SPOTLIGHT - SOMALI
INNOVATION
LANDSCAPE
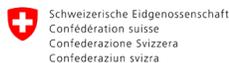
2019

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PREFACE

Somalia is often simply portrayed as being affected by war and famine. Although many challenges exist, this is not the full narrative and it takes away from the many positive and exciting initiatives that have taken root and are having a positive impact.

The Somali Response Innovation Lab (SomRIL)[1] is an interagency partnership which seeks to create and apply effective innovations to enhance the impact of humanitarian and development interventions to improve the resilience of the Somali people. This is achieved through providing a supportive and safe environment where NGOs, local innovators, the private sector, UN agencies, government and academia can share specific challenges they face delivering humanitarian and resilience programming, and identify innovative solutions which can be prototyped, piloted, and brought to scale.

Part of the SomRIL's work has been to research and map the Somali Innovation Ecosystem for the benefit of all actors working in Somalia and those who wish to enter into the market. This work has been very illuminating as it has shown the vibrancy of the current landscape, the connections that are possible between existing actors, and the opportunities that exist for further collaboration and innovation within the context.

Therefore, the SomRIL has curated a digital exhibit to shine a spotlight on a selection of innovations identified as part of this mapping that are creating impact in their respective fields. The initiatives profiled have been carefully selected to showcase the diversity that is flourishing in a wide range of sectors. The innovations cover a broad range; online platforms, to low-tech last mile solutions, solutions driven by the private sector in response to market demand, and innovations that aim to strengthen the learning outcomes of children in Somalia. Some of these initiatives are well established, and some are constantly iterating and adapting to stay relevant in a changing context. But what all these innovations have in common is that they are contributing towards building a brighter future for the Somali people.

[1] SomRIL is part of the Global Response Innovation Lab partnership (GRIL) whose founding members include World Vision, Save the Children, Oxfam, George Washington University and Civic. The SomRIL is locally hosted under the Somali Resilience Program (SomReP), which is a consortium of seven NGOs – World Vision, Action Against Hunger, ADRA, Care, COOPI, Danish Refugee Council and Oxfam. We work with many other organizations such as George Washington University and Benadir University's Somali Disaster Resilience Institute (SDRI). With bases in Mogadishu and Nairobi, we bring together a range of different actors working on significantly better outcomes for Somalis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RESPONSE INNOVATION LAB

ABAARAHA
CRISIS MAPPING

STAGE | PILOT
Networks, Platforms

ABAARAHA
CRISIS MAPPING

Abaaraha, which means 'drought' in Somali, is a crisis mapping platform built for Somalia. Launched in March 2017, the platform provides relief responders with information that allows them to connect with drought victims so they can render aid faster and more effectively.The platform also enables relief organizations to visualize where and what type of urgent needs are needed in the country. It further enables these relief organizations to plan and respond more effectively. This project (Abaaraha) is run by tech volunteers and it doesn't have revenue sources. The data collected through the platform is free for anyone to use.

What Abaaraha does is it crowdsources information needed to coordinate relief effort by forming a platform that collects information through text, phone calls, emails and social media alerts and displays it on a map.It also raises awareness and funding towards its community by providing of information. The open data gathered helps authorities to identify, track and efficiently respond to areas that require relief and thus prevent a humanitarian catastrophe.With the crowdsourcing Abaaraha uses it to bring information needed to provide immediate relief in drought-stricken areas in Somalia. This fills the information gaps which previously existed.

Innovation | Somali | Mapping | Crowdsourcing | Startup

1

RESPONSE
INNOVATION
LAB

ADEEGE
ONLINE
FRUITS & VEGETABLES

STAGE | PILOT
Products, App

ADEEGE ONLINE
FRUITS & VEGETABLES

Adeege Online Fruit and Vegetables app was formed formed by a student named Nemo who was studying Computer Science at the University of Hargeisa. In 2018 she participated in Future Ready at the encouragement of the Dean of her college. The app is to make it easier for customers to get fresh vegetables and fruit, by ordering online and having the products delivered to their homes. And, grocery store owners reach out to a larger and more diverse range of customers. The App helps other people and the local economy too as it creates jobs in delivery. Future Ready that provides valuable training opportunities to help young Somali men and women realize their dreams of making it in the high-tech industry helped Nimo gain practical technical skills and develop transferable skills in critical thinking. The 'learning by doing' approach was what she used for her computer skills and also got new skills from her course thus developing this platform.

Innovation| Somali| Somaliland| eCommerce| Startup

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CAAWI
WALAAL

STAGE | PILOT
Networks, Platform

CAAWI WALAAL

Caawi Walaal means "brother/sister help" in Somali, and it is a humanitarian awareness raising campaign intended to inform about the effect of droughts calamity to Somali society and stimulate collective response from both Somali and international communities. Caawi is a remarkable youth volunteer movement that has delivered more than US$18,000 in aid tovictims of the 2016-17 famine that affect large parts of Somalia.This campaign has two objectives: bringing forth the information about the deteriorating situation of drought affected families in Somalia and organizing preliminary responses to immediately save lives."It is not affiliated to any specific group, and it is not considered a organization, but rather this movement is a collective of young volunteers based in different regions across the Somali region and diaspora communities, who have come together to ready the most vulnerable victims living in hard to reach locations.

Some of the help provided includes: water trucking services in remote villages, medical supplies to treat AWD/cholera, and food assistance to families facing hunger. Caawi prioritizes areas in Somalia that are hard for NGOs to access.

https://youtu.be/dnmmpCdXmJ8

Somali| Innovation| Humanitarian| Disaster| Crowdfunding

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CASH
CONSORTIUM

STAGE | SCALE

Networks, Consortium

CASH CONSORTIUM

The Somali Cash Consortium, led by Concern Worldwide, has distributed emergency funding to over 7,000 displaced people who have been forced to leave their homes in the region due to the continuing drought.The Consortium has activated its emergency cash response in the southern Somalia city of Baidoa to assist 1,225 vulnerable Somali families.It also transferred $73,500 of emergency response cash to the mobile phones of people who were displaced or at risk of displacement due to drought.The cash enables recipients to purchase food as well as basic supplies such as portable solar lamps, kitchen sets, corrugated galvanized iron for shelters, blankets, floor mats and hygiene items. In previous responses, 99% of participants reported that the cash assistance had improved their access to food.Somali Cash Consortium (SCC) was established in March 2015 with the aims of promoting a more effective MPCA response through harmonisation, operational coordination, and by expanding geographic reach. Using an evidence-based vulnerability targeting model, the CCI has to date provided one-off and multi-month cash transfers to over 75,000 households, or approximately 450,000 people.
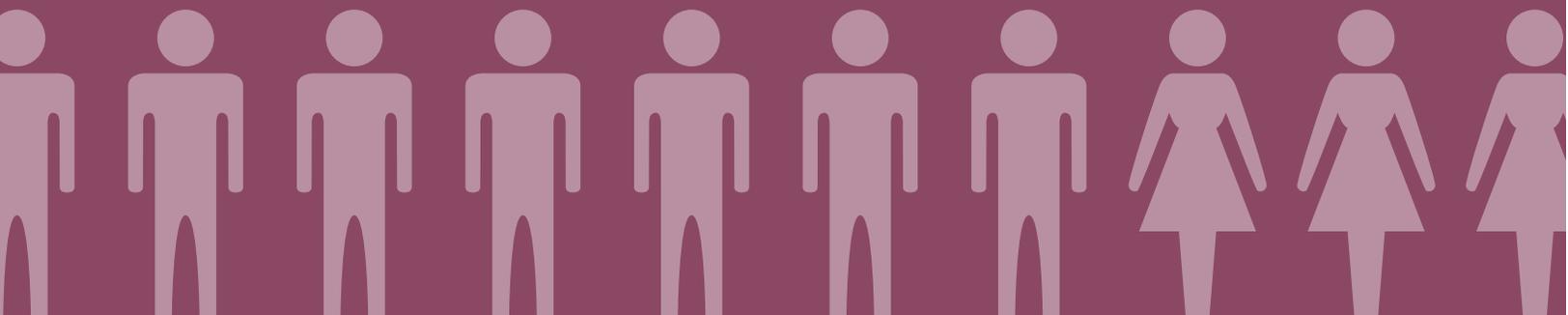
https://youtu.be/kCoStpv3doM

Innovation| Somalia

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RESPONSE
INNOVATION
LAB

PROJECT JETSON

STAGE | PROTOTYPE
Networks, Products

PROJECT JETSON

Jetson is a machine learning-based experiment that provides predictions on the movement(s) of displaced people. This experimental project combines data science, statistical processes, design-thinking techniques, and qualitative research methods. Jetson actively seeks new data sources, new narratives, and new collaborations in order to keep iterating, and improving. It has further underlined the importance of partnership, of collaboration, and of transparency. Project Jetson is working towards predicting population movement from Somalia.Jetson has been working to understand the intrinsic nexus between climate change, violent conflict, and forced displacement. Using supervised machine learning, UNHCR designed Project Jetson, an engine that is fed data and uses trained models to predict the displacement of persons in Somalia.

M-DALAG

STAGE | PILOT
Products, App
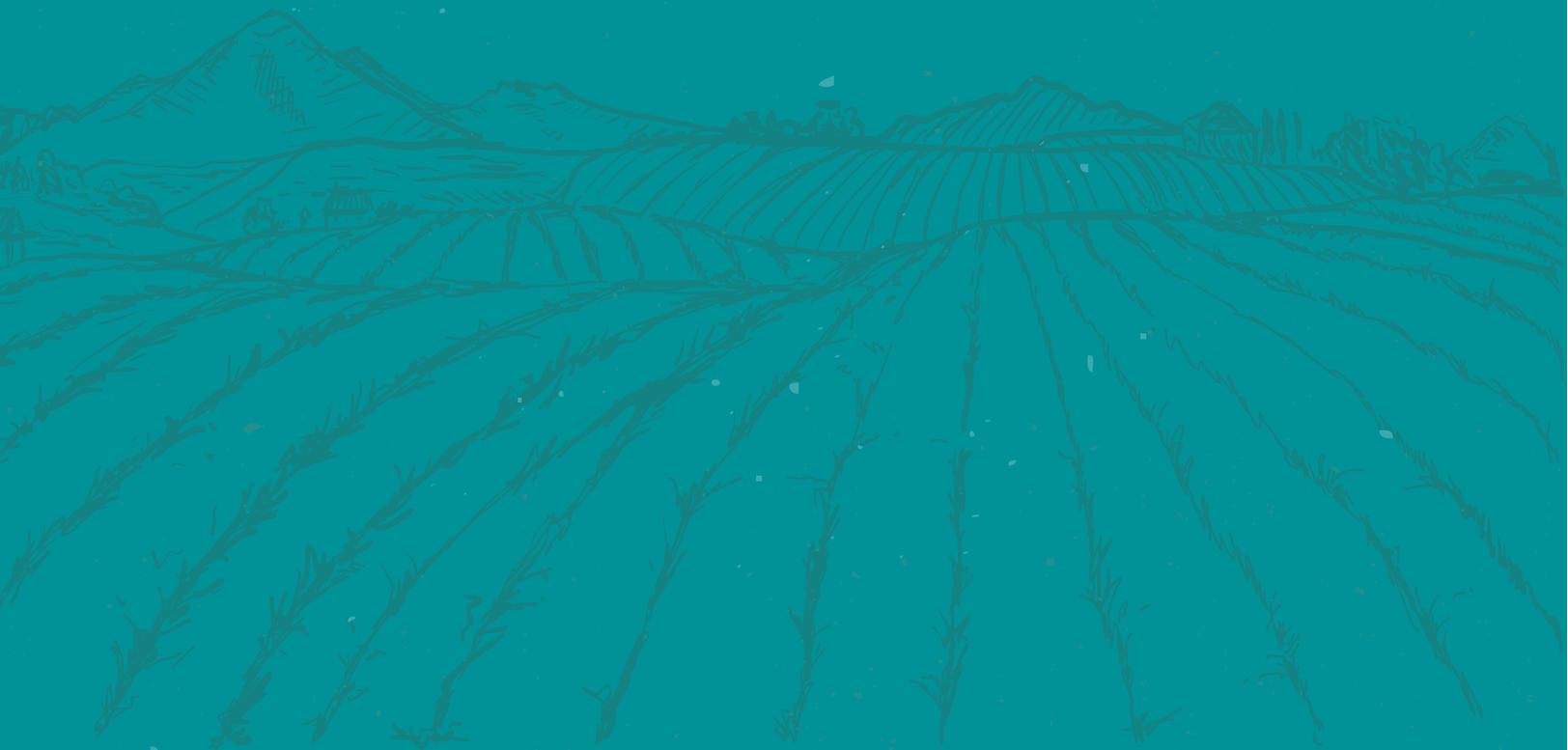
M-DALAG

SAMS (Somaliland Agriculture Market Solutions) is a non-profit organization and an Agri-tech startup that has developed M-Dalag (mobile harvest) with funding from INGO Oxfam Novib. It allows farmers to call in and access voice-based information for free.M-Dalag app aims to connect farmers directly with buyers, leading to wide market reach for farmers and reduction of losses of perishable farm products. According to SAMS' founder and chief executive officer, Faisal Mohamed, the system provides farmers with customised local crop advice and market prices, while also connecting farmers directly with buyers to ensuring they get the best prices for their products.

https://youtu.be/fgP2eaRREY8

OXFAM

Shaqodoon
Organization

Telesom
The Reliable Choice

Innovation | Health | Somali

http://www.mdalag.com/

OGOW

STAGE | PILOT
Products, App

OGOW

OGOW is an electronic medical records (EMR) and practical management system designed specifically for hospitals and clinics in Somalia.The EMR application provides innumerable benefits to healthcare practitioners with essential tools to improve its quality,continuity, assesement and evidence of care through improved management .Their primary goal is improving the delivery of healthcare through collaboration,innovation and effeciency.The EMR also allows doctors to quickly identify past conditions and current treatments at the indvidual level.The reason OGOW EMR was designed was to improve the health outcome of women and girls in somalia where the EMR will improve the vaccination rates by empowering hospitals to track immunisation rates and reach patient who need specific vaccines.

https://youtu.be/q7ZOoXBTIz0

RESPONSE
INNOVATION
LAB

RADIOERGO

STAGE | SCALE

Products, Program

RESPONSE
INNOVATION
LAB

RADIO ERGO

Radio Ergo is on air every day across Somalia and the Somali-speaking region with original humanitarian news and information in Somali. The programming is based on local reporting gathered by our unique network of correspondents and material prepared by Radio Ergo's staff producers.Their focus is on amplifying the voices of ordinary Somalis enabling better communication with the wider international humanitarian community, and providing Somali audiences with the critical information they require to make better informed choices on issues affecting their lives.Radio ERGO provides the Somali population with valuable and life-saving information through programming on issues that include health and HIV/AIDS, education, conflict prevention, protection, gender equality, employment opportunities and environmental protection. This diverse set of topics enables the Somali listeners to make better informed decisions in their communities and for their families.They work with NGOs, agencies and other partners on the development of effective messaging and programming content, although Radio Ergo remains editorially independent.The word "ergo" in Somali means mediators or envoys in the interest of people in need. It is therefore a word that carries significance and resonance.

https://youtu.be/cHa1IYFT-bo

Innovation| Media| Somalia| Puntland| Somaliland

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https://radioergo.org/en/

RESPONSE
INNOVATION
LAB

SOKAAB & BULSHO KAAB

STAGE | VALIDATION & SCALE

Networks, Platforms

SOKAAB & BULSHOKAAB

SOKAAB is a Somali based crowdfunding platform for organisations and individuals that aim to support communities and youth initiatives across the Somali regions. The platform has been built in partnership with Danish Refugee Council (DRC) with funding from the Somali Stability Fund. SOKAAB is used to support the the Dialogue project is an initiative by the Somalia Stability Fund (SSF), in partnership with DRC and Shaqadoon.Through crowdfunding initiatives, the community will be able to channel their collective efforts to realize common projects that matter to Somalis. For too long, decisions on what gets to be funded has been taken by everyone except the communities most affected by this decision,so SOKAAB wants to change that and involve the community. They ensure that only viable projects are endorsed on their platform through an appraisal panel who is accountable and transparent. Which will help with meeting their targets by providing support and training to each community that wants to use the platform.Based on the success of SOKAAB, the SomReP consortium (to which DRC is a member and Shaqadoon supports) sought to expand on the crowdfunding platform to tap into diaspora funding, and so the BULSHO KAAB was launched.

https://youtu.be/1FjsjJDhi90

DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL

SOMALIA STABILITY FUND

Shaqodoon Organization

SomReP SOMALI RESILIENCE PROGRAM

Innovation| Somali| Somalia| Crowdfunding| Tech| FinTech| Diaspora

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AFRICA SCIENCE WEEK

STAGE | VALIDATION
Products, App

AFRICA SCIENCE WEEK

Africa Science Week is comprised of concurrent week-long science engagement events taking place in 35 countries across the continent, an annual weeklong celebration of science and technology with thousands of individuals – from students, to scientists to technologists – actively engaging in coordinated science events across the continent. A first ever African Science Week took place in 2018 across 7 Somali cities: Hargeisa, Bossaso, Kismayo, Baidoa, Beledweyne, Gaalkayo and Mogadishu. African Science Week was organised by the Somali STEM Society in partnership with the Next Einstein Forum and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). ASW wants to encourage citizens to get involved, participate in the NEF's 1mil1 campaign and become interested in science and technology, and how it impacts their daily lives. Led by NEF Ambassadors, this signature program is designed for many age groups and provides an opportunity for citizens to engage in everyday science. The program is designed to instil a curiosity of learning and interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) pursuits among the public and allows young Africans, especially women and girls, to become excellent scientists and technologists. NEF Ambassadors will work with local partners both in the academic and private sector to make it a success.

https://youtu.be/W0dMDahhiI0

Innovation| Somali| Somalia| Somaliland| Hishabelle| Jubaland| SouthWest-State| Galmudug| Banadir

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RESPONSE
INNOVATION
LAB

BULSHO BILE

STAGE | PILOT
Organization, Startup

BULSHO BILE

Bulsho Bile is a startup that offers solar equipment and access to energy to IDPs and other vulnerable families using the pay-as-you-go model. Busho Bile was one of the startups that pitched and won in the Mogadishu Watt Innovation Challenge held at iRISE in 2018 in partnership with the World Bank, iRise offered various services including ambient and fully equipped co-working space both shared and dedicated, incubation and acceleration, consulting and research that helped with the 'Bulsho Bile' startup.

Innovation | Somali | Solar | Energy | Somalia | Renewable | Startup
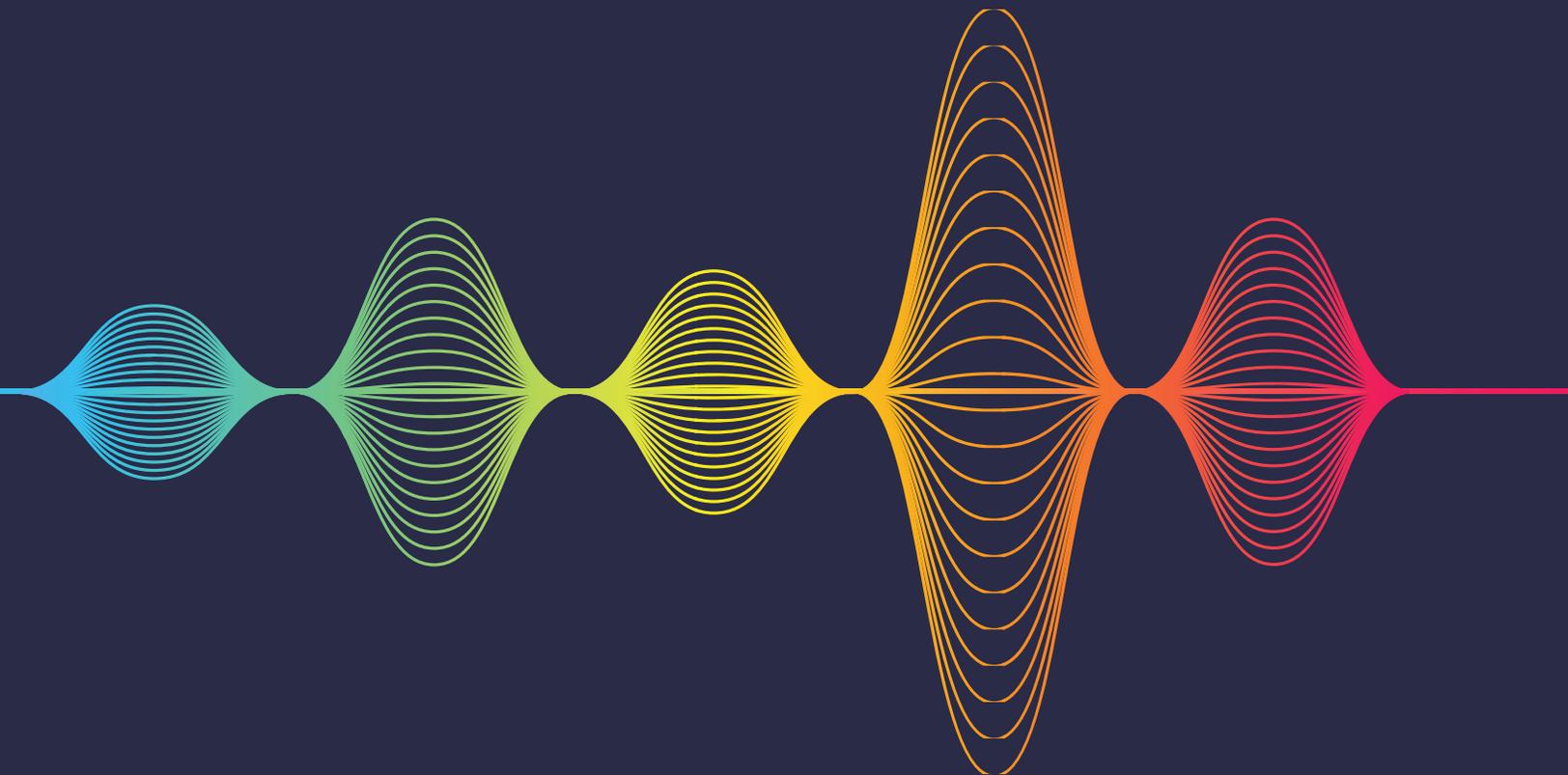
SOMALI ENVIROGREEN PLASTICS RECYCLING

SOMALI ENVIROGREEN PLASTICS RECYCLING

Somali Enviro Green Plastics Recycling helps in transforming plastic waste into an advanced building material,they focus to convert plastic rubbish into a range of sustainable building materials.The companys goal is to facilitate good control in the protection, renovation, conservation, development and management of the environment and natural resources for equitable and sustainable development.

Innovation | Somali | Startup

https://twitter.com/envirogreenp

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RESPONSE
INNOVATION
LAB

MADASHA MUSTAQBALKA

(FUTURE TALKS / INNOVATION TALKS)

STAGE | PILOT
Event

RESPONSE
INNOVATION
LAB

MADASHA MUSTAQBALKA

(FUTURE TALKS / INNOVATION TALKS)

Madasha Mustaqbalka (future talks / innovation talks) is a periodic platform discussion held by Hanaqaad Hub (formerly know as SiHUB) routinely tackling innovation, entrepreneurship and development related topics affecting Somali citizens, particularly youth, attended by some of the forerunners in Puntland's business and innovation community. This platform is a good opportunity for people to participate in the different events and meet different people because everyone has a story to tell. Madasha Mustaqbalka encourages and gives guidance to young entreprenuers.

https://youtu.be/BVVvPnwy0gk

somtel
share your world

iRise
Mogadishu Innovation Hub

Innovation | Somali | Somalia | Puntland

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DIGITAL ATTENDANCE APPLICATION (DAA)

STAGE | PILOT
App, Platform

DIGITAL ATTENDANCE APPLICATION (DAA)

The Ministry of Education in Somalia is in the formative stages of developing an Education Management Information System (EMIS) and NGOs, including World Vision (WV), usually struggle to obtain authentic information on education indicators such as enrollment rates, retention rates, drop out etc.

Digital Attendance App (DAA) is an application developed by UNICEF and students at the University of Nairobi's C4D Lab who later formed Sisitech, a Nairobi-based global software design firm. The DAA tracks student attendance quickly, safely, and efficiently to support learning and school re-entry, thus providing insight on out-of-school children and dropouts. First piloted in Kenya, the RIL and World Vision worked with Sisitech to pilot the DAA in the Puntland, to keep children in school, learning, and in a supportive environment.

The pilot schools were transitioned from a paper-based school attendance tracker to the DAA. The app is available both online and offline and is able to capture individual attendance of a student and generate an immediate report. Individual school data will be fed into the overall District/state data and can be disaggregated by school, sex, and grades, allowing the school and WV to track trends in attendance. The web-based platform allows WV, head teachers, and the government to access the dashboards for planning and advocacy purposes. The DAA will most likely be taken up by the government and other partners to improve attendance tracking. Additionally, the Ministry of Education would like to have the EMIS and DAA integrated.
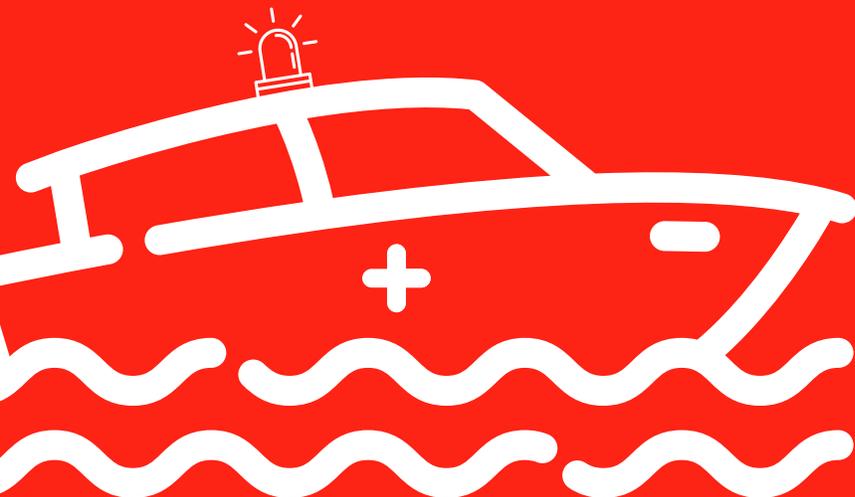
https://youtu.be/IqcngAYXGzk

World Vision unicef Sisitech RESPONSE INNOVATION LAB

Innovation| Somali| Somalia| Crowdfunding| Tech| FinTech| Diaspora

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RESPONSE
INNOVATION
LAB

BOAT AMBULANCE

STAGE | PILOT
Product, Service

BOAT AMBULANCE

Somalia has one of the highest lifetime risks of maternal deaths in the world, with women facing a one in 22 lifetime risk of maternal death. Communities living in Hafun, Banderbayla, Bargaal and Qandala remote coastal towns in Puntland have been having challenges accessing specialized health care due to the bad conditions of the road which would take anything between 12 to 36 hours depending on the area and the traditional referral systems by ambulances is costly and tough for the patients for the same reasons. The shortest route from the coastal towns is by sea but the communities did not have reliable means of transport for transferring sick people to the hospital. When asked about appropriate assistance, the boat ambulance was key innovative suggestion by the communities.

In response to this life saving demand, procurement of two boat ambulances was done by Save the Children (SC), the boats were then modified to suit referral services with shade and referral beds incorporated. The boat ambulances handed over to the government are first of its kind in the area designed specifically to address the existing challenge of access to health care services for majority of Bari region residents. The boat ambulance is being used to transfer patients, particularly pregnant women with complications and sick children to the nearest regional hospital in Bossaso for specialized care and treatment. A boat ride to Bossaso will reduce the time to a minimum of 45 minutes instead of 12 to 36 hours. In Hafun where we have referral health center, the referral time between Hurdio health central and the RHC in Hafun is cut from 3hrs to 25minutes by the boat. Apart from reducing the travel time, the boats were renovated to include all the facilities of an ambulance and patients will be able to receive first aid support as they are being transferred to the nearest hospital.

https://youtu.be/szNhcX_mPMI

Save the Children®

Innovation| Somali| Somalia| Crowdfunding| Tech| FinTech| Diaspora