

**Working Paper 193**

**Conducive Conditions:  
Livelihood Interventions in Southern Somalia**

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## **The Livelihoods and Chronic Conflict Working Paper Series**

This Working Paper forms part of a series that reviews the range of ways in which livelihoods approaches are currently used by operational agencies and researchers working in situations of chronic conflict and political instability (SCCPI). The aim of the series is to document current practice so that useful lessons can be learned and applied to ensure for more effective policies, needs assessment, and aid programming to support livelihoods during protracted conflict. Many of these lessons from each of the individual papers are summarised in a synthesis paper. The series also includes an annotated bibliography and a paper outlining the conceptual issues relating to the applications of livelihoods approaches to SCCPI.

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## Biographical Notes

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## Acronyms

ASP	Agricultural support project (SC–UK)
CIP	Community Intervention Project (ICRC)
CSP	Country Strategy Paper (SC–UK)
DC	District Commissioner
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGM	Female genital mutilation
FSAU	Food Security Assessment Unit (FAO)
GPS	Global Programme Strategy (SC–UK)
GRIP	Gravity irrigation projects
HEA	Household Economy Approach (SC–UK)
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IMC	International Medical Corps
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
MCH	Mother and child healthcare
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PIP	Pump irrigation project
SACB	Somali Aid Coordination Body
SC–UK	Save the Children–UK
SNA	Somali National Alliance
SNRS	Somali National Region State
SRCS	Somali Red Crescent Society
SRRC	Somalia Rehabilitation and Reconciliation Committee
TG	Transitional Government (Somalia)
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHRC	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation for Somalia
UNPOS	United Nations Political Office for Somalia
Watsan	Water and sanitation
WFP	World Food Programme

## Vernacular terms

<i>Arta</i>	Djibouti-hosted national reconciliation process that resulted in the formation of the Transitional Government, in mid-2000
<i>Berkads</i>	Lined water catchment
<i>Deyr</i>	Wet season between October and December
<i>Diya</i>	Blood compensation
<i>Gabaan</i>	Type of lactating animal that gives small amounts of milk but gives it all year round, as opposed to only on a seasonal basis
<i>Jilaal</i>	Long dry season between December and April
<i>Sharia</i>	Islamic canonical law based on the teachings of the Koran, prescribing both religious and secular duties, and in some cases retributive penalties for law breaking

## Summary

This Working Paper considers interventions by two organisations, in light of the working paper theme of linking livelihood approaches with recent work in the area of political economy. Save the Children–UK (SC–UK) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) work in southern Somalia and aim to support livelihoods within a situation of chronic conflict and political instability (SCCPI).

This paper describes the context in which the two organisations work in terms of the livelihood systems within southern Somalia, political economy themes as they relate to southern Somalia and programming possibilities in the area. The authors critically review two livelihood support programmes as case studies. These case studies aim to draw out the ways in which and to what extent the programmes of SC–UK and ICRC support livelihoods. How, and to what extent, the analysis of the political economy informs decision making by the two organisations is also explored.

The review of SC–UK’s work in Belet Weyn highlights the ways in which the Agricultural Support Project (ASP) aims to push staff development and community participation to the forefront of programming decisions in an effort to move from ‘free’ seed and tools distributions to a sustainable agricultural project. The review of the ICRC Community Intervention Project (CIP) emphasises the challenges inherent in the change of programming that the CIP presents to ICRC. These challenges include the targeting of beneficiaries and facilities, the use of cash in the context of political instability, and the influence of leadership structures and conflict dynamics.

The concluding section draws out the differences and commonalities in the approaches of the two organisations. Evidence from both case studies highlights the important role of contextual preconditions in terms both of the changing nature of the working environment in southern Somalia and the characteristics of particular organisations. The use of political economy information can be most clearly associated in the case studies with decision-making on the logistics of programme implementation, and is embedded in day-to-day action rather than in reference to a clearly defined model.

Finally, information about the strengths and weaknesses highlighted in the case studies is used to indicate the ‘conducive conditions’ required for livelihoods programming in SCCPI.

# 1 Introduction

This Working Paper considers interventions by two organisations, Save the Children–UK (SC–UK) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in southern Somalia. Both organisations work in a situation of chronic conflict and political instability (SCCPI) and have, in different ways, tackled the concept of supporting livelihoods within this context. Responses from both organisations have looked beyond the ‘traditional’ forms of relief aid in responding to humanitarian crises. The paper aims to describe the interventions and discuss them in the light of the Working Paper theme of linking livelihoods with political economy approaches. By illustrating actual interventions by operational organisations, the paper aims to give insight into the issues facing organisations when implementing programmes that attempt to provide principled support to livelihoods in a SCCPI. The achievements and limitations of these specific interventions in meeting the challenges posed are reviewed in case studies. Comparisons of the programming approaches of the two agencies follow the case studies.

Neither SC–UK nor ICRC has used a particular ‘livelihood’ model to design, implement or evaluate the programmes illustrated as case studies in this paper. Both organisations have stated that support to livelihoods is an objective that the programmes aim to fulfil. This paper aims to illustrate in which way and to what extent their programmes do support livelihoods. Neither SC–UK nor ICRC has explicitly referred to a ‘political economy approach’ during interviews or in documents pertaining to the programmes in question. Both organisations include some analysis of the political economy in programming decisions. This paper aims to explore to what extent this is the case, and how the information informs decision making.

## 1.1 Introduction to the context

### *1.1.1 Southern Somalia*

Southern Somalia’s last decade can be defined as chronically politically unstable. Since the fall of the Siad Barre regime in January 1991 Somalia has been without a central government. 1991/2 saw the collapse of the state, inter-clan warfare, widespread banditry and looting, displacement and famine. Hundreds of thousands of Somalis lost their lives during this period; large-scale refugee flows were generated together with internal displacement. Much of Mogadishu was destroyed and widespread damage was inflicted on agricultural infrastructure.

The United Nations Operation for Somalia (UNOSOM) was active in the country between 1993 and 1994. While some humanitarian needs were met by the international community during this period, the peace operation was drawn into armed conflict with the Somali National Alliance (SNA) and failed to bring about national reconciliation. ‘When the UNOSOM forces departed from Somalia in March 1995, it left the country still divided, without a central government, and with an economic infrastructure mostly still in ruins’ (Menkhaus, 2000:1.1). Since 1995 much of the population of southern Somalia has remained vulnerable to poor food security and has access to limited if any health care. Chronic problems of armed clashes and lawlessness exist in both urban and rural areas.

The establishment of a Transitional Government (TG) in August 2000 was the product of lengthy dialogue and negotiation. The hope of attracting substantial foreign aid has not materialised. ‘Most Western donors have adopted a “wait and see” approach and made aid conditional on signs of “effective government”’ (UNDP, 2001:54). The administration currently does not exercise any influence over most of the country, it attempts to govern on the basis of minimal financial resources and relies on support from the business community in Mogadishu. This support is waning as

merchants consider that their investment is not yielding expected results. The importation of large quantities of Somali shillings has been to the detriment of the value of the currency and caused hyperinflation. The prospects for the success of forthcoming reconciliation talks in Nairobi between the TG and rival faction leaders are considered to be poor (The Economist, 2002:27).

While the early 1990s saw relatively cohesive armed factions, the splintering of factions from the mid-1990s means that most conflict is now within rather than between major clans (Menkhaus, 2000:1). Conflicts tend to be local in character rather than protracted and widespread. There are pockets of stability and there are geographical areas that, while generally unstable, have periods of stability. Somalia's political and economic conditions are dramatically different today from those of the early 1990s when 'state failure translated into chronic and destructive civil war' (ICG, 2002:2). Unlike the situation in northern Somalia where the self-declared secessionist state of Somaliland has managed to provide a generally peaceful and lawful environment, the south has seen more localised efforts to re-establish rule of law in which clan elders, businessmen and the *sharia* courts play a role.

### *1.1.2 Political economy of war themes as they relate to southern Somalia*

Working in Somalia organisations engage with a system that is characterised by unequal distribution of power and resources. Le Sage (1998) states that, 'orthodox explanations of the war in Somalia overstate the influence of clans and environmental stress and understate the economic stratification of society and the role of self-interested elites'. Competition between the militia factions since 1991 has served to perpetuate long-term patterns of alienation and exploitation. While aid organisations aim to target less advantaged sections of the population and attempt to alleviate the negative economic impacts that exist within a stratified system, access to such groups is not without contact with and consent from those who hold positions of power. Mitigating the effects of extremely uneven distribution of aid is not a straightforward process but is one where humanitarian response and the design of programmes should include an analysis of the production and distribution of power, wealth and destitution. Such an analysis should include the potential for programming itself to exacerbate conflict (see Le Billon, 2000). Information gathering is a major challenge; those profiting politically and economically are highly unlikely to advertise the fact, least of all to a potential or actual source of such profit. Menkhaus (2002) notes that, 'unwillingness to assess implications of a war economy may also be characteristic of external actors'. As one example he notes that aid agencies can be quick to dismiss claims that food aid is diverted by warring parties.

The challenges faced by international organisations in Somalia during the early 1990s were extreme. Looting and diversion of relief aid was widespread. Many prominent businessmen in Mogadishu began to make their fortunes in the war economy of the early 1990s. The large-scale UN, ICRC and International non-governmental organisation (INGO) presence in Somalia in 1993/4 made profits in procurement, transport services, diverted food aid, weapons, and scrap metal available (ICG, 2002; UNDP, 2001; Menkhaus, 2002). Insecurity during this period promoted the now well established use of armed protection by aid agencies working in Somalia.

The business class has, more recently, become an independent political force in southern Somalia. Wealthy merchants and entrepreneurs have considerable influence. In 1999 in Mogadishu leading businessmen outflanked militia leaders from their own clans by refusing to pay them taxes, instead buying directly the backing of individual militia fighters. The businessmen then financed their own security forces and judiciary. The management of judiciary was 'subcontracted' to local *sharia* courts (ICG, 2002:3; Menkhaus, 2000:4-5). Even outside of Mogadishu businessmen are now capable of acting independently of militia. The ICG report (2002) that the international community



may have played a part in reducing the power of the militia and faction leaders and the decreased political affiliation along factional lines since the mid-1990s. 'In the past, large aid flows provided warlords with funds, and international mediation efforts gave them political legitimacy. In the absence of external recognition and resources, warlords have seen their influence dim' (ICG, 2002:3–4).

Recent analysis (ICG, 2002; Menkhaus, 2002) suggests that merchants, now more independent from factional affiliation, have moved into more 'legitimate commerce' than was the case in the early 1990s. This may in turn suggest that the necessary dealings that organisations have with businessmen are less questionable than was the case in the early 1990s. Lack of a state monopoly on security and the necessity of safeguarding trade convoys and businesses have created opportunities for private services that provide security. International aid agencies continue to employ armed security personnel to protect both stocks and staff. The militia and ex-militia employed by organisations would not generally be considered as stakeholders in a return to a system of law and order and can resort to extortion and threats against their employers. They tend, however, to be more strongly affiliated to the burgeoning 'security companies' than to active service in militia factions.

The benefits of economic growth are unevenly distributed in southern Somalia and there are sharp variations in local living conditions and income. The generation of wealth by entrepreneurs in transit, protection, money-transfers and telecommunications companies masks the living conditions of the majority of Somali households. The US\$ is currency of choice for major business transactions and savings although Somali shillings continue to be used in Somalia. Wealthy sections of society who have access to remittances and hard currency are much less affected by the recent major injections of new Somali shillings than small-scale agriculturalists and poorer sections of the population in general. While analysis of webs of social and economic entitlements and interactions that structure and sustain livelihoods should be present in the programming decisions of agencies, disentanglement from that complex is not a possibility unless it informs a case for disengagement.

### *1.1.3 Livelihood systems in southern Somalia*

This Section has been adapted from Le Sage and Majid, 2002. A useful starting point for an analysis of livelihood systems in Somalia is the Household (Food) Economy research undertaken by the Food Security Assessment Unit (FSAU) for Somalia.<sup>1</sup> This food security early warning and information unit has been collecting food security related information on Somalia for over five years. In that time it has been using the Household (Food) Economy Approach (HEA)<sup>2</sup> to categorise and describe different population groups in the country. Over twenty different food economy groups have been identified and described throughout the country. Each of these food economy groups fall into one of five broadly defined 'livelihood systems': pastoral, agro-pastoral, riverine, fishing (coastal) and urban.

FSAU has well developed information on pastoral, agro-pastoral and riverine systems – these are described in more detail below. FSAU also has more limited information of fishing and urban groups. The ICRC projects described in the case study are found in pastoral, agro-pastoral and riverine areas. The SC–UK project is located in a riverine area with some extension into agro-pastoral groups. Further details on the riverine are given in the SC–UK case study.

<sup>1</sup> The FSAU has a network of Somali professionals based in-country who collect and interpret a wide variety of data and information, including rainfall, crop production, livestock conditions, and market prices. Their reports are further analysed in Nairobi and disseminated in different forms to the aid community.

<sup>2</sup> The term and methodology originate with SC–UK, and is now often referred to as Household Economy Analysis. Simply put, food economy groups comprise individuals and communities who (i) share similar methods and patterns of accessing food, income, and (ii) are at risk to similar events that may undermine this access.

**Pastoralists.** In general pastoralists derive the majority of their food needs from the purchase of cereals, sugar, and oil. Milk and milk products comprise a significant additional food source. Income is mainly obtained from the sale of livestock and livestock products. Poorer wealth groups, with their smaller herd sizes, obtain a significant amount of food/income from activities such as petty trade, bush-product collection and casual labour. Intra-community gifts to the poor, such as lactating livestock, food and cash, are also common. The long, dry *jilaal* season is usually the most difficult time for pastoralists and their animals, when energy needs are high (during the search for water and pasture), and milk production and livestock prices low.

In general, pastoralists have been considered the least vulnerable to food insecurity over recent years due to a combination of political and natural circumstances, including the politico-military strength of the pastoralist clans and the mobility of their livestock-based assets. These generally positive trends have been interrupted by drought conditions and two bans on livestock imports from Somalia in recent years.

Factors undermining pastoral livelihoods include:

- Restricted grazing mobility due to insecurity
- Population expansion and sedentarisation
- Lack, and breakdown of, traditional (or other) pastoral environmental management systems
- Poor livestock health care systems in an unregulated drug market
- Conflict-induced asset depletion
- Increasing commercial and communal debt
- Poor terms of trade in some areas due to distance from markets
- Border closures and trade disruptions – livestock import/export bans
- Unregulated trading system, provides limited returns to producers
- High rates of expenditure on social services and production inputs (e.g. livestock drugs and treatment)

Factors sustaining pastoral livelihoods include:

- Increased sales of animals even during times of poor terms of trade
- Mobile assets, useful in times of conflict and drought
- Temporarily decreasing the household size and consumption burden by sending children to live with better-off relatives
- Increasing commercial and communal borrowing
- Rural-to-urban migration to seek employment opportunities
- Increasing reliance of poorer households on the generosity of their kin
- Increased exploitation of natural resources – collection/production of firewood, charcoal, aromatic gums

Reaching and working successfully with highly mobile pastoral communities, regardless of the security context, is notoriously difficult. Interventions in this sector are therefore generally limited to livestock health programmes and some water interventions. Education and some income diversification in localised areas are also beginning. ICRC interventions in pastoral areas are focused on the rehabilitation of water-related infrastructure.

**Agro-pastoralists.** Typically, agro-pastoralists derive the majority of their food from their own crop production, own milk production and some purchase. Income comes from the sale of livestock and livestock products, the sale of crops, and for poorer groups a variety of petty trade, casual labour and collection of bush products. Intra-community redistribution is also important for poorer groups.

In general, agro-pastoral households in Somalia have been considered the most food-insecure populations in recent years. Their vulnerability is due to a combination of natural and man-made factors. Agro-pastoral populations in southern Somalia primarily come from politically and militarily marginal clans, and have been amongst the greatest victims of violence since the collapse of the Siad Barre regime in 1991 (Besteman and Cassanelli, 1996). Combined with poor rains and harvests, the resulting asset losses (of both food stocks and livestock) and displacement have resulted in large-scale food deficits.

Factors undermining agro-pastoral livelihoods include:

- Poor rains and consecutive seasons of crop failure
- Conflict-induced asset depletion of fixed and immobile assets (e.g. land)
- Trade disruptions due to conflict and border closures
- Physical isolation from ports and services in Somalia's main urban centres
- Lack of security from violence and economic exploitation, especially for weaker social groups
- Increasing commercial and communal debt
- Crop pests, disease and bird attacks
- Decreasing levels of assistance from international aid agencies

Strategies sustaining agro-pastoral livelihoods include:

- Sales of household food stocks and livestock assets
- Seasonal migration to urban areas for employment
- Intra-community social support
- Increasing commercial and communal borrowing
- Selling part of a herd in order to buy fodder to keep the remainder alive
- Slaughtering new born calves in order to protect the mother
- Reduction of food consumption to below minimal nutritional levels for short periods of time

Interventions focusing on this group include the distribution of seed and tools and agricultural extension activities and livestock and human health programmes. As within livelihood groups, activities in the water sector have provided a point for intervention. ICRC interventions concerning agro-pastoral populations have focused on water and vegetable production.

**Riverine farmers.** Riverine farmers normally get the majority of their food and income from the production of irrigated food and cash crops. Poorer groups often have good casual labour opportunities on other farms, and also engage in petty trading and the collection of bush products. This group tends to have very small herds or no livestock at all. Riverine resources, such as fruit trees, wild foods and small bank-side plots can be important assets.

This group has suffered for two main reasons in the last ten years. Firstly, in many areas, riverine groups are politically marginalised, vulnerable to discrimination by well mobilised and well armed pastoralist militia who regard agriculturalists as belonging to a lower caste. In some areas, riverine groups have been forced off their former land holdings when mutually beneficial alliances have not been created with their neighbours. Secondly, heavy flooding, such as the El Nino floods in 1997 combined with the decrepit irrigation infrastructure, creates a constant risk.

Factors undermining riverine livelihoods:

- Lack of available land or secure tenure
- Lack of capital for land preparation, labour and fuel for water pumps
- High production costs and low market prices for produce
- Lack of access to and maintenance of irrigation infrastructure
- Lack of protection from seasonal flooding
- High market costs for fuel
- Lack of security from violence and economic exploitation

Strategies sustaining riverine livelihoods:

- Community labour to rehabilitate and maintain irrigation infrastructure
- Petty trade
- Casual employment – particularly agricultural labour
- Temporary migration to urban areas to seek employment
- Fish and wild-food consumption and sales

Investment in such riverine infrastructure as canals has been a significant input by the aid community in secure areas. These types of interventions are relatively visible, are seen to target a marginal group and to assist national-level food production and therefore food security. This type of intervention is often combined with agricultural extension and irrigation management training. Interventions concerning the riverine group are detailed in both the ICRC and SC case studies.

#### *1.1.4 Programming possibilities*

The mid-1990s saw something of a turning point for humanitarian efforts in Somalia. Le Sage and Majid note that changes in programming strategies were a response that attempted to address the implication of classical relief programming in financing war efforts and the problems of maintaining expatriate presence in Somalia given the security constraints (Le Sage and Majid, 2002:12). The Somali Aid Coordination Body (SACB) was established in 1995. This voluntary body which includes donor, NGO, and UN bodies as members is designed to facilitate information sharing and coordinate programming and policy formulation and ‘avoid the mistakes of large-scale, top-down aid programmes providing unsustainable social services until a crisis ends’ (Le Sage and Majid, 2002). The SACB handbook (SACB, 2001) states that the creation of the SACB aimed to facilitate donors in developing a common approach among themselves for the allocation of resources available for Somalia. The SACB Project Matrix identifies the activities of SACB partners in Somalia; these activities are categorised geographically and by sector. Sectors within the SACB system (health and nutrition, food security and rural development, water, sanitation and infrastructure, education and governance) are further split into subsections within the Project Matrix. Some sub-sections relate explicitly to relief-style programming (e.g. ‘emergency water and sanitation’) others are not explicitly related to relief/development continuum (e.g. ‘livestock’).

The SACB’s Guiding Principles of Operation (SACB, 2002) states within the section role of the international community that assistance shall seek to save lives, reduce human suffering and promote self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods for all populations in Somalia (SACB, 2002 emphasis added). The SACB has not been noted as providing a strong emphasis on promoting sustainable livelihoods nor the understanding of the political economy within which livelihood programming should be contextualised. However lobbying by individuals involved with the SACB and FSAU has created an environment where livelihoods programming is promoted within the humanitarian community and to some extent the influence of this has been felt. The ICRC programme described in the following case study was in a large part inspired and developed as a consequence of a general environment where livelihood programming has been promoted.

However, neither analysis of the SACB framework, nor assessments of environments conducive to particular programming hold the only keys to understanding programming choice and options in Somalia. The kind of programming, however represented within the SACB Project Matrix, is largely dependant on well used programming styles employed by organisations in their programming throughout the world, their experience (where it exists) of working in Somalia and the way Somalia is characterised as a place to implement programmes. While problems inherent in working within southern Somalia can be seen to offer a context for change in programming they can also be seen as a factor which tends to encourage ‘safe’ programming, i.e., tried and tested

programming styles used by organisations in other contexts, particularly those described as ‘emergencies’. One example is nutrition programming in the form of ‘supplementary feeding’, models of which are used worldwide in emergency contexts. Action Contre la Faim, as one example, uses feeding programmes as a basic response to ‘nutritional emergencies’ and has done so over a number of years. Despite running programmes in other countries which are more akin to livelihood programmes than emergency feeding (income generation for livelihood support as one example), in Somalia such interventions tend to be less likely to be implemented. Security conditions within Somalia and limited expatriate presence can result in organisations considering ‘classic’ programming styles with which they have experience as being the more viable option.

Organisations such as SC–UK and CARE that operate in contexts considered suited to ‘development’ programmes as well as ‘emergency’ contexts appear to be better placed to implement programmes that consider support to livelihoods rather than emergency distributions. This is likely a consequence of being able to apply intervention styles used outside situations understood as ‘emergencies’ to southern Somalia. In practice this translates as agricultural programming that aims to increase yield through the rehabilitation of irrigation systems. Organisations that are specialists in working in situations of crisis such as ICRC and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) have a stronger tendency towards programming that addresses basic needs over short periods of time. In southern Somalia such programmes tend to be repeated on a regular basis.

Donor support to Somalia has been criticised as limited and short-term in perspective. NGOs have to operate in accordance with strict donor conditions that aim to increase quality of strategy, reporting and programme design. Agencies tend to find the requirements difficult to meet. A current example is the European Commission (EC) requirement concerning community participation, standards of which are found to be difficult to achieve by funded NGOs. The EC have made the collection of baseline information mandatory for funded NGOs prior to project implementation, this should aid monitoring and impact analysis and encourage a better understanding of livelihood systems. The FSAU provide livelihood-related information to implementing agencies in Somalia. They are most associated with the production of monthly food security updates, seasonal crop assessments, early warning of potential crises and the generation of statistics on food aid needs. Although the information is fairly well used there is only limited understanding of the household economy methodology by implementing agencies and there are limits to the extent to which the FSAU information is translated into programming options.

The UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) collects information on Somalia but is rarely sought out by implementing agencies. The UN Security Office is more closely attached to UN agencies in the field because any potential or actual programme site must be cleared through this Security Office sites are also evacuated when the security office assesses this as necessary. The EC have an influence on NGO security procedure and provide some political information. The EC also controls the flight system used by the NGOs it funds. ICRC stands generally outside these systems as it charters its own aircraft and makes security-related decisions based on its own analysis. ICRC officially has ‘observer’ status within the SACB. In practice this means ICRC staff members attend SACB meetings, offer programming information to the Project Matrix but do not necessarily follow SACB policy and practice for field operations. It is not uncommon for ICRC to stand and act outside of co-ordination or operational guidelines for UN agencies and NGOs. Acting on the basis of its specific mandate and particular relationship with interlocutors in the contexts in which the organisation works, ICRC tend to assert the right to act as an institution with some independence from the wider body of humanitarian organisations. In the Somali context the basic rationale is that ICRC have negotiated and developed relationships which allow access to the field and intend to keep these agreements stable. The SACB has developed guidelines that involve local authority’s control over access to an extent that ICRC’s working relationship does not.

## 1.2 Introduction to ICRC

### 1.2.1 ICRC

The ICRC acts on the basis of the specific mandate it has received from the States bound by the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. The mandate is to protect and assist victims of war and internal violence and to promote compliance with international humanitarian law. This includes the task of monitoring the treatment of prisoners of war and other people detained in connection with conflict, and a right to propose its services in order to alleviate the suffering of all victims. The ICRC endeavours to draw attention to violations of international humanitarian law, to spread knowledge of this law and to promote its development. As the founding member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the ICRC directs and co-ordinates the international work of the Movement's components in connection with armed conflict and internal violence.

The ICRC's activities are aimed at protecting and assisting the victims of armed conflict and internal violence so as to preserve their physical integrity and their dignity and to enable them to regain their autonomy as quickly as possible. The ICRC is independent of all governments and international organisations, the ICRC is impartial, its criterion for action is the victim's needs. The organisation currently works in over 50 countries around the world, in addition to its operational delegations the ICRC has set up a network of regional delegations covering countries not directly affected by armed conflict. Contributions from governments, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, supranational organisations, non-governmental organisations, public and private sources and legacies fund its operations.

### 1.2.2 ICRC programming as it relates to livelihoods

The primary aim of ICRC assistance operations is to protect victims' lives and health, to ensure that the consequences of conflict – injury, hunger, disease or exposure to the elements – do not jeopardise their future. ICRC aims to maintain its independence throughout all stages of relief operations and to ensure that supplies are distributed in compliance with the principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality. Responding to immediate needs is now, where possible, combined with aiding the maintenance or re-establishment of the population's own means of survival. This strategy has been referred to in ICRC as 'agricultural and veterinary rehabilitation' and became part of ICRC's response to food crises resulting from armed conflict in the early 1980s. The first ICRC agricultural rehabilitation programme began in Cambodia in 1980. The programmes include seed, tools, fertilizer and pesticide distributions and vaccination programmes. Some training and promotion of sustainable agricultural methods have also been included.

In the ICRC, assistance activities fall within the Assistance Division that includes the Economic Security Unit, the Water and Habitat Unit, and the Health Services Unit. Currently, practice within the Economic Security Unit is described by ICRC as falling into three types of humanitarian activity: economic support, survival relief, and economic rehabilitation. To quote an ICRC report:

'Economic support aims to protect the vital means of production of conflict victims, so they can maintain their productive capacity and economic self-sufficiency at the household level as much as possible. Survival relief aims to protect the lives of conflict victims by giving them access to the economic goods essential to their survival when they can no longer obtain these by their own means. Economic rehabilitation aims to support conflict victims to restore their means of production, and where possible, regain their economic self-sufficiency' (ICRC, 2000:7).

While there is debate within ICRC concerning the inadequacy of the relief – development continuum, the majority of delegates working in the field tend to understand programming and describe programmes within this framework.

### *1.2.3 ICRC's past interventions in Somalia*

The ICRC's involvement with Somalia began with the official recognition of the Somali Red Crescent Society (SRCS) in 1969. ICRC sent First Aid teams to Somalia during the 1977/8 Ogaden War; the teams treated conflict victims and implemented medical projects for refugees. Between 1977 and 1988 ICRC delegates visited Ethiopian prisoners of war in Somalia and in 1988 the ICRC organised the repatriation of thousands of detainees. A permanent office of the ICRC was opened in Mogadishu in 1982. Health posts and dispensaries were set up in northern Somalia in co-operation with the SRCS. The following year a surgical hospital was established in Berbera.

The outbreak of civil war and the major emergency in 1991 led to one of ICRC's biggest relief operations in its history. The organisation delivered dry food rations to more than a million people and cooked food to 600,000 people daily. In 1992, the ICRC supported the opening of Keysaney hospital in northern Mogadishu by the SRCS. Other programmes included well rehabilitation, livestock vaccination campaigns and seed and tools distribution concurrent with food aid. During this period ICRC aimed at implementing programmes to protect or restore people's productive capacity while still supplying immediate food assistance and medical care.

Following the emergency and the greater presence of aid agencies in Somalia during the mid-1990s ICRC gradually reduced its emergency relief efforts and focused on restoring family links, visiting detained persons and providing medical assistance. As a result of the deteriorating security situation, the ICRC delegation decided to move from Mogadishu to Nairobi in 1994. The organisation began to run programmes from Nairobi by working through its Somali field officers and weekly expatriate visits. In 1997 thousands of Somalis were left homeless, hungry and sick by devastating floods. The ICRC reacted by launching an emergency operation to airlift food, medicines and sanitation equipment for the victims. In 2000, the ICRC supported the opening of Madina hospital; a cost-recovery system has since been put in place.

The second case study within this paper details one current ICRC project. The ICRC Community Intervention Project (CIP) in southern Somalia aims to provide an economic input into selected communities to aid households most in need overcome a limited period of economic insecurity. It also aims to provide longer-term support through the rehabilitation of a relevant economic infrastructure to benefit the whole community. The CIP is a small part of ICRC's programming in Somalia. The CIP shows the strongest link with the theme supporting livelihoods of all the ICRC activities within Somalia. It is also illustrative, to some extent, of a point of departure from previous programming by ICRC in Somalia.

## **1.3 Introduction to Save the Children**

Save the Children has a Global Programme Strategy (GPS), which informs and is adapted to regional and country contexts and strategic plans. Underlying the organisation's entire work is a framework of child rights, as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other human rights instruments.

One of the very broad themes that is highlighted in the GPS is that

‘[the SC] approach is very different from the short-term humanitarian relief efforts undertaken by many agencies. SC seeks to prevent such emergencies (e.g. by looking to improve food security), to base action on good analysis, to provide material and other assistance in ways that assist long-term recovery’ (SC–UK, 1997:1).

The six core areas in which SC works are:

- Social Protection, Welfare and Inclusion
- Education
- Health
- Food Security and Nutrition
- HIV/AIDS
- Children and Work

These six areas, which provide the focus of SC’s global work are outlined in the Programme Strategic Plan (developed in 1999) with gender and disability providing cross-cutting themes (SC–UK, 2000a).

### *1.3.1 SC programming as it relates to livelihoods*

SC as an organisation has experience and expertise in situations of both ‘emergency’ and ‘development’, and aims to balance the two. The organisational philosophy stresses the need for timely emergency interventions to preserve livelihoods and protect children’s rights, rather than belated ‘life-saving’ approaches.

The organisation has identified a number of advocacy priority areas.<sup>3</sup> These are:

1. Economics
2. Emergencies
3. Basic services
4. Citizenship
5. Child rights

Across the priority areas, ‘the cross-cutting issues of gender, disability and livelihoods analysis are crucial dimensions’ (SC–UK, 2002:10).

The meaning and use of livelihoods analysis is articulated in a number of different ways. It is recognised as a tool, with multiple dimensions. For SC, ‘livelihood analysis constitutes social and economic research, at inter- and intra-household and community levels with linkages to the wider social and economic environment’ (SC–UK, 2000a:6).

SC’s development and use of the HEA methodology over many years plays an important part in their interpretation of ‘livelihoods’.

‘*Livelihoods* includes household income and expenditure patterns, participation, social capital and the environment as they relate to basic needs – food, water, health, education and shelter. The development of a livelihood analysis methodology is an extension of the household food economy model’ (SC–UK, 2000a).

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<sup>3</sup> These five priority areas are different from the six core areas previously mentioned. However SC is currently making a shift from its previous core areas to a new global strategic focus based on the priority advocacy areas mentioned.



In practice, what this means and how it is used for programming will vary according to the local context and the interpretation (or lack of) by programme staff. At a global organisational level the HEA approach has made limited in-roads into informing programme design, implementation and evaluation to date.

In terms of the Somalia programme, ‘emergencies’ provides the priority area for SC–UK’s focus. The goal for this priority area is to minimise children's suffering due to conflicts and natural disasters. The four objectives are:

1. The international community provides appropriate aid for ‘silent emergencies’ to meet the survival and protection rights of children in equitable, appropriate and sustainable ways;
2. Governments, humanitarian agencies and donors maintain minimum standards of practice in protection of children affected by emergencies, especially work with separated children and child soldiers;
3. Governments, humanitarian agencies and donors improve food security and nutrition information systems in order to strengthen preparedness and responses to acute and chronic food and nutrition problems affecting children, with a focus on building the capacities of vulnerable households to prevent and mitigate the impact of crises;
4. Donors, governments and humanitarian agencies provide timely and high standard health, nutrition, education and HIV/AIDS-related services for children in emergencies (SC–UK, 2001–5).

### *1.3.2 Background to SC’s past interventions in Somalia*

SC–UK has been active in Somalia since the 1950s. In the 1970s and 1980s it was working in the north of the country running a large programme in the Refugee Health Unit, in collaboration with the then Mogadishu-based Ministry of Health.

SC–UK remained in Mogadishu from 1991 to 1993, during the collapse of the state and resultant chaos. By 1993 the organisation had expanded to include Mogadishu, Belet Weyn, Bardera and Jalalaxi. In 1994 the field office in Mogadishu was moved to Nairobi, in common with many other organisations. By 1997, the Belet Weyn Programme was the only project area. All other programmes had close down in the mid-1990s due to a combination of insecurity, strained relations with local authorities and internal evaluations showing programmes to be too large, very expensive and having limited impact.

Emergency work during the period 1991 to 2000 included:

- Supplementary feeding programmes in southern/central Somalia
- Mother and child health care (MCH) for malnourished children in Mogadishu, Bardera, Belet Weyn and Jalalaxi
- Provision of food aid, shelter materials, latrines and wells in camps for displaced people
- Provision of shelter materials, seeds and tools in response to flooding

With only one programme base in Somalia, namely Belet Weyn during 1998/9 the country office carefully considered options for developing the geographical scope of its work within the framework of a now well defined country programme strategy (2000–4). The Somalia Country Strategy Paper (CSP) (SC–UK, 2000c) identified four key strategic objectives that the programme aimed to address in Somalia:

1. Enable Somali children to have access to better health and appropriate and equitable basic education;
2. Improve access for Somali children to enough food for their proper growth and development;

3. Achieve greater protection, care and social inclusion for children in vulnerable circumstances who are subject to abuse, discrimination and/or who are disadvantaged [girls subjected to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and children in institutions] and to develop a better understanding of issues related to HIV/AIDS and urban poor children;
4. Be prepared to respond to emergencies where basic needs are not met and where SC has the capacity to assist in a timely and effective manner.

It was decided that Somaliland, where SC has a long association and where the political environment was more stable, provided the programme with an environment conducive to addressing key issues affecting children through strong, potential partnerships. In 2000 SC re-established its programme in Somaliland, currently limited to the education sector.

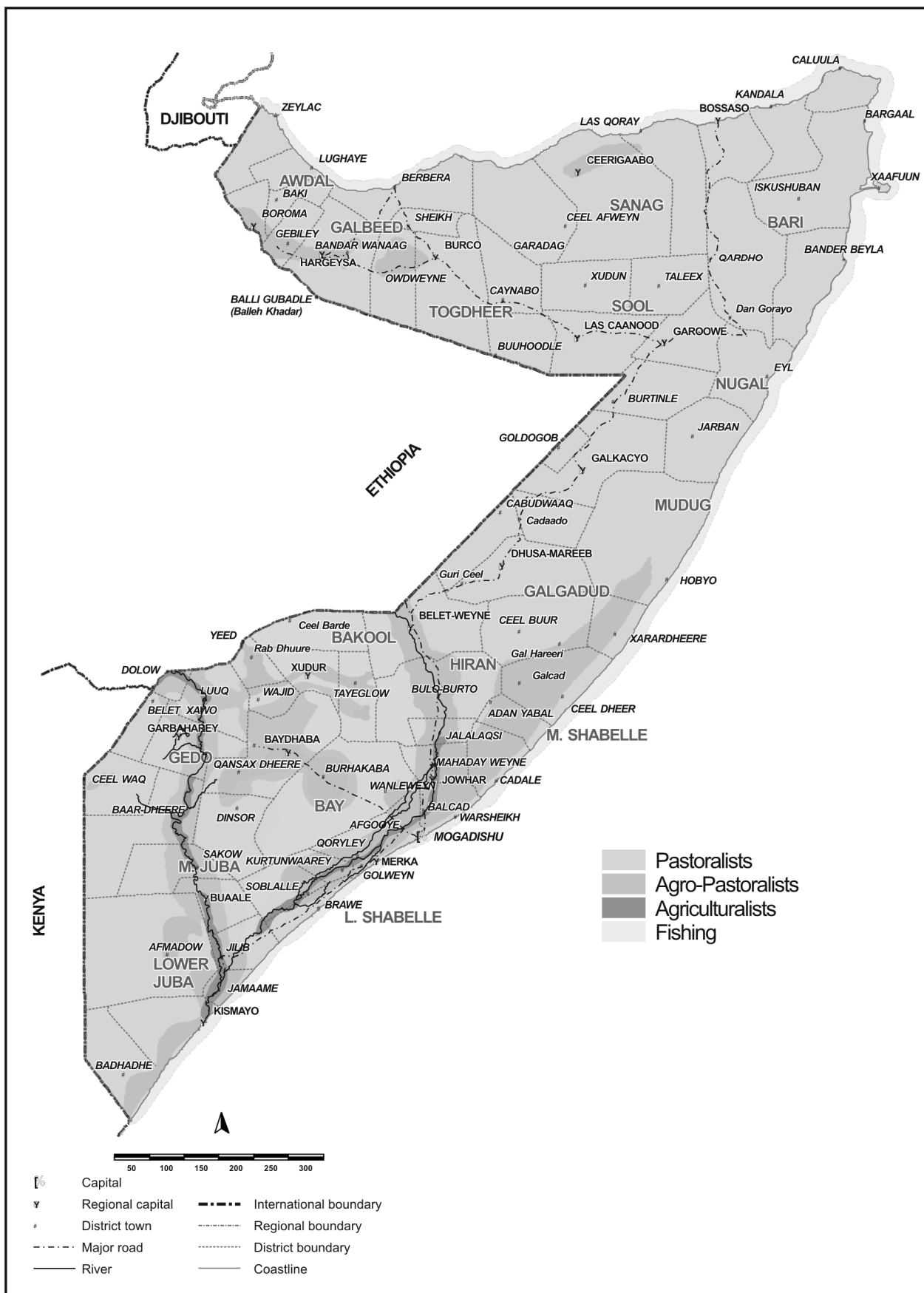
SC–UK was also instrumental in the creation and development of the FSAU for Somalia. This unit was housed within the World Food Programme (WFP) from 1994 to 2000 and has since moved to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The major involvement of SC–UK was in promoting the use of the HEA for food needs and food security assessments. From 1997 until 2001 SC–UK had a full-time HEA specialist seconded to FSAU.<sup>4</sup> As this Unit covers the whole country SC–UK has had an interest in the overall food security status of Somalia.

The following section is a case study of the entire SC–UK programme in Belet Weyn, southern Somalia. It is a historical description of organisational change and development that has brought SC–UK to a position recently where in many respects it is operating a livelihoods-sensitive programme.

A map of Somalia is provided in Figure 1.

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<sup>4</sup> Since the move to FAO FSAU has essentially adopted HEA fully as its analytical framework, it now has strong internal HEA capacity, and the seconded link has ended.



Source: FSAU-FAO

**Figure 1 Somalia, major food economy groups and areas, prepared by the Food Security Assessment Unit of FAO (FSAU-FAO)**

## 2 Case Study: Save the Children–UK in Belet Weyn, Somalia

This case study is a description of SC–UK in Belet Weyn over its ten years in the district. While the focus is on the last three to four years reference is made to the full and longer period in order to illustrate important changes in context that have occurred. Over the more recent period the study highlights the relative stability and continuity, in terms of staffing and security, that have allowed SC–UK – its people and projects – to learn and evolve in to a well integrated series of interventions that are sensitive and responsive to (changing) community livelihoods.

### 2.1 Evolving programming directions

#### 2.1.1 Background

As an organisation SC–UK claims to bring a ‘developmental’ approach to emergency interventions. In the early to mid-1990s in Belet Weyn, as in most of southern Somalia, classical relief and rehabilitation programmes were common. SC was involved in supplementary feeding centres, MCH for malnourished children and seasonal distributions of free ‘seed and tools’. While the feeding centres and MCH support were phased out by 1994, seed and tools distributions were maintained.

Programmes were interrupted for nine months in 1994/5 due to the occupation of the region by the warlord Hussein Aideed. Activities resumed very slowly due to the threat of further incursions. However, by 1997, with the recognition that years of free seed and tools were likely to be undermining local coping strategies, the SC Nairobi staff, with their national counterparts, started to prepare for a programming switch to a more community involved sustainable agricultural project.

Thus, in early 1998 the Agricultural Support Project (ASP) began. The major aim of the ASP was to switch from free seed distributions to the multiplication of seeds in grouped village sets. Agricultural extension and canal rehabilitation were also components of the work, as were community contributions and involvement, in terms of land and labour.

The beginning of the ASP was also associated with the arrival of four new international members of staff, where there had previously been only two. Two of the new arrivals were based in Belet Weyn to support the ASP directly and coordinate the overall programme there. The new Country Director and his deputy were Nairobi-based.

The ASP, a two-year programme, gave the organisation a certain amount of stability, continuity and a new, changed focus in Belet Weyn. In the beginning however there was a period of re-organising and settling in by all of the new staff members, particularly as the Belet Weyn programme had been weakly supported for a number of years prior to 1998. In 1999, a new Programme Co-ordinator arrived in Belet Weyn, with a strong agricultural background and the ASP undertook its first impact assessment survey.<sup>5</sup> These two events were critical for informing the next, and much improved, phase of the ASP.

The second phase of the ASP, which began in mid-2000, also saw the developments of water and sanitation (Watsan) and education projects. All three projects were able to take advantage of the lessons learned in the first phase of the ASP, including a good understanding of the ‘livelihoods’ of the beneficiary communities built up during the assessment survey, and the good relations and involvement of the community that were developing over time.

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<sup>5</sup> This survey involved the input of the FSAU and the HEA methodology, and is elaborated later in the paper.

This experience therefore helped SC–UK to develop a well linked overall programme (the three sectoral projects) with a strong community involvement (including increasing emphasis on women and children), based on a sound understanding of the community. This same period, 1998 to the present, has seen relatively good security conditions and no ‘acute natural disaster’,<sup>6</sup> which have provided conditions conducive to institutional learning and growth. At the same time the organisation has demonstrated good awareness of changing ‘livelihood’ conditions, and flexibility and opportunity in programming by responding with a quick impact emergency seed distribution at a critical time (see Section 2.2).

This case study is therefore suggesting that the organisation is starting to ‘see’ and follow the community in a holistic ‘livelihoods’ manner and is able to respond accordingly.

## 2.2 Programming in Belet Weyn

SC currently operates three sectoral projects that have direct linkages with each other and common approaches to the way in which they work.

- ASP is considered ‘the mother of all programmes’ by the national staff. Its general objective has been to improve the food security of target communities and the district in general. This has been pursued through agricultural extension activities, the rehabilitation of canals, the multiplication of seeds and the provision of water pumps;
- The Watsan project includes the construction of latrines, shallow wells, animal troughs and *berkads* together with the dissemination of information on better hygiene and sanitation;
- Education is the newest project. Construction of schools, teacher training and the development of teaching materials are its main component.

The common approach that runs through all of the projects is related to the nature of engagement with the community. All projects require a contribution from the community, usually in the form of materials and labour. All projects also involve the creation of management committees, which then become the focus for ongoing training and problem solving with SC support. The Community Development Officer, a woman, is the focal point for the community training for all of the sectoral projects. She is also involved in building women’s and children’s participation. She is often assisted by a female colleague whose major focus is health promotion in the Watsan project.

SC has also played an important coordinating role in the district during this time, attempting to encourage and lead inter-agency coordination, in addition to managing the airstrip for humanitarian (ECHO-funded) flights, the latter involving logistics and security.

## 2.3 Building a livelihoods approach

### 2.3.1 District background

Belet Weyn town, the capital of Hiran Region is the SC–UK base. Since SC–UK established their operation in 1992 they have only worked in Belet Weyn district. The population of this district, one of six in the region, is estimated at between 30,000 and 63,000. Population estimates anywhere in Somalia are very crude. Hiran region is centrally located within Somalia and to a large extent within the entire Somali sub-region<sup>7</sup> of the Horn of Africa. Hiran borders the Somali National Region State

<sup>6</sup> These are certainly relative concepts. Security is always fragile and limited emergency interventions have taken place during this time, by SC–UK and others. See Bradbury (1998) for a discussion of deteriorating standards in responses to humanitarian crises.

<sup>7</sup> That includes the Somali-populated areas of Kenya and Ethiopia.

(SNRS) of Ethiopia to the north, Bay and Bakool regions to the west, Middle Shabelle region (close to Mogadishu) to the south, and Galgaduud region to the east. As such, and because it has an old tarmac road it is an important trade and transport hub, linking Mogadishu, and therefore some of the coastal ports, with SNRS Ethiopia and the more stable, dynamic northern Somali regions of Somaliland and Puntland.

The region has the Shabelle, one of the two major Somali rivers running through its centre, giving it irrigation/agricultural potential and dry-season water for livestock and humans. The region is largely semi-arid and apart from the riverine area is generally considered best-suited to livestock rangeland. Some rainfed agriculture does also take place.

A general trend in Somalia after the collapse of the government and breakout of civil war in 1991/2 was the exodus of people from Mogadishu to their respective clan areas. After having one of the highest urbanisation rates in Africa prior to the war, Somalia has seen many previously small towns grow dramatically as the educated, business and other urban peoples have returned 'home'. These 'returnees' have had to identify and create economic opportunities in order to re-build their livelihoods (UNDP, 2001). Belet Weyn town, being well positioned in terms of trading opportunities and maintaining relatively good security is a good example of such a new and growing town. The returnee phenomenon is also something that has involved the riverine Bantu, who have generally been the SC–UK target population. Many Bantu from further down-river have moved up to Hiran region and Belet Weyn district over the years due largely to insecurity in their own areas.

Unusually for Somalia, the Bantu of Hiran region have not been particularly exploited, looted or targeted over the last ten years. This is in stark contrast to the Bantu of the lower Shabelle and Juba river regions, where a history of labour and land exploitation associated with plantation and large-scale commercial agriculture exists (Besteman and Cassenelli, 1996), and which has continued in various forms up to the present. The Bantu of Hiran are well represented at the traditional elders level and many say they have the same rights as any other clan in the region.<sup>8</sup> The Bantu in this region have also been armed for some time, and are so able to defend themselves, whereas in other areas this is not the case, or has only recently become so.

The major economic components of the Hiran, and particularly Belet Weyn economy, are trade- and remittance-related, particularly for the urban economy, and livestock and agriculture-related for the rural economy. There are also significant links between the rural and urban economies in terms of social networks and trade relations. An expanding Belet Weyn town has provided a market for many rural products, including building materials, crops, livestock, and labour.

Social services such as health, education and water are very limited throughout both district and region. Such services are provided in rural areas to a very limited extent mainly by international organisations. In Belet Weyn town, some private facilities are available to those that can afford them. These include health, education, electricity and telecommunications (e-mail, internet, and mobile phones).

There are four main food economy<sup>9</sup> or livelihood groups in the district and region; pastoral, agro-pastoral, riverine and urban. These have been summarised earlier in Section 1.1.3. SC–UK mainly works with the riverine communities and to a lesser extent with the agro-pastoralists. The following is a profile of the riverine group.

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<sup>8</sup> The only obvious separation being the lack of inter-marriages between Bantu and the main Somali clans.

<sup>9</sup> Food economy group is a term associated with SC's development of the Household (Food) Economy Approach, or Household Economy Analysis (both – HEA).

### 2.3.2 Local livelihoods

The basic determinant in the success of a riverine livelihood is access to water. This is normally obtained through pump-irrigation and rainfall.<sup>10</sup> An individual or a village may own a pump or have to hire one. The cost of irrigating one's field includes fuel and usually a maintenance price for the pump. All the riverine agriculture is small-scale, with plot sizes of less than a hectare (most commonly), to several hectares. Maize and sorghum are grown and small vegetable gardens are increasingly common. Riverine groups in Hiran, unlike those in many other areas, also keep some livestock, typically a small number of cattle and goats. A number of other income-generating activities may also be carried out. Poorer households and villages are characterised by their involvement in casual labour and the collection and sale of such bush products as firewood and construction poles. Reasonable opportunities exist for both these activities, as successfully irrigated farms do exist along the river, with a seasonal demand for labour, and the rapid growth of Belet Weyn town provides a market for construction materials, firewood and casual labour. Village men and elder children may travel far for construction materials, particularly in difficult times, reaching Ethiopia from where they will float material down river, back to Belet Weyn. This activity can take them away from their families for up to 20 days a month.

As mentioned, the major threat to livelihood success is related to access to water. If rains are poor, the need for costly irrigation increases. Similarly if the river water level is low or the cost of fuel is high, pumping water is expensive. The timely accessibility of pumping facilities is also a problem, given the high demand and limited pumps available in the area. At the other extreme, severe flooding poses a risk to irrigation infrastructure, including canals and pumps. Pump maintenance and obtaining spare parts may also be problematic.

Although the general perception of the 'pastoral Somali' and many international observers is that the riverine Bantu are amongst the poorest and most vulnerable of groups, due to their lack of livestock and minority status, the dynamics of changing vulnerability are not sufficiently explored and followed. As has already been mentioned the Bantu of Hiran, socially and politically, have relatively equal status within traditional governing structures. Economically and in terms of food security the riverine farmers throughout southern Somalia have generally been doing relatively well in recent (drought) years.<sup>11</sup>

In northern riverine areas such as Hiran, where pump-irrigation is necessary, as opposed to the flood-irrigation of southern riverine areas, the dependence on, and cost of access to pumps creates significant differences in livelihood patterns and vulnerability to food insecurity compared to the southern areas. The riverine farmer who cannot guarantee access to water does become very vulnerable to poor rainfall. With few livestock as a reserve the riverine farmer may soon fall into a dependence on casual labour and the collection and sale of bush products, which in turn may limit his involvement and investment in agriculture.

However, with secure access to irrigation water, the riverine farmer may soon start accumulating wealth, even in dry years. In consecutive dry years the pastoralist and agro-pastoralist groups become much more vulnerable to food insecurity and livelihood collapse. A thorough understanding of these local conditions and changing dynamics is necessary for good targeting.

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<sup>10</sup> Irrigation is supplementary to rainfall, as irrigation is costly, in terms of fuel, maintenance and hiring.

<sup>11</sup> This is due to a significant investment by the international community in the rehabilitation of irrigation infrastructure as well as the relative peace that has existed in some of the riverine areas. As a result, since the late 1990s the FSAU has been classifying riverine groups relatively low on the scale of vulnerability to food insecurity in southern Somalia. The factors that had most affected them in the past were the collapse of the government and therefore the collapse of irrigation infrastructure and the further damage and destruction to irrigation infrastructure that occurred as a result of the El Nino-related flooding of late 1997. In more localised areas, violence, looting and suppression also damaged their livelihoods in the early and mid-1990s.

### 2.3.3 Indications of impact

The impact of SC–UK’s work in Belet Weyn needs to be considered in several different but inter-related ways. The social side, in terms of community links and capacity building has been evolving over many years. However, only since 2000, with the new ASP (which, significantly, introduced water pumps) and the integration of Watsan and Education, all within a common strong community focus, has SC–UK really been having a big multi-dimensional impact.

Perhaps the most widespread or general impact of SC–UK in Belet Weyn, particularly over the last four to five years, has been in its social mobilisation and community organisation work, especially in shifting community expectations and thinking away from a ‘*ken*’ (bring me) attitude to one of more self-dependence. One of the best illustrations of this is in the nickname that has been given to the organisation – *Gabaan*.<sup>12</sup>

SC–UK has steadily improved the quality of its interaction with, and support of, the community. Gaining real community contributions and involvement takes time, especially where there is a weak history of such relations. When interviewed, some community members described how SC–UK ‘kept coming back’ to explain why they must give some land and labour, ‘for nothing’. Elders agreed to try this new system and now agree that the old approach was akin to ‘being given a school but having no teachers’.

The involvement of women and children and the promotion of links between the different sectoral projects have been major aims of the project, and both contribute to good livelihoods – based understanding and therefore appropriate responses. The two community development officers are both women. When asked how they have had an impact on village life, village women replied ‘seeing a woman arriving in a vehicle, working for a foreign organisation, and dealing with men in a strong way, was important for us to witness’. Some women mentioned how in the beginning they were shy, when sitting on committees and in meetings, and the men were uncomfortable also, but over time they have all adapted. The role of the SC–UK community officers is deliberately separated from resource decision-making. They are there to facilitate discussion and transparency in order to help identify problems and solutions in project running. This is mainly done through the village management committees that are comprised of both men and women (although women are still in a minority).

One tangible example of how women have made their voice meaningful is the nomination of a woman to the overall Village Management Committee, normally a male preserve, in one village, a few months after SC–UK started. The women mentioned the fact that because they are now members of the community management committees, a necessary pre-requisite of a SC–UK project, they could also argue to be on the highest village committee.<sup>13</sup>

In another village a group of women felt the need to raise attention to the plight of the poor. Because the poor and disadvantaged in a particular village did not have the necessary means to buy irrigation water, the women advocated for them to be offered credit, payable after the harvest. In another village, the women raised money to enable the poor to pay for their water.

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<sup>12</sup> *Gabaan* – a type of lactating animal that gives small amounts of milk but gives it all year around, as opposed to only on a seasonal basis. In interviews communities have described SC–UK’s production (or contribution) as small but very valuable and reliable. They also describe SC–UK as ‘always being with them’, and ‘knowing their needs’. In so saying they are comparing the high profile but short-term impact of other agencies, with SC–UK’s low resources and profile but continuous support.

<sup>13</sup> While it seems that the influence of SC is very strong in this regard, particularly with their district wide presence and influence in other villages women have also achieved presence on the highest committees, sometimes due to a past intervention where it was required, but also due purely to their own efforts.



Other women explained how they used to be separated from the men, remaining at home, and didn't know what the elders were discussing when, for example, SC–UK visited. Now they have been brought out and are involved in all activities.

One of the approaches of SC–UK to community participation and capacity building in Belet Weyn is the very open process of community training, workshops, and agricultural demonstrations. This means that different villages and clans and communities are often brought together, when they share information and experiences. Some villagers mentioned how they had made 'new friends' from these gatherings and go and visit other projects/villages to see how they are doing. This type of exchange and openness has positive benefits in terms of community relations in an environment where security is fragile. In some areas such interaction is deliberately encouraged. For example, when one village that wanted to start a school with SC–UK support but did not have enough teachers, it was suggested that they contact a neighbouring village, from a different clan, in order to explore building and using a school together.

Where SC–UK has brought in water-pumps the impact on livelihoods, at both economic and social levels, is dramatic. Many villages were said to be 'empty' when they had no access to pumped water. The men and possibly the elder children would be out searching for labour in other towns and villages or collecting bush products. The family members were too busy and dispersed to even know what each other was doing. Villagers explained how 'their families are now back together' and that 'friendships have been strengthened' and 'there is more time to talk'. One of the women said that 'now the father is around to assist [financially] if one of the children is sick'.

Villagers claimed that since water became available they did not have to sell their livestock, and that the livestock were producing more milk. Some families had even been buying back the livestock and donkey carts they were forced to sell earlier.

One of the main aspects of the HEA approach is the division of communities into wealth groups. When asked about how the gains from the pump-related interventions were being taken up by all members of society, whether rich or poor, interviewees mentioned that all wealth groups had benefited and improved themselves. Examples have been given earlier in this paper about traditional means used to include the poor. While there was not time to explore in more detail the relative gains due to increased access to irrigation, it is likely that the rich would benefit more.<sup>14</sup>

#### *2.3.4 Emergency response*

The following case study provides an illustration of the importance of understanding and following changing local livelihoods and being flexible and opportunistic in response.

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<sup>14</sup> This was noted in the Agricultural Support Project (ASP) Impact Survey (SC–UK, 2000) which found that extension techniques were adopted at higher rates for progressively wealthier groups.

### Box 1 SC–UK emergency seed distribution

The *Deyr* harvest of 1999/2000 failed in Belet Weyn. In addition the following *Jilaal* was unusually long and when the first rains arrived they came very heavily and washed away a lot of the seed. SC–UK investigation revealed household food and seed stocks were very low or non-existent, and that even though seed was available in the market, people did not have enough money to buy it. There was also little evidence of sowing or land preparation. As a result, and due to the fact that the rains were developing well, SC decided that an opportunity existed to provide a timely boost to production (and livelihoods), by distributing seed, although they had not been planning to do so.

Having initially planned to make a single distribution, they carried out a second after finding out that many pastoralists and agro-pastoralists had been moving into riverine areas and were being given some of the seeds, and that some losses had taken place due to flooding, some seed had been lost.

The greatest concern about distribution was to avoid any security incidents, particularly as the security situation had deteriorated, with many check-points and attacks on individual vehicles and relief convoys. The implementation of a WFP free food distribution at the same time caused concern. It was also important to ensure that the desired beneficiaries actually received the distributed seed and quantities were not ‘lost’ along the way. In order to do so contacts with merchants were kept discrete and not even all the SC–UK staff members were informed about distribution (to avoid word spreading, rather than because of a lack of trust). Villagers were told by radio and individual messages to visit the SC office, though the exact reason for the visit was not given. Village committees/members who did so were then given a ‘chit’ to collect seed from the store. Villagers had to make their own arrangements to move the seed back to the village. Distribution at the village level was carried out through the village committees.

Follow-ups by SC–UK after the two distributions appeared to confirm the initial need for seed and that using the committees had resulted in fair distribution and minimal losses (only a few bags out of 140 tonnes).

#### 2.3.5 Contributory factors

There are a number of different factors that have contributed and are contributing to the relative success of the SC programme in Belet Weyn.

**Livelihoods understanding.** Clearly, a thorough understanding of the population with which one is working is a prerequisite for an appropriate and successful intervention. This understanding has changed and improved over the years for SC. The senior national staff members are primarily of an urban background and may not have worked amongst the riverine community prior to joining SC (although several are agronomists and will have worked with agricultural communities in their government days). In the earlier days, when the emphasis was on ‘emergency’ programmes, and the delivery of commodities, detailed knowledge of the ‘beneficiaries’ was not sought after. The ASP was the first project to require this greater understanding. However, a serious initial weakness of this project in the first one to two years was the lack of any pre-intervention baseline or good on-going documentation.<sup>15</sup> Although the field officers were engaging with and learning about their community partners, this was in an ad hoc, male-oriented way. The lack of female senior staff and the resultant limitations on women’s participation and issues were also serious flaws at the beginning of the ASP and prior to that within the SC–UK organisation itself in Belet Weyn.

The Impact Assessment survey in early 2000 (SC–UK, 2000a) designed and conducted with the support of the FSAU and using the HEA methodology, was the start of a serious round of data gathering and reflection on the strengths and weaknesses and areas of improvement for the ASP. The survey had a significant HEA dimension and once the main survey was completed (in about 20

<sup>15</sup> This is something that the EC Somalia Unit now stipulates as compulsory for a new project to undertake, in recognition of the lack or poor quality of baseline assessments.

villages), for the purposes of the evaluation report, the team carried on and surveyed over 100 villages in the district<sup>16</sup>. The results of the survey helped to inform the next phase of the project, particularly in terms of targeting poorer villages and a greater, more focused impact. The experience gained has been considered a turning point in programming and learning terms in Belet Weyn.<sup>17</sup>

Some of the key characteristics of the questionnaire and survey are:

- An understanding and description of households based on a wealth stratification
- Asset levels, by wealth group
- Ranking of food and income sources, and expenditure, by wealth group
- Project impact/take-up, by wealth group

**Staffing and staff development.** The recruitment, continuity and development of good staff are probably the most important factors in running any successful programme, and changing and developing it over time. Perhaps in an SCCPI where information is lacking and politics, security and livelihood status are liable to fluctuate quickly, this is even more the case. In Somalia, the difficulties of hiring staff, an area in which the local authorities take an (over) active interest, and firing staff, who may then threaten security, further emphasise this sensitivity. Some say it is the most difficult part of establishing and running a project in Somalia. In the fragile and mixed-clan town that Belet Weyn is, SC–UK has managed to establish and develop a very good national team.<sup>18</sup>

The quality and continuity of expatriate staff has also been a major factor in the development of SC–UK in Belet Weyn. SCCPIs are often associated with a high turnover of expatriate staff, difficulty in obtaining experienced and well qualified staff, and a predominance of logistics-oriented staff (Schafer, 2002). Since 1998 the SC–UK Somalia programme has been fortunate to have had a relatively high degree of continuity in international support. Of the Nairobi staff, the Programme Director is still present and there have only been two Deputy Programme Directors. In Belet Weyn, there have been three Programme Coordinators (the most senior position in Belet Weyn), with two of them staying for a year, and the third likely to stay for two years. There have been an international agronomist and two Watsan international staff members, all of whom stayed for at least a year.

The national staff still complain and highlight that a single year posting is very limiting from their and the programme's perspective, as it takes three to six months for an expatriate to understand the working context.

The development of staff is another critical area, for incentive and motivation, and for a working environment that shifts between the extremes of short-term emergencies, and logistics-driven a longer-term, community-driven approaches. As highlighted previously, the SC–UK programme in Belet Weyn has evolved from an 'emergency' focus to a 'developmental' one, but still can and does implement emergency-type interventions.

For such a shift to be successful requires a great deal of internal institutional (and personal) reflection, training, and guidance.<sup>19</sup> Discussions on this subject in Belet Weyn reinforce this notion. One member of staff<sup>20</sup> stressed how he needed to 'become convinced' himself, of the value of an

<sup>16</sup> Due to a funding gap, time was available to do this.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Nigel Nicholson, Programme Director, SC–UK.

<sup>18</sup> A number of people interviewed, with experience of programmes throughout Somalia, mentioned that the Belet Weyn programme has the, or one of the, best national teams in Somalia. Reference was made to team dynamics and clarity of roles and responsibilities, management of local politics, and participation with the local community.

<sup>19</sup> This applies to both national and international staff.

<sup>20</sup> The concerned individual has been with SC–UK from the early 1990s, being involved in both the emergency programmes, and the shift thereafter.

increasingly participatory approach, before he could explain this to and practice this with the communities with whom he was working.<sup>21</sup>

Several SC staff members who have made, or are making, this transition mentioned the following factors that have assisted this process:

- Different training and courses
- Good relations with the community (learning from them)
- On-the-job support and ‘coaching’ (from the international staff)
- Exchange programmes (with other SC projects)

For a large INGO with a strong commitment and capacity for staff development, the process has been rather ad hoc to date. A staff development strategy is now being developed. However, several of the national staff said they were getting better training opportunities with SC–UK than from any one with whom they had worked previously.

In recognition of the lack of staff development programmes and resources by many NGOs in Somalia the EU Somalia Unit now includes budget lines within its proposals to provide such funds. This does raise questions about the lack of internal capacity of many INGOs in such areas as staff development.<sup>22</sup>

SC–UK has quarterly programme review meetings that include the participation of senior project staff (Somalia/Somaliland) and Nairobi programme management to review progress against the objectives of the CSP and the operational plan. This is a very participatory process. Also, budget management is now largely delegated out to the field so project staff members know exactly the resources allocated to activities and overheads, nothing is hidden, and project staff members have as much responsibility as they are prepared to take to develop, review and manage budgets.

Although SC–UK has been delegating more and more responsibility in recent years to the national staff, both national and international staff members recognise that the support required is still significant. In an SCCPI, where many of the most skilled people have left the country perhaps relatively high expatriate input is necessary.

**Integrated operating environment.** Another important condition of running programmes in Somalia is addressing the internal division of agencies, between their Somalia implementation side and their Nairobi Headquarters. The difficulties this can create in terms of alienating and disenfranchising the field from many aspects of decision-making and policy, and decision-making from familiarity with the field, are commonly noted. SC appears to manage this well with a remarkable lack of complaints by the field-based staff of Nairobi. One of the major ways in which this is achieved is by 7.30 am briefings that mark the start of every day. While their primary purpose is security updating, it is also an occasion when any relevant news from Nairobi Headquarters is mentioned to the staff. One member of staff stated that ‘they [Nairobi] know what is going on here and we know what is going on there’.

For SC–UK in Belet Weyn, joint planning, the cross-fertilisation of information and issues and common responsibility for security are all-important underlying themes that contribute to a holistic style both running the operation and of understanding and response to community issues.

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<sup>21</sup> This also involves a huge change in perception from communities, where in Somalia, the huge humanitarian programmes of the early 1990s and the Government policy and practices of the 1970s and 1980s were very top-down and essentially involved free provision of goods and services by those respective actors.

<sup>22</sup> A recent EC Somalia Unit synthesis of monitoring and evaluation exercises in Somalia highlighted, amongst other points, that: Organisational structures are not clear; there is a lack of clarity of respective roles of project staff; there is a high turnover at project management level.

The ASP was the first community-focused programme and has remained the largest, longest-running project. The ASP staff members have established good links and knowledge of most villages in the district, over time. They are therefore an ideal resource for the Watsan and Education staff members to tap in to, in terms of village entry points and introductions, as well as briefings on relevant issues, whether personal, political, economic or otherwise within a village. The Watsan and Education staff members appear to have recognised and utilised this asset in the establishment of their own programmes.

The common approach to community participation and capacity building across all three programmes that has recently become women-focused is also an important ‘livelihoods’ dimension, where the organisational consistency is strong and a strongly patriarchal society is countered.

The three sectoral programmes also feed into each other in very direct ways:

- The ASP team has developed an agricultural training package for schools and supports practical training of children (as part of the science curriculum) and their parents through nurseries at schools;
- The ASP team conduct environmental training for the Watsan committees about environmental protection around the water wells;
- Latrines have been built in schools and wastewater harvesting, water management, and hygiene components are taught by the Watsan team.

When commenting on the linkages between the ASP and the Education Project, Fox, who conducted an independent review, stated that the linkages ‘are small at the moment but are occurring naturally between the different staff of SC–UK and the communities’ (Fox, 2002: 20).

The three sectoral programmes meet once a week to discuss and plan their following week’s work. While this exercise is useful for joint logistics planning and maximising resources it is also an occasion when briefings and experiences on each of the projects can be shared. As a result, and in order to maximise resources, the different sectoral teams are very familiar with each other’s work and can represent each others projects in relatively minor affairs.

## **2.4 Managing the local political economy dynamics**

### *2.4.1 Summary*

Understanding and establishing ways of working with and/or around complex, fluctuating, and insecure political environments is a prerequisite to running a good programme. SC–UK has done this largely through the skill and experience of its national staff. The organisation has created an internal environment of transparency and common responsibility for security.

### *2.4.2 Political background*

Hiran region and Belet Weyn district are composed of several clans. The dominant clan identified most strongly with the region is the Hawadle. They are found almost exclusively on the eastern side of the river throughout the region. On the western side of the river there is a mix of clans all falling under the Gugundabe umbrella (Gilkes, 1999). In Belet Weyn district, the Gaal Jacal and Jejele are the two Gugundabe clans. Along either side the river within several kilometres of the rivers edge are the Bantu farmers, not of the main Somali pastoral lineage. The non-Bantu clans mentioned

above are all of the Hawiye clan, one of the five major Somali clan lineages.<sup>23</sup> There are also several very small 'priestly' clans, known collectively as the Shanta Culumu (Gilkes, 1999).

There is a relatively good degree of communication, respect and coordination amongst all of the clans in the region, including the Bantu, particularly at the traditional elders-level. Unlike many other areas Hiran region does not have a history of any large-scale intra-regional inter-clan conflict.<sup>24</sup> Arguably, in all of southern Somalia, the Hiran region has been the least affected by conflict and destruction during and since the onset of civil war. The clans and sub-clans of the region have not become directly or strongly involved in the politics and warring in Mogadishu, although there are connections and influences as a result of relations with the other Hawiye sub-clans based in the capital. In fact, the region has remained remarkably neutral with respect to all levels of external politicking, particularly since the mid-1990s. The traditional authorities that represent all of the clans have played an important role in maintaining a relative peace and settling disputes before they become more serious.

Geo-politically, the region is delicately placed, with its northern Ethiopian border and southern border close to Mogadishu.<sup>25</sup> However, national-level politics and the formation of the Transitional Government (TG), associated with the *Arta* process,<sup>26</sup> together with the Ethiopian-backed response, through the factional opposition, the Somalia Rehabilitation and Reconciliation Committee (SRRC), has not yet managed to seriously involve or disturb Hiran region.

However, this is not to say that Hiran or Belet Weyn is a peaceful place. Due to the number of clans tension and conflict are ongoing, but are sporadic, low-level and usually very localised, more in the tradition of Somali inter-family or sub-sub-clan/family disputes and their associated *diya* compensation. Several international agencies have pulled out of the district over the years and the town and region have the reputation for being very difficult places in which to work. This is however, as much to do with the insensitivities of international agencies in setting up offices and operating programmes, as it is with the internal political fragility of the district and region.

The current major political actors are the traditional elders whose Council represents all clans, and the regional Governor and District Commissioner (DC), who have very little popular support but are able to mobilise their small militias and some members of their sub-clans at times. The Governor and DC are both widely known to be more interested in personal financial gain than constructive civil administration, but they are figures that international organisations have to manage, particularly in the hiring of vehicles, housing and staff.

The *Sharia* Court is another important actor. Its recent re-formation came about almost by default<sup>27</sup> and its existence is essentially the result of an agreement within one clan (the Hawadle) and with business, to uphold the law. It has stabilised the growing influence of banditry, particularly along the main road, but only has jurisdiction over the one clan and therefore the east side of the river. The formation of this court also creates a tension with the Governor and DC, in terms of rights and ability to tax.

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<sup>23</sup> The five are: Hawiye, Darod, Dir, Issaq, Rahanweyn (Digil and Mirifle).

<sup>24</sup> The major conflict occurred in 1994 and 1995 when Hussein Aideed's forces occupied the town and controlled the main tarmac road for about 10 months. Their target was only the Hawadle clan on the east side of the river.

<sup>25</sup> Since 2000, Mogadishu has been the base for the Transitional Government and Ethiopia has been strongly backing the faction-based opposition to the TG.

<sup>26</sup> The Djibouti hosted several month-long national reconciliation processes that resulted in the formation of the TG, in mid-2000.

<sup>27</sup> After a spate of banditry in 2002 along the main and only tarmac road in the region, members of the same sub-clans as the bandits attacked and jailed the offenders, and the greater clan (the Hawadle) decided that the only institution that could equitably uphold the law was the *Sharia* Court. It was thus formed and supported in terms of taxing by the business community, whose businesses along the road were being affected.

There is little evidence of a predatory ‘war economy’ in the region. No dominant economic actors were identified – rather a spread of smaller-scale actors. Local politicians, the Governor and the DC, have a very weak economic base, and are not supported by the trading class.

### 2.4.3 *Operating practices*

One of the ways in which SC–UK has remained operational in the district over the last ten years has been by deliberately focusing programmes on rural areas in order to avoid the fragile politics that manifest themselves most destructively in the town. Traditional structures are also far more functional in rural areas. Good relations and credibility built up over time with the rural communities mean that those communities can be mobilised, or made aware of certain ‘political’ developments in order that they may decide to advocate through their traditional systems, on SC’s and their behalf, if they feel their interests are being threatened.

The organisation has also always had relatively good cross-clan representation,<sup>28</sup> although there is a dominance of one clan, the Hawadle, amongst senior staff within the organisation.<sup>29</sup> In the recruitment of unskilled staff, maintaining clan balance is the most important criteria used. For example, the armed guards that the organisation has to employ are equally divided into clans from the east and the west sides of the river. For skilled staff clan is not a recruitment criterion.<sup>30</sup> In order to manage the recruitment of skilled, senior staff, which the local authorities are keen to influence in order to get ‘their person’ on board, transparency and clear justification are key. Advertising posts is open, for all to apply. The justification for short-listing and final selection is also open and clear. The local authorities are invited to attend the final interviews, although they apparently have yet to do so.

Evidence and discussions within and outside SC–UK suggest that the national staff themselves attempt to be clan-neutral when it comes to managing the organisation. They are certainly under pressure at times from their own clan to further clan-related interests, and all pay a ‘clan tax’, but this does not seem to interfere significantly with the running of the operation. The most senior member of national staff, responsible for local liaison, known also as the ‘gatekeeper’, is a very important and influential figure for SC–UK.<sup>31</sup> He is a very well respected individual amongst all clans in the area, at an ‘elder’ level. The clan balance in the team means that he can, and does, use his own colleagues in order to communicate/lobby with other clans as the need arises.

The management of this insecurity and uncertainty does fall heavily on the national staff. All are made to feel responsible for security. This is witnessed each morning at 7:30am when the first staff meeting takes place. All staff members, except for the unskilled, give a security update. Due to the experience and success that the national staff members have gained in Belet Weyn the international Programme Coordinator generally leaves his Somali deputy to manage these issues with the rest of the team.

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<sup>28</sup> The International Medical Corps (IMC), the only other organisation to have remained in Belet Weyn for a long period has also stressed the importance of clan balance within the team.

<sup>29</sup> The Hawadle are the largest clan in the district and account for the greatest proportion of educated (therefore senior) people in the district.

<sup>30</sup> Except on one occasion when SC–UK positively discriminated in favour of one clan, explaining that they needed a member of an under-represented clan on the senior staff. This has happened relatively recently suggesting it was a previous weakness.

<sup>31</sup> While most would agree that SC–UK has a good team and a strong liaison person, some would also say that this can place a heavy reliance on few individuals who, for example, might be resistant to some of the changes that the organisation may try to make, for instance, in the recruitment of women.

SC–UK does not generally use other sources of information on local security conditions as it is the major actor in the area. It in fact sometimes feeds information to other political/security apparatus in Nairobi.

It is also worth stressing that the Somali field setting is a very rich and well connected environment, in terms of access to information. Widespread access and use of high frequency radios (for personal transmission), short-wave radios (BBC World Service), telephones and the word of mouth mean that information travels very quickly and that even in a very local context the wider geo-political dynamics are incorporated into discussions and analyses.



### **3 Case Study: ICRC Community Intervention Project in Southern Somalia**

This case study details one current ICRC project. The ICRC Community Intervention Project (CIP) in southern Somalia aims to provide an economic input into selected communities to help households most in need to overcome a limited period of economic insecurity. It also aims to provide longer-term support through the rehabilitation of a relevant economic infrastructure to benefit the whole community. The CIP is a small part of ICRC's programming in Somalia and is a recent introduction. This case study highlights the context in which the project was designed. Following a brief description of the CIP itself, it includes an analysis of CIP's impact on local livelihoods, and a discussion of CIP from a political economy perspective.

#### **3.1 New programming directions**

During the first months of 2001 the Somalia Aid Co-ordination Body (SACB) warned of a probable need for large-scale food distributions in parts of Somalia towards the end of the year. This warning was given due to the observed degradation of the humanitarian situation in Somalia. Despite overall good harvests in 2000 and optimistic predictions by specialised observers, substantial recapitalisation at household level was not seen during the initial months of 2001. The failure of the main rainfed harvest in 2001 had major implications not only due to the absence of the crop itself, but also due to the substantial reduction in employment opportunities. Employment opportunities were also badly affected by below-normal production in irrigated areas due to high fuel prices. Because the rains were insufficient in large areas, and years of lack of maintenance of surface water storage structures, the level of surface water reserves was below normal. It was in this context that the proposal for new programming was made at the ICRC Somalia delegation.

The Somalia delegation and ICRC Headquarters in Geneva discussed the project proposal for CIPs in southern Somalia in July 2001. The proposal was seen as something of a diversion from the previous programming in Somalia and raised questions relating to the relief/rehabilitation/development debate and the use of cash in 'emergency contexts'. The CIPs were to take the form of providing selected communities with immediate support to livelihoods over a limited period (ideally bridging a gap until the next labour-intensive sowing season when more labour opportunities would be available) and longer-term small-scale economic rehabilitation interventions. These projects can be considered – at least for ICRC in the Somali context – innovative in their proximity to livelihood approaches.

The strategy was based on needs analysis (mainly through secondary source information) focused at the household level, combined with an assessment of feasibility. This analysis used information and skills available at delegation level, rather than following an explicit methodological framework ascribed to by the institution. The CIPs were presented as an integrated emergency prevention strategy parallel to a preparation for emergency distributions. The ideal outcome was seen to be that the CIP would replace/mitigate an emergency food distribution. Key elements in the design were seen, by the delegation, to be that the projects were flexible and adaptable to the development of the humanitarian situation and that the strategy integrated the delegation's Economic Security, Agriculture and Water and Habitat programmes.

Both opportunities and constraints are inherent in the long-term presence ICRC has had in Somalia and in the introduction of a new programme. The delegation as a whole, despite the turnover of expatriate staff, gained considerable experience and knowledge of the country over the years. This

background, together with the presence of organisations such as FSAU allowed ICRC the information to move towards new programming strategies. Unlike many of the expatriate staff, most of the Somali staff members have worked for the delegation for a number of years. They work in geographical areas and communities they know well, many work in areas they consider their native place. Particularly since the move from Mogadishu to Nairobi in 1994, the delegation has relied heavily on the experience of the Somali field officers. Due to the limits on expatriate presence in Somalia this is a theme common to all agencies working in the country. It is the performance of these field officers that is a key to the gathering of information in the field and the implementation of the programmes.

The implementation of the new projects involved two conflicting but unavoidable elements. Firstly, the context in which the projects were to be implemented – that of a worsening economic environment and risks to livelihoods in Somalia – that necessitate prompt action. Secondly, the need for the delegation as a whole and the field officers in particular to learn new ways of working that did not correspond to their often long experience in working with ICRC in Somalia. This proved to be a delicate balance and the limited time available for training in working methods and approaches put extra demands on the staff. A project outline and implementation guidelines were developed by the staff member responsible for the project in collaboration with the field officers. Field officers received initial training in the following month and the first CIPs were launched on 20 August 2001. Follow-up training in November 2001 aimed to re-emphasise the main features of the project and to introduce new procedures to facilitate the smooth running of the project.

### **3.2 CIP in southern Somalia**

CIP aims to provide an economic input into selected communities using a cash-for-work or food-for-work approach to help those households most in need of immediate livelihood support to overcome a limited period of economic insecurity. At the same time a relevant economic infrastructure is rehabilitated through the community-organised work activity which should benefit the entire community in the longer term. Although CIP basically uses an approach usually termed food/cash-for-work, or employment generation scheme, the delegation wanted to emphasise the strong community involvement with CIP.

The delegation set the following objectives for CIPs:

- In the short term contribute to mitigating the effects of the current crisis by strengthening the household economy within the targeted communities (provision of labour/income/agro-pastoral assets);
- Contribute in part to a longer-term solution to the recurrent water availability and food production problems and thereby strengthen the basis of the household economy of the targeted communities;
- Reduce, in the selected communities, the need for emergency food distribution at a later date;
- Facilitate ICRC's monitoring of the humanitarian situation and its preparation of a possible larger-scale emergency distribution programme.

Communities identified as vulnerable in terms of food security are selected to take part in CIPs. Each community, with support from ICRC staff, establishes a project committee and management structure, determines the community facility most pertinent to the community's economic security that is in need of rehabilitation, timing of the project and selection of the workers. The community also decides between payment for labour in food or cash. The community is responsible for the day-to-day running of the project with intermittent monitoring by ICRC field officers, occasionally with an expatriate, to ensure that the work follows the agreement made between ICRC and the community. The agreement, in many cases, includes the facility's long-term maintenance. An

evaluation of the programme was carried out by the Project Manager and took place in March 2002. At the time of the evaluation 74 CIPs had been implemented (at 69 sites in southern Somalia), of which 45 had been completed. The project is ongoing, both at the 29 locations where work is still in progress and at newly identified sites.

Water catchments, irrigation canals, *berkads* and shallow wells were all identified by the various communities as: pertinent to livelihood support, community-owned, and in need of rehabilitation. Irrigation canals were identified in riverine areas. The canals allow increased agricultural production since crops are used for both household consumption and sale. Water catchments, *berkads* and shallow wells provide water for both livestock and the human population. Water supply is of crucial importance to livestock management for pastoral and agro-pastoral households. While 14 CIPs involving *berkads* and shallow wells were completed, new projects have not been implemented involving this infrastructure as they were found less-suited to the project design than the water catchments and irrigation canals. *Berkad* and shallow well rehabilitation demands high material and technical input and low levels of labour, in turn meaning high costs for ICRC in relation to the limited gain for the community in terms of community-level involvement and immediate gain of income. Of the 74 CIPs, 13 involved support that did not include water-related infrastructure. At three locations the communities identified increased vegetable production as the primary concern for livelihood support. ICRC therefore successfully incorporated field clearance and planting into the intervention model, in this case the fields were privately rather than community owned. At ten sites in southern Somalia ICRC were asked to assist villagers who had lost housing destroyed during intra-clan conflict. While house reconstruction did not fit clearly into a project focussed on improving the productive capacity of communities, ICRC did incorporate house reconstruction in an effort to avoid a simple distribution of building materials.

### **3.3 Meeting the demands of providing livelihood support**

The advantages the project offered ICRC in Somalia included providing an opportunity to build good relationships with the communities involved. These relationships are, in some cases, hard won. This is likely due to large-scale 'free' distributions in the past (both by ICRC and other agencies) and the expectations produced by them. This is as much an issue for the field officers as for the members of the communities involved. Field officers are well known in the geographical areas in which they work and are under some pressure to provide for the needs of communities; it is on their shoulders that the responsibility of explaining to the community members and negotiating with them falls. The idea of working with a community in order to design a project was not one that was within the field officer's nor the community's previous experience of the ICRC. Although some benefits of this approach are acknowledged it clearly demands extra effort on the part of all involved.

Both the selection of communities to be involved in the projects and the selection of workers within those communities proved difficult. Field officers were initially responsible for selecting communities; expatriates began to play a stronger role as the programme developed. This was due in the main to the difficulties faced by field officers through pressures from communities to implement to their advantage. The community elders were responsible for the selection of the workers according to guidelines provided by ICRC which indicated that they should select the 'most vulnerable in the community'. An overall shortage of labour opportunities and endemic insecurity meant that a large proportion of a given community is in need of employment and the CIP offered only limited work. The solution found in some communities was that the work be shared among a large number of households for at least a short period of time in order to spread the benefit. Both men and women work as labourers on the CIPs, the majority of workers are men.

While some communities report allocating labour to those who are ‘unable to fill their cooking pots’, others report allocation to those ‘fit to labour’.

The project has the advantage of clear exit strategy – the project ends when the work is completed. However the limited nature of the labour available means that the more immediate support can only be sustained for a limited period of time. Infrastructure rehabilitation with the greater labour input has been identified as more suitable for the project; but even though projects centred on water catchment and canal rehabilitation demand a larger number of workers, the time period over which members of the community have access to waged labour is still small. The communities note this limitation. The problem of finding appropriate activities for employment requiring large-scale activities of unskilled labour and low material input is inherent to cash/food-for-work schemes.

Those who participated in the CIPs as labourers expressed, during the ICRC evaluation of the programme that the income was very important to them and was predominantly used for food purchases. When asked how they would have coped over this period without the wage labour made available by the project, the workers mentioned support from relatives and collecting and selling firewood. Although food purchase dominated the use of cash earned, according to interviews with workers, cash was also spent on clothing and health care and to a more limited extent mats, mosquito coils, and house improvements. Some production-related investments were mentioned. These investments were made in seed, tools, and livestock, fuel for irrigation, and insecticide (ICRC, 2001:9). The extent to which the wages earned had a positive effect on households not directly involved in the labour activities was not assessed during the evaluation and is difficult to estimate. What should be stressed again is that while there are some indications of investments, the cash tends to have only a brief impact on livelihoods rather than providing a longer-term change.

While some communities opted for payment in food, the majority requested payment for work completed to be made in cash. The most common problem in Somalia for poorer households is not lack of food in the market place or lack of physical access to markets; it is the lack of purchasing power in the face of their own limited productive capacity, lack of employment, and inflated prices. An understanding of the restrictive elements that limit poorer households’ capacity to provide for their needs suggests that wages in the form of cash is a sensible option for short-term livelihood support. The choice of cash by most communities suggests the same conclusion. No shortages of grain in the market have been reported at cash-for-work sites. There is no evidence of cash injection causing local price inflation.

The structures identified for the CIPs so far have been community-owned (with the exception of house building and vegetable production) and identifying community-owned structures in rural areas of Somalia has proved to be an obstacle. This obstacle is related both to the limited infrastructure suitable for the project, and the limits in human resources with the ICRC to identify projects. Identification of suitable infrastructure has been easier in areas along the Shabelle River where the rehabilitation of irrigation infrastructure is a possibility, but these areas are not necessarily those that ICRC considers most in need of support. All infrastructure identified (with the exception of the house building) aids production within the community and helps provide for consumption needs. In the case of house building, support allows households to provide for their needs by freeing up cash otherwise needed for building materials and facilitates return to villages. The case of house building is less clearly connected to livelihood activities than the other interventions included in the project.

### 3.3.1 *Impact assessment*

The possibilities for evaluating the impact of the rehabilitated infrastructure itself at the present time are limited. Some estimates have been made by the delegation, including the example of the expected benefits of the Anabore canal in the Lower Shabelle region. Additional arable land in the first year is estimated at a maximum of 280 ha. With an input of 15 kg seed ha<sup>-1</sup>, a yield of 900 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> is possible, providing a total of 252 t of maize. If secondary canals are rehabilitated, arable land can be increased from 280 to 1260 ha (ICRC 2001:10). This canal was the focus of four CIPs and involved the four settlements with access to the canal.

The communities also benefited from retaining the tools used to complete the rehabilitation with the aim of increasing autonomy for maintenance of the infrastructure. The community reportedly kept tools in collective ownership, managed by the community elders or village chief in 63% of CIPs evaluated. Other communities distributed the tools among individuals, in particular the workers, with the provision that they would be made available for future maintenance (ICRC 2001:10).

A comparison between planned and actual output at the time of the programme evaluation reveals good results. 24 (31%) of the project proposals were directly assessed by an expatriate staff member. Of these three (4%) were not approved for implementation. Of the projects initiated, 25 (34%) were evaluated by an expatriate. ICRC had aimed to assess 20% of projects proposed and evaluate the same proportion of projects initiated. Of the initiated projects seven were changed during implementation without prior agreement either by the field officer in charge or by the community. 27 projects reserved for particular geographical areas were delayed due to human resource constraints (ICRC 2001:12). These constraints specifically involve the limited number of field officers being unable to identify and organise projects over the large geographical area.

### 3.3.2 *Long-standing presence and changing programming*

The ICRC Somalia delegation took the opportunities that a long-standing presence in Somalia gave them to implement a style of intervention that had not been attempted by ICRC in Somalia on any previous occasion. The CIP is challenging in terms of not only the implementation itself but also in the conceptual shifts necessary to move from the more 'traditional' distributions of food and non-food items that characterises previous ICRC assistance in Somalia. The experience is considered, by the staff involved, as a pilot initiative to be built upon. It is as appropriate to look at the impact of the project in terms of changing and evolving working methods and interaction at the community level as its cost effectiveness and scale of economic benefit. One ICRC delegate mentioned that in terms of impact the CIPs are best seen within the context of other ICRC programmes, many of which run in the same locations as the CIPs. These interventions also aim to impact on livelihood support, some are higher in technical input and lower in terms of community participation than CIPs. Focused on water and agriculture these programmes include gravity irrigation projects (GRIPs), pump irrigation projects (PIPs), borehole, shallow well and lined water catchment or *berkad* rehabilitation programmes.

The communities participating in the CIPs distinguish between the style of the programmes in comparison to relief operations involving a distribution of goods. The distinction rests upon the lasting impact of the CIPs programmes in terms of the rehabilitation of the infrastructure over the short-term gain of access to economic goods provided as a distribution. Concerning completed CIPs; community leaders interviewed for this report identified the rehabilitation as more important than the wages received for labour. The timing of the interviews may well influence this conclusion, as work had been completed several months before sites were visited. An interviewed community who were proposing a CIP to ICRC focused directly upon the financial gain from labour.

Within the guidelines of the project, the ICRC allowed beneficiaries to define the entry points of the intervention themselves by identifying infrastructure relevant to their livelihood. The design of the programme itself and the direct participation of the beneficiaries in both planning and implementation allowed a stronger focus on the communities and their circumstances than had previously been the case in ICRC programming in Somalia. While the creation of working days allows some poverty reduction in the short term, the project aims to initiate the rehabilitation and use of an infrastructure that can be sustained in the longer term. ‘Building on strengths and capacities to create further capabilities’ (Schafer, 2002) would be the ideal outcome of the discussions with the communities that included reaching agreements on the possibilities and benefits of long-term efforts to sustain the use of the infrastructure. The success of the longer-term maintenance of the infrastructure remains to be seen.

### **3.4 The possibilities and limitations of the programme design and execution in view of a broader political perspective**

The CIP was initiated by using knowledge gained within the Somali context and by attempting to find new ways of working within this context. To understand the possible implications of the programme from a political economy perspective meant, for the ICRC, consideration of both intentional manipulation of the support directed at those in need, and considering possible negative effects outside of manipulation. Attention is given to site choice in an effort to be vigilant against the possibility of exacerbating conflict between communities. This proves to be a time-consuming and complex exercise that involves attempting to anticipate imbalance of aid as perceived by local communities and acting to avoid this outcome. Reliance on information from the field officers and a good knowledge of the geographical areas in question are of key importance. ICRC has supported only one of three main sub-clans in Hiran to date. Available funds to assist the other two groups (with numbers of projects in rough proportion to the population size) could not be used because conflict prevented access to the areas. Lack of implementation raised concerns from the groups concerned, with whom the security issue was discussed. The area is currently more stable and plans are being made for projects.

#### *3.4.1 Targeting beneficiaries and facilities*

Ensuring complete impartiality proves difficult in terms of targeting within the communities. ICRC has found that past food distributions via village elders excluded some minority groups (Jaspers, 2000:8; Foley et al. 2001:13). While patterns of representation and exclusion clearly must exist, widespread exclusion from CIPs has not, so far, been obvious. Yet neither is it well advertised and therefore easy to identify. Involving the community in targeting was a deliberate choice on the part of the ICRC and it is a choice that limits their influence on the implementation of the intervention.

The selection of facilities to be rehabilitated also holds implications in terms of who is likely to benefit from the intervention and whether the likely beneficiaries are those ICRC aims to support according to the objectives of the programme and more general principles of humanitarian intervention. A particularly pertinent example is the lack of approval for the proposal of the rehabilitation of an airstrip. The airstrip was privately owned and its rehabilitation would likely have had military, strategic and political implications. While the vegetable production proposal fell outside the design of the programme that aimed to rehabilitate that which is owned by the community, it was on balance found to be an appropriate and acceptable method of supporting livelihoods within that community. In the presence of basic principles, knowledge of the working context and programme guidelines and objectives, informed, practical decisions can be made on a case-by-case basis.

One Bantu village gives an interesting example of project choice and differences of opinion between a humanitarian agency and the community involved. Following conflict with a neighbouring settlement, subsequent destruction of housing and displacement, return to the village was met with a non-food distribution, including building materials, seed and tools from ICRC. Knowing of a CIP that had taken place in a nearby settlement, the village asked for cash for work that would help them meet their needs in the initial month of return. The community proposed that they rehabilitate an irrigation canal. The canal was used by a local non-Bantu community rather than by the village concerned. As a community that are disadvantaged in Somalia, were treated terribly by Somali clans during conflict in the 1990s, and tend to labour on others land, ICRC saw the choice as inappropriate. The proposal was turned down on the grounds that as well as not fulfilling all the objectives of the CIP (as the community would not directly benefit from the finished canal), the project could be seen as perpetuating existing stratification and exploitation. The community supported the proposal on the grounds that they work as labourers and in circumstances of more general prosperity in the area they would be offered this work. ICRC and the community are in the process of jointly identifying another project.

### *3.4.2. Leadership structures, social capital, and conflict dynamics*

The complex systems within which local people operate in southern Somalia are intertwined with a struggle for power between armed groups. Agencies need the consent of local power holders at regional and district level in order to assist communities. These local power holders are inevitably involved, to varying degrees, with competition between militia factions. The fragmented nature of southern Somalia means that external actors need to work with and through shifting local politics. By involving communities in project design and implementation at some level any agency engages with existing power structures and therefore risks a de facto complicity with those power structures.

At the community level the ICRC aims to assist the community leaders in identifying those members of the community most in need of livelihood support and infrastructure that would aid the community as a whole in terms of their economic security. Understanding how institutions of leadership at the local level relate to conflict dynamics is crucial. Individuals and groups within the communities in which ICRC intervenes may well profit in some way from conflict, but both the extent and the specific dynamics vary from place to place. Individual community leaders may have substantial social capital and be key players in shaping patterns of reconciliation. Others may have more limited influence or be more effective in undermining efforts at rehabilitation or reconciliation than promoting it. Field officers gave very varied responses about the question of whether community leaders have direct day-to-day links with militia. For a field officer working in Gedo region this was considered a necessary condition for a claim to be able to protect the interests of others and therefore to leadership itself. A field officer working in Hiran region did not see this as a clear link and commented that such connections would be seen as unacceptable by members of village committees.

When a project is identified by a field officer and accepted by ICRC, the field officer must enter the names of the project committee on a form providing a description of the project and its location. Field officers appear to have had very different experiences of whether the project committee consisted of those within or outside the existing leadership structures and the level of influence they had over the membership of the committee. In some cases the project committee is made up of elders and leaders who have established positions within the communities. Once these individuals represent themselves as elders and/or village committee members (therefore implying clear choices for guidance and decision-making concerning the CIP), some field officers accept the formation of the project committee including these individuals. In at least one case community members have approached ICRC staff to comment that those claiming to represent them do not in fact do so. In

this event, the process of identifying the committee is restarted. In some cases (particularly where field officers involved are former extension workers) field officers have been in a position to involve those outside the existing leadership structures in the project committee.

At this stage of initial discussions with the community it can be very difficult for field officers to judge the quality of the leadership in any given place. In situations where leadership is weaker or less beneficial to the community field officers seem to have had varied influence over the extent of such person's involvement in the project. Problems that have arisen so far during the implementation process have tended to be misunderstandings on the part of the field officers and/or communities involved – field officers not allowing sufficient control to be held by the project committee or poor site choice – rather than deliberate appropriation of funds. Desire for membership on project committees appears to be strongly related to the pursuit of social capital, acceptance by others as a project committee member is an acknowledgement of existing social capital.

Some of the CIPs completed to date involve a group of settlements that are relatively homogenous in interests and affiliation, others include varied affiliation and therefore representation for each of the groups is required. Sites visited for the purposes of this report varied in this respect. Projects in Lower Shabelle exist in areas where one clan lives in the location. In this case representation of the group of villages involved in the project is common with lower-level representation in each village. At other sites in Lower Shabelle, representatives of the population basically represent the mixed affiliation of the area with a Bantu representative as well as those from other clans. In this case, the leaders were not from individual settlements (in many areas Bantus live in mixed villages) rather representing different interest groups within settlements.

Not only is the specific nature of the state crucial in influencing livelihood options (Schafer, 2002), but the nature of local leadership in different contexts impacts directly on the success of livelihood interventions. 'Harvey identifies the degree to which warring parties and local authorities predate upon the population as a key distinction between different situations of chronic political instability' (Schafer, 2002). This is as true for different geographical locations and for different leadership in southern Somalia as it is for a comparison of different countries understood as politically unstable. Understanding of different local dynamics is particularly important for the ICRC programme as the first phase of implementation includes 74 settlements in eight regions of southern Somalia.

### *3.4.3 Cash versus food*

While ethical dilemmas of working in situations of chronic political instability crosscut all types of humanitarian aid, specific implications can be identified that affect particular interventions. The flexibility and fungibility of cash is one element relevant to the CIP, as cash was offered, and in the majority of cases chosen by the communities as payment for labour. As cash is inherently of value to all there is a clear danger that cash may be misappropriated by warring parties and that misallocation of cash is more easily hidden than misallocation of food (also see Peppiatt et al. 2001). The lower visibility of cash in comparison to food has been noted in its favour in terms in transportation. One delegate notes that it is easier for recipients to check the quantity of cash received than the quantity of food, and that verification, by ICRC, of payments is more successful. Jaspers notes that large-scale food aid was moved by ICRC in Somalia (1992 and 1999/2000) in small quantities at one time to lower both risk and visibility (Jaspers, 2000:8); the same method was used for the movement of cash. Businessmen use their networks in Somalia to advance money to ICRC wherever it needs to be issued to ICRC's field officers. ICRC reimburses the businessmen after confirmation of payment to bank accounts outside Somalia. No organised attacks on, or



looting of convoys has occurred during the running of the current (and ongoing) programme. No theft of food or cash was reported before, during, or after distribution.

Transaction costs of providing cash in the place of food has been assessed financially sound, due to the overhead costs associated with food aid (see Buchanan-Smith and Barton 1999:34–38; Peppiat et al. 2001:13). In the context of chronic political instability, procurement is not only a financial consideration in terms of the cost to the institution and the proportion of money spent reaching the beneficiary. Bulk procurement in Somalia (a transaction completed in US\$ rather than local currency) involves trading with self-interested ‘wealthy politico-business elite’ (Le Sage, 1998). The same argument can be used about transport and storage. Not all such interaction is avoided even by completely avoiding food purchase and transportation. Car-hire and the hire of armed security is lower in volume in the CIP than in a large-scale food distribution, but clearly not absent. Again these transactions are completed in US\$, supporting a biased currency system that works in the favour of the most powerful. The principle of neutrality and attention to possible unintended negative effects of aid on the political economy are ultimately assessed within the context of pragmatic decision making.

#### *3.4.4 The changing working context*

The extent to which an organisation deals with profiteers of a war economy is not merely dependant on the type of intervention. As noted in the introduction to this paper, many of the new business class now controlling politics in Mogadishu made their initial fortunes in the early 1990s from international relief agencies. However ‘crucially, interests and behaviour in war economics can and do change over time .... merchants [in southern Somalia] who initially profited off a war economy gradually moved into legitimate commerce’ (Menkhaus, 2002:9). This analysis suggests that current procurement may have stronger links to ‘legitimate commerce’ than was the case in the early 1990s. In the same way that the discussion of varied local leadership and different local contexts within southern Somalia illustrates the necessity of analysis at community level, so the changing face of commerce illustrates the necessity understanding a dynamic picture.

A direct comparison between ICRC food distributions during the 1990s and the CIPs, made purely in terms of the difference in programming style is problematic when considering other contextual issues. The intensity of need and the more-volatile conditions during two periods in the 1990s heightened problems of principled programming. As Foley et al. (2001:28) comment, while not a desirable state of affairs, as the severity of an emergency increases so does the relative importance of the principle of humanity at the expense of other principles. This has implications for the understanding of the higher level of transparency in the CIPs and less compromise of accountability. There may be an impact in terms of bias in targeting, although this is difficult to ascertain.

The main operational problems for the CIP, despite improvements over time, remain accounting and monitoring. However, ICRC suggest that because work has been completed by the labourers and they expect to be paid for the work completed there are less options available for diverting the food or funds by those managing the distributions. Evidence suggests that workers were, and are, being paid according to agreements reached. In the case of high labour and low technical input projects such as water catchment and canal rehabilitation wages received by workers make up 65% to 90% (depending on the particular project) of the overall cost of the project, as an expression of accountability, such a proportion is encouraging.

## 4 Conclusion

This final section highlights some points drawn from both case studies. Organised in themes that relate to the project cycle, the section aims to illustrate some differences in organisational approach and the interventions described, including the time-scale and geographical range of the two programmes. It also aims to highlight that similar lessons can be drawn from the experiences of both SC–UK and ICRC in terms both of the wider context in which they work and of the programmes themselves. What is clear from the strengths and weaknesses of the two programmes is that common elements serve to increase the possibility for successful programming. These elements appear in final summary.

### 4.1 Preconditions for livelihoods programming

In both case studies certain preconditions have been noted as aiding SC–UK and ICRC in their efforts to introduce and implement the programming styles described. Knowledge of and experience in the context of southern Somalia gained over long-standing work in the region allowed the possibility of finding new ways to work within it. Competencies in articulating the rationale behind new programme direction to donors (in the case of SC–UK) or Geneva Headquarters (in the case of ICRC) have been key in securing funds for projects, in the case of ICRC the diversion from previous programming proved contentious. Adequate staffing is a recurring issue for programming in Somalia, spokespersons from both SC–UK and ICRC note that the success of projects is heavily dependant upon the quality and experience of local staff in particular. This is particularly relevant in view of the limited field access for expatriate staff and the high turnover of these staff (this appears more clearly applicable to ICRC).

Contextual preconditions exist also in terms of the mandate, role, and type of programming characteristic of a particular organisation as a whole (rather than in Somalia specifically). SC–UK has wide scope to draw on experience of programming outside that designed for ‘emergency’ contexts, to adapt and reinterpret such experience in the context of southern Somalia. ICRC does little work outside situations of crisis (work in post-conflict areas is a relatively recent addition), and does not have ‘developmental’ programming on which to draw and adapt. What ICRC was able to do in the case of the CIP described was to engage with debates at Nairobi level on the need to rethink interventions. Reorientation and training of staff in view of the projects described in the case studies was perhaps more of a challenge for ICRC than for SC–UK in part because the CIP is a greater departure from ICRC programming than was the case for SC–UK. The CIP is a small part of ICRC programming in Somalia (accounting for approximately 5% of their total budget and 14% of the economic security budget) and is not representative of the organisation’s overall interventions in Somalia. Both organisations are well resourced, in terms of both staff and material resources and in relation to smaller organisations working in Somalia. This does not in itself create an environment for innovative programming, but can increase potential for the possibility of new directions.

Increased levels of security in southern Somalia as a whole in comparison to those of the early 1990s and good security conditions in Hiran region compared to some other parts of southern Somalia have clearly increased the possibilities for programming based both on sustaining livelihoods and saving lives. Increased awareness of debates about the importance of sustaining livelihoods, while not well developed or fully integrated into programming design in Somalia in general, have developed since the early 1990s and go some way to informing programme direction.

## 4.2 Assessment and livelihood programming

Neither SC–UK nor ICRC initiated a pre-intervention baseline before implementing projects. This has clear implications for the possibilities of impact assessment, as discussed in the Section 4.4. ICRC used a combination of FSAU baseline data and general observations by field-level staff to make a needs and feasibility study for the project proposal. SC–UK has recently adopted mechanisms for baseline information collection in line with EU Somalia Unit stipulations. In the context of southern Somalia, security conditions do have a tendency to dictate action meaning that even good needs-based analysis does not necessarily translate directly into interventions. Realistic possibilities for interventions also tend to dominate action. Clearer opportunities (in terms of both feasibly and measurable impact) exist in agricultural areas, particularly the riverine. Populations in agricultural areas tend to be more likely beneficiaries of programmes this is not to say that this is completely undeserved in terms of the vulnerability of such groups, but that the attention to these areas is not purely a product of needs-based analysis.

The need for an understanding of political economy information employed for decision-making relating to feasibility, and particularly possible threats to staff security (also see Le Billon, 2000:24) is clear in the case studies. It is more difficult to suggest to what extent specific analysis of the political economy influences site choice for the implementation of programmes, although SC–UK’s decision to work in rural areas was, in part, a way of avoiding involvement in political tensions in urban areas. An in-depth understanding of economic violence (past or present) that threatens livelihoods in the form of neglect, exclusion, or exploitation is not necessarily a central feature of decision-making about site choice for programming. It does add to a generalised understanding of particular groups in Somalia (for example the exploitation of the Bantu) although the populations within generalised groups have very different experiences in different geographical areas. Concerning economic stratification of society generally, while not all advantages of interventions are gained by them, programming clearly aims to target those at the bottom of the pile.

## 4.3 Project implementation

The pressure of timely interventions requiring a changed direction, training, and reorientation of staff and working methods has been a challenge felt more strongly by ICRC than SC–UK in recent intervention in Somalia. In part, as mentioned above, this relates to the level of departure from previous programming. It also relates to the contemporary and abrupt nature of the changed methods within ICRC (in terms of this programme) in comparison with the longer-term development of the working methods for SC–UK. This also relates to the objectives as expressed by the ICRC delegation of the CIP intervention. If projects were to work as a mitigation strategy averting the need for an emergency food distribution, staff training and planning would need to be prompt.

Using ‘an integrated approach’ has been highlighted by both agencies as important to project implementation. This has been a particular focus for SC–UK and appears intrinsic to the idea of livelihoods for them. Building links between sectoral programme areas is interpreted as improving a response to livelihood support since the general response is more holistic and therefore more strongly related to the complexities of livelihood needs. ICRC tends to describe integration between CIPs and water-related activities in terms of good use of the technical expertise in the water and habitat department to optimise project implementation quality. SC–UK has highlighted staff development and ongoing training as integral to the success of programme implementation in Hiran region. While not all of the training relates specifically to ‘livelihood programming’ it is seen by the organisation to be closely linked to a general movement from short-term emergency programming to longer-term, community-based approaches.

ICRC has faced the challenge of the reorientation of field officers in particular in their approach to programming. This has been most directly linked to building new kinds of relationships with communities and moving towards their greater participation. While the challenge and the importance of community participation are highlighted by both agencies, the attention to gender in this regard is particularly clear in the SC–UK programme. While the participation of women was noted in the ICRC programme in regard to labourers working on projects, SC–UK has concerned itself directly with the participation of women in decision-making groups within the community as well as in its own staff.

The use of political economy information can be most clearly associated (in both case studies) with decision-making concerning the logistics of programme implementation. Knowledge of the context in which the agencies work allows them to make informed choices about car and property hire and the purchase of goods. What it does not allow them is complete disengagement from these systems whether they are considered ‘legitimate’ or not (and this in itself is open to interpretation). The analysis of information concerning political economy, where it exists, is embedded in the day-to-day decision-making of those working in an informed manner, rather than referred to in a clearly defined model. In circumstances where information concerning political economy is collected and analysed, the resulting decision-making is dependant on the interpretation of the information from the perspective of the individual(s) concerned and the particular circumstances in question. While there is a general awareness of the usefulness of political economy information, there are no clear answers about the reaction to the interpretation of the same, or about exactly how this informs action.

ICRC and SC–UK have employed livelihood programming alongside other types of intervention in Somalia. For ICRC, as has been noted, the CIP is small, relative to other programming and considered by some within the organisation as experimental. The original design of the programme was made alongside preparations for large-scale emergency food distributions. To date ICRC has not made such a distribution during the running of the CIP (this is not to suggest that other organisations have not recently distributed food in southern Somalia). Following loss of seed due to flooding in 2000, SC–UK made a seed distribution in their programme area. This distribution had not been planned and SC–UK comments that their ability to react to an unexpected need was a product of their knowledge of the area that had been gained through agricultural and other programming. The need was assessed using information concerning local livelihoods and knowledge of the political economy of the area allowed successful implementation of the distribution. While ICRC made a livelihoods intervention before a crisis in order to try to prevent the need for food distribution, SC–UK aims to use a long-term livelihoods approach that is flexible enough to response to emergency needs.

#### **4.4 Impact and evaluation**

Changing and evolving working methods (particularly interaction at community level) have been more a direct result of the recent and ongoing CIP programme for ICRC than is the case for SC–UK. This has been a longer-term strategy for SC–UK Somalia and a more integrated part of their working methods in general. While the scale of economic benefit is small in the ICRC programme, the CIP appears cost-effective, particularly at the project sites where cash rather than food was used. The SC–UK programme is investment heavy considering the scale of economic benefit gained by the communities, but involves extension work that where successful, could accrue benefits less obvious to a basic cost analysis.

One of the clearest contrasts between the two programmes is the sustained concentrated effort of SC–UK in one geographical area and ICRC’s short-term dispersed efforts at multiple sites. This

links to some extent with different kinds of emphasis on sustainability. The longer-term close contact of SC–UK with the communities in question are part of an effort to maintain the relationships and so the programme itself. For ICRC cash or food input is a mitigation strategy providing short-term support. This need was identified through an understanding of livelihoods, but is not a basis for an economically sustainable livelihood. The rehabilitated infrastructure itself is the part of the design that works in this direction but without the sustained contact with the implementing agency over a longer time period. For ICRC the possibility for further maintenance should, following initial rehabilitation, be achieved by the communities without the necessity of further outside support. This contrast highlights a wide-ranging impact (geographically) for the ICRC programmes for short-term livelihood support and currently functional infrastructure. The longer-term contrast remains to be seen.

Limits in the evaluation of the programmes by the agencies concerned are apparent. ICRC has made two evaluations of the CIP; one completed by the delegation itself followed by one included in an assessment of all ICRC assistance activities completed by staff from the Headquarters. A clearer impression of actual impact on livelihoods would be gained through more systematic data collection, and as noted previously, the lack of baseline information specific to the sites in question hinders this process. The development of appropriate monitoring and assessment indicators would guide this process. The sheer number and range of sites in which the programme is implemented make the task of collecting baseline data and completing impact analysis more difficult in the ICRC case. While SC–UK have contributed greatly to the understanding of livelihoods in Somalia through the development of HEA and the building of livelihood profiles (through FSAU), they have been slow to translate this work into a system that captures asset and livelihood changes as a result of interventions. Work towards understanding the impact of the programming in Belet Weyn was begun in 2000 and has served to improve the understanding of livelihoods in the area.

## **4.5 Conducive conditions required for livelihoods programming**

### *4.5.1 Institutional and security preconditions*

- Knowledge of and experience in the context
- Knowledge of and innovative use of available information both from and within the organisation and other actors
- Good staff – both local and expatriate
- Adequate security in the field, likely built on long-standing relationships

### *4.5.2 Needs assessment /baseline information*

- Completion of a pre-intervention baseline
- Pre-intervention assessment of conditions built around an understanding of livelihoods within an SCCPI

### *4.5.3 Project implementation*

- Timely interventions based on programme aims and objectives
- Integration of ‘traditional’ sectors
- Ongoing staff training and orientation
- Strong community participation throughout programmes

- Continuous collection of information related to the political economy and use of such information in day-to-day decision-making
- Intrinsic flexibility in programming style

#### *4.5.4 Impact and evaluation*

- A good understanding of the likely benefit of the programme in economic and non-economic terms.

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