of better opportunities via the Mandera border. The drought and high unemployment rate have forced the locals to migrate in search of pasture and water as well as jobs to fend for their families.

70% illiteracy levels exacerbate high unemployment rate which stands at
69% worsened by inability to access affordable credit, over dependency on aid, porous borders and frequent inter communal conflicts



In terms of education, the illiteracy level in Mandera is at 70 percent, stifling opportunities for innovation and dampening the economic potential of millions of people³⁴. The poverty level, majorly contributed to by the high illiteracy, is at 80 percent³⁵.

Mandera County has a primary school net enrollment ratio (NER) of 42.4 percent (64.4 percent boys and 35.5 percent girls), compared to the national rate of 77.2 percent (76.2 percent males and 78.3 percent females)³⁶. The secondary NER for the cluster stands at 5.2 percent (7.6 percent boys and 2.2 percent girls), compared to the national rate of 24.0 percent (22.2 percent boys and 25.9 percent girls)³⁷. The disparity amongst boys and girls is, however, inconsistent between boys and girls in urban and rural settings. As per the FGDs and KIIs, the NER ratio in urban areas within Mandera is somewhat equal for both boys and girls, but these numbers disproportionately change in favor of the boys in rural areas. The disproportional enrolment of more boys than girls in rural areas is contributed to by cultural barriers with many parents preferring to educate boys over girls.

According to the responses received, the low enrollment rate in schools for basic education has significantly reduced the literacy levels in Mandera County. With low literacy levels, the unemployment rate worsens, and now stands at 69 percent, further deepening the community's inability to access affordable credit, over dependency on aid, polarity at the borders, and frequent inter-communal conflicts. Further, low literacy levels and unemployment forces most youths to join violent extremist groups in hope for better opportunities. All these disrupt the normal functioning of society and weakens building of resilient cross-border communities.

³⁴ Republic of Kenya, 'Kenya National Bureau of Statistics Population and Housing Census Report 2019,' February 2020, <https://www.knbs.or.ke/?wpdmpro=2019-kenya-population-and-housing-census-volume-iv-distribution-of-population-by-socio-economic-characteristics> (accessed 23 August 2022).

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ United Nations Children Education Fund, 'Country Office Annual Report 2021: Kenya,' September 2021, <https://www.unicef.org/media/117101/file/Kenya-2021-COAR.pdf>.

³⁷ Ibid.

3.1.2. BELET HAWA, EL WAK, AND DOLLOW IN JUBALAND, SOMALIA

The Somalia side of the Mandera cluster falls under Gedo region, and is administratively under Jubaland State of Somalia. Gedo region consists of six districts, namely El Wak, Belet Hawa, Dollow, Bardhere, Garbaharey, and Luuq. Gedo region is governed by a Governor, a Deputy Governor, and other regional administration officials. Belet Hawa is a border town and business gateway to Kenya and Ethiopia, El Wak a border town between Kenya and Somalia, and Dollow is a town in the Southern Gedo region sitting on the Jubba River.

The Marehan clan (Darod) dominates the Gedo region economically, politically, militarily, and rules across all districts. The Jubaland economy mostly depends on livestock and farming, but the Gedo region has strong inter-regional and international cross-border trade with Kenya and to some extent, with Ethiopia³⁸. Trade with Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia allowed the Gedo region to be economically stable for the years before the UN intervention and afterwards³⁹.

The principal economic activities in Gedo are livestock, arable farming, and trade with neighboring regions and countries⁴⁰. Some of the trade with neighboring Ethiopia and Kenya takes the form of recorded trade via official crossing-points at Belet Hawa and El Wak on the border with Kenya and at Dollow on the border with Ethiopia⁴¹. Considerable informal cross-border trade is also ongoing across the borders with both Kenya and Ethiopia, and in small towns and villages as well⁴².

Further, the region's vast majority of imported goods come from Mogadishu, making the state of the roads and the security of Gedo's neighboring regions vitally important if trade is to continue. The region's economy is controlled by traders from the Marehan clan who ensure that goods arriving in Luuq from Mogadishu and other regions are transferred to their trucks for onward transportation to their end destinations⁴³.

In terms of governance, there is no effective civilian administration operating in the Gedo region. There is, however, a Somali National Front (SNF) based regional administration. SNF is a military group made up of loyalists to former President of Somalia, Siad Barre, and the remnants of the Somali National Army forces after his ouster from office, with the intention to recapture Mogadishu and reinstate Barre's regime⁴⁴. This administrative structure was established in 1997 in response to the political and administrative vacuum left by reconciliation between the SNF and Al-Itihad, with the subsequent disbanding of Al-Itihad⁴⁵.

Gedo's administrative structure consists of a District Council headed by a Deputy District Commissioner and other council members. The district administration is charged with the responsibilities of enhancing good governance, security, and community-based priorities; local revenue

³⁸ Peter D. Little, Waktole Tiki and Dejene Negassa Debsu, 'Formal or Informal, Legal or Illegal: The Ambiguous Nature of Cross-border Livestock Trade in the Horn of Africa,' *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 30(3) (2015): 405-421.

³⁹ Peter Little, 'Unofficial trade when states are weak: the case of cross-border commerce in the Horn of Africa', 2005, <https://arcadia.sba.uniroma3.it/bitstream/2307/3764/1/Unofficial%20trade%20when%20states%20are%20weak%20-%20the%20case%20of%20cross-border%20commerce%20in%20the%20Horn%20of%20Africa.pdf> (accessed 4 September 2022).

⁴⁰ Little et al., supra n 38.

⁴¹ FGD participant, Mandera, Kenya, 18 August 2022.

⁴² FGD participant, Mandera, Kenya, 18 August 2022.

⁴³ FGD participant, Mandera, Kenya, 18 August 2022.

⁴⁴ Little et al., supra n 38.

⁴⁵ FGD participant, Mandera, Kenya, 18 August 2022.

collection; management of internal affairs; and infrastructure and community development projects⁴⁶. However, the council members are not elected in traditional or democratic fashions but are people who are generally held in esteem by the local community. This implies that the area's clan elders do not elect representatives to sit on the District Council, but put forward nominees, as well as advising it⁴⁷. Through their nomination and advisory authority, the clan elders influence the day-to-day administration of the Gedo region. The clan elders also help foster reconciliation and compensation payment during dispute resolution⁴⁸. Administratively, the Gedo region should closely work with Jubaland State and the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS). However, due to political differences, there are no proper working mechanisms, leading to cutting of ties between the three levels of government in [2013-2021]⁴⁹.

In terms of GESI considerations, women, youths, and PWDs are socially excluded in the Gedo region. The women are disadvantaged by social constructs that advocate for development of the boys and underinvestment in girls. This is because girls are viewed as “soon-to-be brides” who would be married to other families and, hence, not worth investing in⁵⁰. The high youth unemployment rates in the Gedo region increases their vulnerability as easy picks for militia groups for radicalization purpose since they provide a sense of hope to a deprived youthful population⁵¹.

The region's education sector has witnessed a sharp decline over the years. The towns of Garbaharey, Luuq, and Bardhere had education systems up to secondary level, and most of the region's high school graduates attended the Somali National University in Mogadishu. Currently, towns in Gedo which have the largest school enrolments are Bardhere, Belet Hawa, Garbaharey, El Ade, Luuq, Buurdhuubo, and Dollow, but only Bardhere, Garbaharey, Belet Hawa and El Ade have secondary schools⁵². Notably, El Wak and Dollow, which border Kenya and Ethiopia, respectively, have the least district level school developments⁵³.

3.2. MAPPING KEY ACTORS AND INSTITUTIONS

The successful design and implementation of the CBCR Activity is anchored on the contributions of various players who would play vital roles. The individual players will collaboratively contribute to specific aspects that will either create an enabling environment for successful implementation or an environment that will hinder progress of the project. These players can be broadly categorized as either facilitators or disruptors in the implementation of CBCR's activities.

3.2.1. FACILITATORS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

As the CBCR Activity's core objective is to build more resilient cross-border communities, the environment in which implementation will occur will determine its success. This environment includes the involvement of a number of enabling actors and institutions, including the national and local

⁴⁶ FGD participant, Mandera, Kenya, 18 August 2022.

⁴⁷ Interview with District Official, Dollow, Somalia 20 September 2022.

⁴⁸ Interview with District Official, El Wak, Somalia, 20 September 2022.

⁴⁹ Yusuf Musa, 'Somalia's Arduous Election Journey,' ACCORD, June 2021, <https://www.accord.org.za/analysis/somalias-arduous-election-journey/>

⁵⁰ FGD participant, El Wak, Somalia, 21 August 2022.

⁵¹ FGD participant, Belet Xawa, Somalia, 21 August 2022.

⁵² Interview with District Official, El Wak, Somalia, 20th September 2022.

⁵³ Interview with District Official, El Wak, Somalia 20th September 2022.

administrations, clan elders, local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as youth and women's networks.

First, the national governments of Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia are at the forefront of ensuring peace and order prevails in the volatile region of the Mandera cluster. Given that the area is within their borders, it's more susceptible to increased incidences of violent extremism, inter-clan clashes, cattle rustling, and unpredictable unrest. Working closely with community leaders as an alternative conflict resolution mechanism, the governments have managed to keep peace and tranquility in spite of the disruption caused by terrorism. The community elders and the government representative at the grassroots levels are the major players in dispute resolution and social cohesion building. There are laws governing conflict and other related cases that have been put in place by the governments through public participation. These laws have greatly helped in curbing the spread of conflict. One such example is the inclusion of community members in developmental planning of an area in order to prevent conflicts of interest.

For its part, the Kenyan government has established the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) which has the mandate of responding to triggers of violence and bringing on record the perpetrators of war and conflict⁵⁴. The NCIC has an allocated budget with which it runs its operations, and it has indeed significantly contributed to the cohesive nature of the cluster especially during political times. The Government of Kenya has also deployed National Police Reservists to the main hotspot areas in Mandera County to contain inter-clan conflict and terrorist attack threats. The government also supports the county government through disbursement of county funds from the exchequer to facilitate development of the region, and maintain security and peace for the locals.

The governments are also central to making and implementing policies that spur economic growth and development. These include policies that enable the growth of livestock farming and trade through development of effective value chains, increase access to agricultural extension services, and market linkages for livestock products, among other functions. Hence, for the CBCR Activity, national governments are natural facilitators.

On the Kenyan side of the cluster, the Mandera County Government is probably the most obvious facilitator in the implementation of the CBCR's activities. As part of the county government's economic empowerment of local communities' agenda, the CBCR Activity will potentially collaborate with different county ministries. These include the Ministry for Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Irrigation to help build more resilience and sustainable agriculture; the Ministry of Health to build access to health services; and the Ministry of Water, Energy, Environment and Natural Resources for climate smart interventions and protection of the environment.

The Mandera County Government plays an important role in local planning and development processes, as it involves the beneficiaries from the grassroots levels (sub-county, ward, and village levels). The planning process is guided by the county's strategic documents, the ministries' strategic plans, sectoral plans, the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP), and annual work plans. As such, the CBCR's activities will have to be streamlined into these plans for local ownership and their sustainability long after the termination of the project.

⁵⁴ Republic of Kenya, 'Conflict Hotspot Mapping for Kenya', 2022, https://cohesion.or.ke/images/docs/downloads/hotspot_mapping_ncic.pdf (accessed 3 September 2022)

The County Steering Group (CSG) meetings will also provide good opportunities for the county government to meet with other organizations, such as the CBCR Activity, as well as those working on the other side of the border. Through the county officials, meetings with Gedo region officials and clan elders to discuss and get buy-in on CBCR's activities will be possible. However, it is also important to note that the county government can also act as a disruptor to the project if the officials do not find it relevant to their goals and interests and, thus, might refuse to grant the necessary approvals for CBCR's activities. This is a potential threat because some of the officials might propagate corrupt practices requiring bribery to approve implementation of activities or access to specific areas and for collaboration.

For Somalia's side of the cluster, the District Commissioners and other council members in the Gedo region will be helpful. For the CBCR Activity to succeed in Gedo region, these administrators, together with the clan elders who are in charge of oversight, will have to contribute in one way or another. For example, the District Commissioner can be involved as an advocate for CBCR's activities to enable seamless acceptance and buy-in from the communities and local leaders. These administrators will also be involved in planning, development, and rollout processes for CBCR's activities, as well as mobilization of community members and resources to ensure the achieved results are sustainable beyond CBCR's lifespan. These leaders will also drive forward the GESI agenda to improve inclusivity in leadership, and economically empower the marginalized groups as core drivers of CBCR's objectives.

The clan system in the Somali culture can, at best, work positively for the society, acting as a strong and protective social unit. At its worst, it can act as a political unit that leads to conflict and bloodshed. At the same time, clan elders are important mediators during any form of conflict or misunderstanding. The Sultans (clan leaders) of the Garree, Dagodia, and Murulle clans can be facilitators of the CBCR Activity⁵⁵. The Sultans' main tasks are to manage conflict and guide the community. They are powerful and influential leaders within their respective clans who can mobilize their clan members and influence them on certain issues. The CBCR Activity should, therefore, actively engage the clan elders in order to ensure that it gets support as well as awareness among communities.

Clan elders can also be used as platforms for engaging different clans or groups should there be any challenges during the project's implementation period. For instance, in January 2012, Al-Shabaab kidnapped two Kenyan government employees from Gerile, Kenya. Since the Kenyan government refused to negotiate directly with Al-Shabaab, clan elders mediated⁵⁶. One of the abductees publicly thanked the elders for securing their release⁵⁷. As the CBCR Activity kicks off, it is important to keep close relations with clan elders across the Mandera cluster by making them aware of the project's activities. The clan elders can, at times, be used to broker deals whenever there are impasses across the borders.

Moreover, there are a number of local and international organizations operating or implementing projects in the Mandera cluster. Some examples include the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), the European Union (EU), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), Boresha Consortium, and PACT. These

⁵⁵ Sultans of each clan are elected by a council of elders from each of the sub-clans through voting and after a vigorous process of consultations. Given the APEA document will be a living document for CBCR, it is fair to mention the institutions of governance rather than names of individuals holding power who may vacate the seat while CBCR Activity is still at implementation stage.

⁵⁶ FGD participants, Mandera-Kenya, Belet Xawa, Somalia, 18 August 2022.

⁵⁷ Interview with Community Members, Dollow, Somalia 18th September 2022

organizations either implement directly or award grants/contracts to local NGOs to implement on their behalf. The CBCR Activity can engage with local and international organizations to ensure that there is no duplication of efforts, and that there is maximum coordination amongst different actors to deliver the most optimal impact on livelihoods. The CBCR Activity can also participate in different coordination meetings among partners based on thematic areas. This will also provide an opportunity for collaboration and learning from each other.

There are also a number of youth and women's groups based on common interests in the Mandera cluster. Some are engaged in business activities, sports, cultural activities, advocacy etc. These organized groups provide platforms where project initiatives can easily be implemented due to their common interests and collectivity. As such, the CBCR Activity can engage with local youth and women to ensure their programming needs are taken into consideration during the planning stage. During implementation stage, these groups can be an effective force that ensures effective and strategic communication through dissemination of key messages using their informal networks. The CBCR Activity can also strategically collaborate with these groups to drive the GESI agenda by championing for their inclusion in leadership and economic platforms.

3.2.2. DISRUPTORS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

The implementation of the CBCR Activity is pegged on the interaction of both facilitators and disruptors in the operating context. Some of the potential threats to implementation include smugglers, violent extremists, and the diaspora.

For their part, smugglers operate from a darker side of the spectrum, and have a significant influence on the success of the CBCR Activity. They control commercial pathways across the borders, rivaling legitimate businesses, and support a proportion of the population from proceeds of illegal trade in guns. Human smuggling especially of youths seeking better opportunities in Europe and other western countries is on the rise facilitated by smugglers across the border who prey on vulnerable youths and women.

The youths and women are lured by false promises of jobs and better opportunities only to be used as bait to solicit ransom money by their smugglers/captors. Most victims of the smugglers are tortured along the smuggling routes and, sometimes, some sustain serious injuries or die due to the harsh condition they are subjected to.

At the same time, the continued infiltration of violent extremist groups remains a threat to the economic and social stability of the Mandera cluster. As per the study's respondents, violent extremism affects the entire community, but groups such as youth, the elderly, children, women, low-income households, and minority clans are most affected. The vulnerable youths are recruited by violent extremist groups and radicalized to join militia and terrorist groups in the hope of securing monthly stipends.

Therefore, to succeed in its objectives, the CBCR Activity will have to be alert to the imminent threats of extremist groups, as well as play a vital role in sensitizing the youths and marginalized groups on the potential dangers posed by extremist groups.

Moreover, the role of the diaspora community in political and economic affairs cannot be underestimated. Apart from annual remittances worth millions of dollars, the diaspora community has

played a key role in humanitarian aid and promoting education, health care, public infrastructure, and private enterprises⁵⁸. Nonetheless, the region’s diaspora continues to practice clan fragmentation abroad⁵⁹. Due to their economic power, various diaspora groups have been changing the local balance of power to pursue their personal interests, either supporting or opposing the prevailing balance of power within the cluster.

Within Somalia, anti-diaspora sentiments have been increasing due to the diaspora’s dominance of important institutions in the region. The Somali diaspora is a double-edged sword engaging in both conflict and peace-building by supporting their clans financially in times of conflict, and also supporting local peace-building and state-building initiatives⁶⁰. Diaspora involvement in support of local peace-building and reconciliation has been a significant ingredient for success⁶¹.

3.3. CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN DECISION MAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANNED ACTIVITIES

This section of the reports outlines sensitive issues that affect the Mandera cross-border communities, and have the potential to influence the successful implementation of the CBCR Activity. The issues include dominant perceptions of ‘expansionist’ and ‘expulsionist’ tendencies that reinforce the already fragile situation of clan schisms. Often, these issues are not subjects of discussion within the communities because they are viewed as taboos.

In the Mandera cluster, the Degodia and the Murulle clans are labelled “expansionist,” while the Garre clan, with its numerical majority, is alleged to harbor “expulsionist” tendencies. For a long period, the Degodia clan, traditionally herders along the Kenya-Ethiopia border area, had very little involvement in political and economic activities. However, the clan has, over the decades, established settlements along the borders of the two countries. These settlements have always been disputed by the Garre, who have gradually migrated away and deeper into the interior parts of today’s Mandera County in search of better pasturelands for their livestock.

Recent decades have also seen increased involvement by the Degodia in commerce and politics. The spirited entry of the Degodia into politics has caused tensions with the Mandera cluster’s majority Garre. The political supremacy wars fuel inter-clan conflicts and protection tendencies for incompetent leaders whose community members feel targeted when faced with corruption allegations.

For example, the Mandera Central parliamentary seat (now renamed Mandera North) was hotly contested in 2007, when a Degodia candidate, Abdikadir Mohamed, defeated Billow Kerrow, the sitting Garre Member of Parliament. The results of the election triggered violent clashes between the two communities, lasting all the way into early 2013, and spread further into the neighboring Wajir County, where the Degodia form the majority. In late 2013, members of the Garre clan were displaced from Wajir County and from a number of Degodia-dominated settlements in Mandera County, such as Ashabito, Garse, and Malka Ruqa. The Degodia were, in return, displaced from Garre-dominated areas of Mandera County, such as Banissa and Takaba.

⁵⁸ Saskia Kok and Richard Rogers, ‘Rethinking Migration in the Digital Age: Transglobalization and the Somali Diaspora,’ *Global Networks* 17(1) 2017): 23-46.

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Interview with Community Members, Dollow, Somalia, 18 September 2022.

⁶¹ Kok and Rogers, *supra* n 56.

These “expansionist” and “expulsionist” perceptions are not limited to the Garre and Degodia clans. The Murulle have also been accused of exerting pressure on the “corner tribes” by creating new settlements like Dar-al-Salaam in Khalalio ward to compel the “corner tribes” to support Murulle candidates for the Mandera East parliamentary seat.

On the Somalia side of the cluster, the Marehan clan dominates the Gedo region where Dollow, El Wak, and Belet Hawa districts are located. However, due to power dynamics in Jubaland State, they are not well represented in the administration, with the Ogaden clan taking majority of the state level positions. The Marehan clan often feels left out in the governance structures, with just a few of their elites given some positions, such as the Vice President and few cabinet positions, in Jubaland administration. Their feelings of exclusion from the wider administration has resulted into prolonged opposition against the regional administration.

A section of the Marehan clan that moved into Mandera after the 1991 state collapse of Somalia is also accused of displacing the Murulle clan along the Mandera-Lafey grazing corridor, sparking violent conflicts in recent years between the two clans⁶².

3.4. IMPLICATIONS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONFLICTS FOR THE CBCR ACTIVITY AND CONFLICT SENSITIVE PROGRAMMING

The Mandera Cluster has experienced prolonged conflict emerging from inter-clan supremacy battles and cross-border community competition for resources. As a major trade route for goods from Somalia and Ethiopia transiting through Kenya, the region has a commercial advantage and attracts both formal and informal traders. The boom in trade of livestock commodities and smuggled goods, especially illegal guns, is a major propellant for inter-clan conflicts.

The major and minor clans, as previously described, battle to control the commercial centers, as well as land, pasture, and natural resources. This competition extends to the political and diaspora groups who embrace and empower their own clans to dominate the less powerful ones in order to control the resources and trade in the cluster. For example, in the Gedo region of Jubaland, Somalia, the Marehan clan have political, economic, and military powers backed by the District Commissioners and clan elders. They control the trade in the region by forcing all goods transiting through their region to be transported by trucks owned by their clansmen.

In Mandera County, clan supremacy in politics continues to determine who wins or loses in elections. This trend was disrupted by the election of Abdikadir Mohamed who won a seat in the 2007 elections despite coming from a minority tribe. The win marked a shift in the political dynamics of the region. It also increased the stakes in subsequent elections, which are now characterized by hate messages, displacement of voters, formation of inter- and intra-clan alliances, and the magnification of ‘resident-migrant’ dynamics, including a political pact between the Garre and the Murulle clans.

The inter-clan supremacy mentality is deeply rooted in Somali culture despite its drawbacks. The competition has led to bloodshed and losses, including destruction of properties and livelihoods. The clan elders play a two-thronged role of either intensifying the conflicts by inciting the population, or

⁶² Alinoor Hassan Haji, ‘Inter-clan Peace Initiative in Mandera County: A Case of Gurreh and Murulle Communities From 1998 To 2012’, 2018, http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/76901/Alinur_Inter-clan%20peace%20initiative%20in%20Mandera%20County%3A%20a%20case%20of%20Gurreh%20and%20Murulle%20cmmunities%20from%201998%20to%202012.pdf?sequence=3,(accessed 20 August 2022).

acting as agents of peace and advocating for peaceful settlement of conflicts. These conflicts have led to displacements of populations, and provide a good breeding ground for violent extremism.

With mass migration of potential beneficiaries and advocates of the CBCR Activity, especially of youths who are in search for better opportunities, it is imperative for the Activity to prioritize empowerment initiatives, which has not been the focus of most NGOs. The CBCR Activity has the opportunity to collaborate with other partners in building the capacity of local leaders and vulnerable groups to be self-reliant and come up with solutions to their social challenges.

As highlighted by FGD respondents, the Mandera cluster is affected by severe unemployment rates, mostly affecting the youths and women. This challenge significantly encourages these vulnerable groups to join violent extremist groups or embark on *tahriib* (migration), thus worsening social problems within the cross-border communities. In order to address these social calamities, the CBCR Activity should aim to catalyze the creation of new businesses or growth of existing ones to plug the gap in economic empowerment and employment opportunities. This can include designing interventions that increase connectivity in economic corridors through road and rail infrastructure to accelerate movement of goods and services across borders and access to other markets; eliminating bureaucratic border procedures by strengthening the current border procedures to facilitate cross-border movement of goods and services; building special economic zones or markets to connect locally produced commodities to consumers; facilitating business development interventions to help local business conduct their operations seamlessly, and access affordable credit facilities and markets for locally sourced commodities.

To foster inter-clan integration, the CBCR Activity should train all leaders on the importance of peace and inclusivity in resolving the decades' long clashes. The main drivers of these clashes, as identified earlier, are supremacy battles to rule and control resources and power. As such, the project should focus on interventions that will foster integration by increasing accountability of leadership, sensitizing the community on the dangers of clannism, and advocating for inclusivity of all clans in positions of power, with a focus on gender balance and full representation of persons living with disability.

Another challenge facing the cluster is violent extremism. This is because extremism and radicalization in the Mandera cluster have put human development at risk, and socioeconomic activities have been impeded. As a result, there has been no positive change in people's lives. Additionally, people are unable to live the lives they value because they lack the opportunity and freedom to pursue education and training, as well as access to the resources they need to sustain a decent standard of living.

Violent extremist groups, although synonymous with Somalia, are rapidly spreading to other countries including, Kenya and Ethiopia, negatively impacting socio-economic development and progress. As a consequence of the terrorist actions, innocent civilians have been subjected to harsh economic hardships. There has been a decrease in foreign direct investment (FDI) as a consequence of terrorist activity, which has hampered economic growth. However, an opportunity exists for the CBCR Activity to contribute to countering violent extremism through capacity building and inclusive activities. The CBCR Activity can foster coordination and collaboration between different security agencies to work with the local community to eliminate the threat of violent extremism and radicalization; build the capacity of conflict resolution committees to resolve disputes on water and land, especially as communities scramble for the limited resources during the drought period; and involvement of women and vulnerable groups in charting solutions for a more sustainable and peaceful co-existence to entrench their voices and contribution to stability and resilience.

3.5. NAVIGATING RISKS: WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY TOWARDS ACHIEVING ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES

The successful implementation of the CBCR Activity is dependent on the interaction between the different factors identified in the APEA. The interaction between the different components will drive the desired change based on specific assumptions during the implementation stage.

The most important players are the stakeholders, who include the County Government of Mandera, District Commissioners for the Gedo region, clan elders, national government, local and international partners, and youth and women's networks. For the Activity to succeed, the local leaders should work with clan elders who are trusted by the community to advocate for the importance of the project, as well as to create an environment that will enable eased implementation. The clan and council of elders also wield enormous influence on the community and local leadership and are, therefore, strategic players in implementation. The clan elders will support in conflict resolution, equitable resource distribution and allocation, and lobbying for accountability and transparent leadership that is free from corrupt practices.

There are also other NGOs doing similar work or work that complements the objectives of the CBCR Activity and should, therefore, be considered as strategic partners in implementation and for peer learning. As such, early engagement with these groups of people will be critical to the CBCR Activity's success. Bespoke capacity building and awareness raising sessions will be vital to firm up the strength and increase preparedness and buy-in from these groups.

As the community members are at the centre, and subjects, of the CBCR Activity interventions, they will also play a vital role to the Activity's success. This is especially so since the local communities are the worst affected by ongoing drought, inter-clan conflicts, unemployment, and the challenges facing the Mandera cluster. The region also suffers from instability caused by violent extremism, which causes harm and destroys livelihoods and properties, exacerbating poverty and dependency levels.

As highlighted by most FDG and KII responders, their most immediate and pressing priority is stability and peaceful co-existence. The cyclic clan skirmishes over resources and power control create a disabling environment for implementation of the CBCR Activity. Without peace and stability, the community members will be less interested in creating sustainable livelihoods since all livelihood sources will have been destroyed or threatened except for the dark market controlled by the smugglers.

To overcome instability challenges, the CBCR Activity should strengthen social cohesion as a foundation for resilient programming. This involves designing interventions that will promote the good side of clannism (such as pulling society together), but reduce the negative effects of inter-clan supremacy battles. The project will also need to focus on counter violent extremism (CVE) interventions in order to eradicate the effects of radicalization of the youths.

However, CVE activities cannot be implemented without addressing the enablers among the youth. The lack of opportunities and income is the major incentive for youth joining outlawed militia groups where they are offered pay for their loyalty. Some of the youths who do not join the groups opt to migrate to Europe or to the Gulf in search of greener pastures and, in the process, are trapped in foreign countries by smugglers.

To address these social challenges, the CBCR Activity should aim to catalyze the creation of new businesses or growth of existing businesses to plug the gap in economic empowerment and employment opportunities. This can include designing interventions that increase connectivity in economic corridors through road and rail infrastructure to accelerate movement of goods and services across borders and access to other markets; eliminating bureaucratic border procedures by strengthening the current border procedures to facilitate cross border movement of goods and services; building special economic zones or markets to connect locally produced commodities to consumers; and facilitating business development interventions to help local business conduct their operations seamlessly, and access affordable credit facilities and markets for locally sourced commodities.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mandera cluster is a region that has grappled with social, economic, and political stressors and shocks for decades. The area is marginalized, with less infrastructure and fewer basic social services than many other regions. Insecurity stemming from violent extremism, ethnic conflicts, cyclic drought and the recent desert locust invasion are further stressing resilience among the cluster communities. The drought has caused loss of livelihoods and lives, severe food insecurity, scarcity in arable land and pasture, thus escalating food and oil prices and diminishing the purchasing power of the local people. The livestock sector, which is the backbone of the local economy, has been hard hit with lack of pasture and water. The livestock are slowly perishing and both milk and beef production are dwindling.

The threat of violent extremism and inter-clan clashes is still a reality. The local and national governments, and community leaders have put on concerted efforts to reduce the incidences of terrorist attacks and inter-clan clashes. These efforts include deploying armed forces to contain the terror threats, signing peace agreements to guide community engagement, and resolving any internal disputes amicably. These approaches have reduced the security threat, but are not fully efficient. Terrorists still attempt attacks, and the prevalent kidnapping and hijacking incidences constrain resources, exacerbating competition and potential for inter-clan conflicts.

The rapid growth in radicalization and terrorist networks is due to lack of opportunities for the youth, who are easy prey for radicals. The terrorist gang members easily recruit unemployed youths and indoctrinate them into extremism with a promise of financial rewards. A majority of the youths are illiterate, a factor that limits their access to available employment opportunities and credit from financial institutions for businesses. Illiteracy is more pronounced in the female population who suffer from patriarchal and chauvinistic ideologies. These ideologies are either religious or cultural, and are retrogressive to the growth of the female population by imposing rules that prevent them from equal access to opportunities and resources.

These challenges can be resolved through several strategies including:

- a) promotion of peace initiatives throughout the Mandera cluster in order to improve peaceful coexistence and equitable and access to pastures/water;
- b) investment in productive assets, natural resources management, and climate smart agriculture to boost food security;
- c) increasing access to basic services such as schools, health facilities etc.;
- d) investing in education through the provision of literacy programmes to enhance household adaptive capacities;
- e) implementing counter violence extremism (CVE) strategies, and working closely with the national and local governments to eliminate the threat of terrorism, amongst other measures.

To design bespoke and responsive interventions that will gain political and economic buy-in from leaders and cross border communities, the CBCR Activity should consider:

1. **Adopting a hybrid approach to peace-building and conflict resolution:** According to FGD participants, peace and stability remain top priority. The community and local leaders are developing mechanisms to ensure sustainable peace despite occasional incidences of inter-clan conflict. To gain political and community buy-in for CBCR activities, peace targeted interventions should be prioritized. The project can adopt a hybrid approach to conflict resolution. This includes the establishment of effective peace and conflict structures; re-

engineering the inter-government coordination mechanism to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts efficiently and effectively; and enhancing the capacity of cross-border conflict management. The hybrid approach takes into consideration strengthening effective local conflict reconciliation processes by participatory generation of locally-owned solutions; rebuilding trust between the local population and security agencies; resolving border disputes among clans through a mix of traditional and formal mechanisms; and championing a coordinated policy mechanism on cross-border security, movement, and trade between different local and national governments.

2. **Communication awareness campaigns:** The CBCR Activity can use creative communication strategies such as radio talk shows, radio dramas and series, town hall meetings, road show campaigns, social media etc. to influence behavioral change on certain aspects. These aspects include the political and social inclusion of minority groups such as PWDs, women, and youth.
3. **Creating spaces for inclusion of minority groups:** The CBCR Activity can support the establishment of bodies and mechanisms aimed at creating a space for discussions and exchanges on issues relevant to minorities. They should promote the participation of minority groups such as PWDs, women, and youth in public dialogues. The participation of minorities should be particularly encouraged and ensured through active outreach.
4. **Build strong coordination mechanism, institutional strengthening, and partnerships:** For optimal impact in building community level resilience to external stressors and shocks, different players must put their efforts together. This is critical as governments, donors, community leaders/members, and the private sector all have competing interests and different roles to play for the successful implementation of any intervention. Through a well formulated collaboration framework, the resources donated by external actors and the private sector will be well utilized to benefit the intended target groups. The CBCR Activity must endeavor to formulate strategic partnerships with all stakeholders and win buy-in or complementarity with existing interventions to deliver the project successfully.
5. **Promoting cross-border cooperation to enhance resilience and sustainable development:** Cross-border cooperation is a collaborative relationship between neighboring governments to address common challenges for the mutual benefit of communities living on both sides of a shared international boundary. Such issues might include increasing regional integration and economic cooperation, providing food security, and achieving social and environmental security. This is critical since at the borders, competition for natural resources such as pasture and water is fierce, and poses peace and security concerns. Furthermore, insufficient collaboration in agricultural growth, management of natural resources, and biodiversity protection and usage may offer significant difficulties to ensuring food security.

Inadequate infrastructure, such as roads, telecommunications, energy connectivity, and transportation is also a key barrier to regional integration. The aforementioned obstacles, among others, impede resilience building and sustainable development initiatives, affecting social justice and peace and stability in the Mendera cluster. The establishment of bilateral and/or multilateral agreements between Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya might help to promote cross-border collaboration. While some exist, they are dormant and their recommendations are not implemented properly. Collaboration and integration of arrangements through a single entity such as IGAD to hasten decision implementation can galvanize cooperation and enhance the resilience of cross-border communities.

6. **Drought response and recovery for cross-border communities:** With the ongoing drought ravaging and destroying livelihoods in the Mendera cluster, the communities and leaders are grappling to survive with meagre resources. Consecutive failed rains have forced the population

to be in dire need of relief support and economic recovery support to rebuild their livelihoods. As such, the focus of community and local leaders will be on recovery, and they are likely to support interventions that are in alignment with their goal. Therefore, the CBCR Activity could provide basic income and employment support as an effort to rebuild the cross-border communities from the devastation of drought, clashes, and attacks. The livelihood support will protect the most vulnerable households and rejuvenate local economic activities by creating artificial purchasing power in the affected areas. This support can be in cash or in kind such as distribution of consumables, food substances, and health products, and by increasing access to basic services such as education and health.