

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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Abbreviations

YECO: Youth Empowering Council

UNTMIS: United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia

G-FFO: German Federal Foreign Office

UNDEF: United Nations Democracy Fund

CSRV: Conflict-related sexual violence

EOL: Education Outloud

UNSC: United Nations Security Council

ETI: Equip Them Initiative

EFASOM: Education for All Somalia

WPS: Women, Peace and Security

YPS: Youth, Peace and Security

BoDs: Board of Directors

AUSSOM: African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia

AU: African Union

UNPBF: United Nations Peacebuilding Fund

Message from Us



It is with deep gratitude and reflection that we present our 2024 Annual Report. This past year challenged Somalia in profound ways, persistent insecurity, climate-driven displacement and economic fragility continued threaten the rights and dignity of millions and yet, within this complex landscape, we witness powerful stories of hope, transformation and collective action.

In 2024, we strengthened our focus on education, youth empowerment, women, peace and security (WPS), and human rights advancement. Our programming reached underserved youth with learning opportunities and practical skills, promoted community-led peace efforts and amplified the voices of women and girls in decision-making spaces. These achievements were made possible through the dedication of our team, the trust of the local communities and the enduring support of our partners and donors.

As we enter the finals stretch of our Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025, we reaffirmed our commitment to principled, inclusive and evidence-based action. We will continue to invest in youth, women and communities, strengthen social transformation and work toward a Somalia that is just, peaceful, and full of opportunity for all.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, and staff, thank you for walking this journey with us. With respect and solidarity.

Sincerely,
Mohamed Sharif Mohamed
HoP, Youth Empowering Council (YECO)



Background

Youth Empowering Council (YECO) is a women and youth-led non-profit organization found with the mission of empowering, nurturing and transforming women and youth to be selfreliant, independent and agents of change in their communities. Youth Empowering Council (YECO) operates in Banadir region, Hirshabelle State, South West State and Galmudug State of Somalia and focuses on women and youth empowerment, inclusive governance, social justice, economic development and peacebuilding.

Mission

Our mission is to empower, nurture and transform women and youth to be self- reliant, independent and the agents of changes in their communities.

Vision

We're envisioned to see empowered, nurtured and transformed women and youth who actively participate in the decisions that affect their lives and are the agents of changes in their communities.

Slogan

Empowered. Nurtured. Transformed.

Core Values

Inclusivity: is a core value that emphasizes the importance of creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all individuals involved with YECO. It promotes diversity and ensures that everyone, regardless of their background, ethnicity, gender, age, or abilities, feels valued and respected. Inclusivity at YECO means recognizing and appreciating the unique perspectives, experiences, and contributions of each person, fostering a sense of belonging and equal opportunity for all.

Accountability: is another fundamental value of YECO. It emphasizes taking responsibility for one's actions, decisions, and commitments. Within YECO, individuals are expected to act professionally, honestly, and ethically. They are accountable for delivering on their promises and meeting their responsibilities. This value fosters a culture of trust and reliability, where individuals are held responsible for their actions and their impact on the organization and its beneficiaries.

Collaboration: is an essential value at YECO, emphasizing the power of teamwork and collective effort. It recognizes that by working together, individuals can achieve greater impact and success. Collaboration involves actively seeking and valuing input from others, both within and outside the organization. It encourages open communication, cooperation, and the sharing of ideas, knowledge, and resources. Through collaboration, YECO aims to create innovative and effective solutions to empower youth and women and address societal

challenges: Continuous learning Continuous learning is a core value that highlights the importance of personal and professional growth. YECO acknowledges that learning is a lifelong journey and values a culture of curiosity, improvement, and adaptability. It encourages individuals to actively seek learning opportunities, engage in formal and informal education, and embrace new ideas and perspectives. Continuous learning at YECO fosters creativity, innovation, and the ability to respond effectively the pressing challenges in the community.

Country Situation: Somalia



Somalia remains under a fragile security environment dominated by persistent conflict, particularly in central and southern regions, largely due to activities of the armed group AlShabaab. International efforts to bolster Somalia's security framework proceeded, notably in December, 2024 the UN Security Council (UNSC) authorized a new peacekeeping mission, termed AUSSOM (African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia) with up to 12,626 personnel to success ATMIS, reflecting recognition of the need for continued stabilization support. Government challenges persist including weak institutional capacity, limitations in rule of law, and corruption.

The country's humanitarian situation in 2024 was dire, exacerbated by drought, flood, and conflict and food price inflation. According to IPC (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification), between July and September 2024, about 4.4 million people (roughly 19% of the population) faced acute food insecurity at "Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse levels. At the same time, approximately 33.9% of Somalis aged 15-24 who are in the labour force were unemployed and this figure represents a slight increase over 2023.

Access to education was limited as over 3 million children in Somalia are reported to be out of school in 2024. Barriers include ongoing conflict, displacement, poverty, safety concerns, lack of adequate infrastructure (including sanitation and water in schools), long distances, shortage of trained and female teachers and social norms that limit girl's attendance. Primary school enrollment remains and in many areas, only about one-third of school-age children attend primary school. This low attendance is further compounded by high dropout rates, especially among girls and among displaced populations.

Women and girls endure disproportionate impacts of conflict, displacement, and poverty. Gender-based violence, restricted access to justice and protection services and limited participation in political and public life remain critical issues. Displacement and breakdown in social supports compound risks of exploitation, early marriage, forced recruitment and deprivation of basic services. Children are particularly vulnerable, grave violations, including attacks on education, recruitment into armed groups, displacement and disruptions to health services persist.

Climate shocks in Somalia continued to drive humanitarian distress, drought remains a chronic risk, several consecutive seasons of below-average rainfall preceding mid-2024 damaged agricultural production and livestock health in many pastoral and agro pastoral communities. While intensified rains during some of infrastructure and disrupted markets in riverine and low-lying districts. The intersection between climate shocks and conflict magnifies suffering and displacement often follows drought, floods or a combination, meaning people lose their livelihoods, shelter and assets.

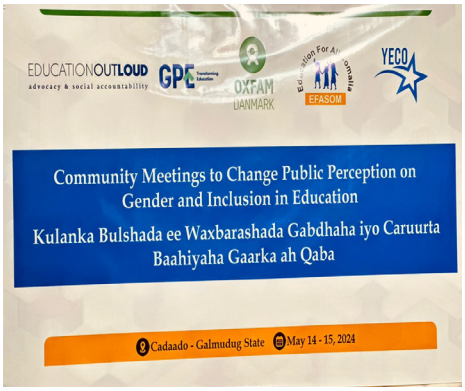
2024 At a Glance

- 250+ girls access to inclusive education has been advocated
- 60 fresh graduates equipped with the soft skills needed to navigate labor market and enhance employability chances
- 15 civil society actors were mentored, on women's protection issues
- 10 members of Cadaado district local council were engaged in supporting women's participation in peace and security
- 10 women representatives were trained on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda.
- Attended 1 national and 1 international workshops on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda and Climate Change.

Overall Programme Achievements

Thematic Area – Education

Education Outloud (EOL) Phase II



In 2024, Youth Empowering Council (YECO) continued its successful partnership under the Education Outloud (EOL) Project – Phase II, a Global Partnership for Education (GPE)- funded initiative implemented through Oxfam Netherlands and Education for All Somalia (EFASOM). The project aims to strengthen civil society capacity to advocate for equitable, inclusive, and quality education for all children in Somalia, with a particular focus on girls and children with disabilities.

The activities were implemented in Galmudug State of Somalia, where YECO conducted a series of capacity-building trainings targeting primary and secondary school teachers, district education officer staff, Community Education Committees (CECs), and other education stakeholders. These sessions equipped participants with advocacy skills and practical tools to advance education rights, promote gender equality, and foster accountability in the education sector.

The project also facilitated dialogue among district local councils, education office, and civil society organizations to strengthen education governance and inclusiveness. These engagements focused on developing and enacting local education policies that prioritize accessibility for children with disabilities, ensuring that the goal of inclusive education moves from policy to practice.

Furthermore, YECO engaged education stakeholders and the District Education Officer (DEO) in discussions to expand access to education in hard-to-reach areas of Cadaado district, Galmudug State. Through these initiatives, the project promoted collaboration among local authorities and communities, ensuring that education becomes more responsive to the diverse needs of learners.

Overall, the EOL Phase II project has significantly enhanced local capacity for education advocacy, improved coordination among education actors, and advanced efforts toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) — ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all.

Thematic Area – Skill Development
Equip Them Initiative (ETI) Program



Under the thematic area of Skill Development, Youth Empowering Council (YECO), in partnership with Nabaad, co-implemented the Equip Them Initiative (ETI) Program — a youth-focused initiative designed to empower fresh graduates with essential soft skills to navigate the labor market and enhance their employability.

Recognizing the pressing challenge of youth unemployment in Somalia, the ETI Program was developed as a practical response to bridge the gap between academic learning and labor market requirements. The program provided targeted training in areas such as communication, leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, professionalism, and workplace ethics. These skills are crucial for enabling young people to transition successfully from education to employment.

The program has been implemented in collaboration with various educational and civil society partners, including Horn of Africa University (HAU), Skillful International College, and iCOPE Somalia, as well as youth and community-based organizations. Activities were carried out across multiple districts in Somalia, including Cadaado district of Galmudug State, which served as the program's inception point.

Through interactive workshops, mentorship sessions, and networking opportunities, participants were introduced to real-world insights on employability and entrepreneurship. The program also fostered partnerships between youth and potential employers, promoting a spirit of innovation and self-reliance among young professionals.

Ultimately, the ETI Program contributed to broader national efforts to reduce unemployment by equipping young graduates with the skills, confidence, and mindset necessary to thrive in Somalia's evolving job market. The initiative continues to serve as a model for youth empowerment and skill development, aligning with Somalia's priorities for sustainable human capital development and economic resilience.

Thematic Areas – Human Rights and Women Protection
Civil Society Empowerment on Women Protection Issue



In Somalia, women continue to face significant challenges, including conflictrelated sexual violence (CRSV), which remains a critical human rights and protection concern. To contribute to local, national and international efforts to address conflict-related sexual violence, Youth Empowering Council (YECO), in partnership with the United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission (UNTMIS) brought together civil society organizations in Galmudug and organized a capacity-building workshop for civil society organizations (CSOs) working on women's protection issues in Galmuug State of Somalia.

The workshop brought together key civil society organizations to strengthen their technical capacity in monitoring, reporting, and analyzing conflict-related sexual violence. Participants received targeted training on data collection methods, ethical considerations in handling sensitive information, and survivor-centered approaches to ensure confidentiality and dignity in reporting. The training also enhanced the ability of CSOs to effectively refer survivors to essential medical, legal, and psychosocial services, ensuring that protection responses are comprehensive and coordinated.



The workshop curriculum was aligned with YECO's core thematic priorities, providing participants with a solid understanding of the nature, scope, and drivers of conflictrelated sexual violence in Somalia's context and by the end of the training, participants had acquired practical knowledge and analytical tools to improve the accuracy and consistency of CRSV monitoring and reporting, thereby strengthening local accountability and advocacy mechanisms.

The initiative was well organized and well attended, including participation from local government representatives such as the General Secretary of Cadaado District, who underscored the importance of building local capacities to address gender-based violence. The training covered key topics such as the definition of conflict-related sexual violence, its humanitarian and legal implications, the special protection needs of women and children in conflict settings, and the ethical standards for CRSV documentation.

The initiative also created a safe and collaborative space for dialogue, enabling CSOs to exchange experiences, identify challenges in addressing CRSV, and propose practical solutions. Participants expressed that the training significantly enhanced their ability to monitor and report CRSV cases and to connect survivors with appropriate services, including medical care, legal assistance, and psychosocial support. This initiative marked a major step forward in building a more responsive and coordinated civil society movement for women's protection and human rights in Galmudug State.

Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda

In alignment with the global Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, Youth Empowering Council (YECO), with support from the UN Women's Women Peace and Protection (WPP) Project funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund, UN in Somalia Joint Fund, and UN Women Somalia, implemented a series of interventions aimed at strengthening women's participation in peace and security processes in Galmudug State. The project sought to increase women's representation and influence in decisionmaking spaces, particularly at the community and local government levels and to achieve this, Youth Empowering Council (YECO) facilitated roundtable discussions between Cadaado District local council members and women's groups, providing an inclusive platform to exchange ideas, identify barriers, and explore strategies for enhancing women's leadership in peacebuilding and security governance.



Additionally, the project supported a radio talk show that hosted panel discussions featuring experts in the field of women, peace, and security, as well as the District Officer from the Ministry of Women and Human Rights (MoWHR) in Galmudug State. The program provided an opportunity for the public to engage directly in the conversation by directly posing their questions and recommendations. This interactive approach encouraged broad community dialogue on improving women's participation in peace and security and raised public awareness of the critical role women play in sustaining peace and promoting inclusive governance.



The overall objective of the project was to empower local council members and women's groups to advocate for women's active involvement in peace and security initiatives in Cadaado and surrounding areas. It also aimed to create a bridge between the public, government representatives, and experts in the field of women, peace and security, fostering mutual understanding and collaboration.

The project successfully achieved its intended outcomes by equipping local councilors with foundational knowledge of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) framework, increasing awareness among women's groups and the broader public, and establishing a platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue. These outcomes contributed to advancing gender equality, promoting sustainable peace, and ensuring that women's voices are meaningfully included in security and governance processes.

Memberships

Youth Empowering Council (YECO) maintains active membership in several strategic national and international coalitions, consortiums and advisory bodies, these memberships are amplifying our impact, coordinating advocacy and advancing our mission.

National Education for All Somalia (EFASOM) Coalition Youth

Empowering Council has been an active member of the Education for All Somalia (EFASOM) coalition since September 2021, where we included limited civil society organizations whose was selected to co-implement the Education Outloud (EOL) Project PHASE I&II, which is a Global Partnership for Education (GPE) funded project through OXFAM Netherland and dedicated to expanding access to inclusive and quality education for women and girls in Somalia.

Somali Youth Consortium

Youth Empowering Council is an active member of the Somali Youth Consortium, a platform dedicated to enhancing coordination, advocacy and mobilization efforts. Through this consortium, YECO contribute to collective efforts that engage decision-makers, and elevate youth voices to foster a peaceful, resilient and prosperous Somalia.

United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNTMIS) CSO Pool

YECO has been an engaged and functioning member of the United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNTMIS)'s Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Pool. This civil society organizations works with the mission, reports human rights violations and collaborates with the mission on capacity building interventions for fellow civil society actors, women, youth and human rights defenders.

Gender and Human Rights Advisory Council

Since 2024, Youth Empowering Council (YECO) has been an active member of the national Gender and Human Rights Advisory Council, this high-level council is co-chaired by Somalia's Ministry of Human Rights and Family Services and the Embassy of Canada to Somalia. Through bi-monthly meetings, the council plans strategies, reviews advocacy approaches and reinforces collaborative commitments to advance gender equality and make human rights a reality for all.

Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Workshop



In 2024, Youth Empowering Council (YECO) Somalia was invited by the Norwegian Embassy to Somalia to participate in a high-level workshop on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. This workshop provided our team with advanced knowledge and strategic skills to advocate effectively for women's meaningful participation in peace and security processes. The insights gained has directly informed and enhanced our advocacy and mobilizations efforts to implement the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda at the local level.

Our Partners

British Embassy Mogadishu

EISA

OXFAM IBIS

Education For All Somalia EFASOM

HEEGO FORUM

iCope Peace & Development

PEDDA PEACE AND DEMOCRACY DEVELOPMENT ACTION

NAQCA

GOBAAD YOUTH FORUM

Hiddo Tech Driven by Trust.

UNTMIS

ifa Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen

UNDEF The United Nations Democracy Fund

FNUD Fonds des Nations Unies pour la démocratie

Nabaad Shaping Tomorrow

YECO YOUTH EMPOWERING COUNCIL

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