ANNUAL REPORT

2020

Democracy │ Open Data │ Digital Rights

Bareedo Platform Somalia
Democracy │ Digital Rights │ Open Government

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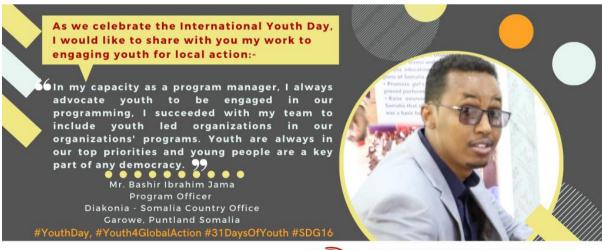www.bareedo.org /.so │@BareedoPlatform

DEMOCRACY

- *International Youth Day 2020 event held*
- *21 thoughts and stories of renowned youth members featured through*
- *400 youth members motivated*
- *81 youth members across Somalia trained on leadership and advocacy skills*

Commemoration of International Youth Day 2020

Some stunning events were held in different parts of Somalia to commemorate International Youth Day 2020, a country where young people make up over 75% of the population. Bareedo Platform Somalia, a youth-led organization has changed its planned event to online events and discussions due to COVID-19 restrictions. Bareedo Platform Somalia has featured the stories of handful youth members who are under their capacities playing a role in engagement of youth for local actions or promoting youth's role in the community in Puntland State of Somalia. 21 thoughts and stories of renowned youth members were featured through organization's social media platforms and other online networks to value their work and inspire and empower other young people to do same as part of scaling up youth-led solutions to youth problems. It was a significant moment to observe the legacies of these young people who are working for youth rather than for themselves and contributing in solving the problems facing young people.

These stories have motivated 400 youth members across Puntland and opened up an constructive discussions in the social media platforms that focused on reviving youth's power and dedication to address their own problems. These are some stories and thoughts featured during the commemoration of International Youth Day 2020:-

As we celebrate the International Youth Day, I would like to share with you my work to engaging youth for local action:-

"I lead an umbrella of youth volunteers who volunteer a few hours each week to help youth overcome adversity and facilitate the inclusion of youth in development by voluntarily improving public works including urban greening, road and pedestrian marking and rehabilitation of public buildings"

Mr. Abdullahi C. Artan
Chairman of Isxilqaamayaasha Puntland
Bosaso, Puntland Somalia

#YouthDay, #Youth4GlobalAction #31DaysOfYouth #SDG16

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UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY 2020 YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FOR GLOBAL ACTION

As we celebrate the International Youth Day, I would like to share with you my work to engaging youth for local action:-

"I facilitate public participation in parliamentary work through information sharing to learn the work of the delegated persons, have inputs to the legislations and interact with their representatives"

Mr. Abdiwali Hassan Abdi
Director of Communications
Puntland Parliament
Garowe, Puntland Somalia

#YouthDay, #Youth4GlobalAction #31DaysOfYouth #SDG16

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UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY 2020 YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FOR GLOBAL ACTION

As we celebrate the International Youth Day, I would like to share with you my work to engaging youth for local action:-

"I advocate for social change through promotion of human rights, safety and security of women journalists, gender equality, good governance, women's political participation and elimination of gender based violence against women, girls and children"

Ms. Nasro Abdirizak
Founder & Executive Director
Women in Media Initiatives - WIMISOM

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Leadership & advocacy skills for youth

Youth represents more than 70 per cent of the population in Puntland state of Somalia but they are not well represented in decision making processes and have higher low participation in political, reconciliation and federalization processes in Puntland state and Somalia in general. In particular, the young people who are socially and/or economically disadvantaged, tend to have higher low public participation. The clan-based political structure in Somalia make hard for young people to participate in an effective and meaningful way, limited leadership skills and civic education are some other factors which have been identified to be especially off-putting youth to be actively engaged in the processes of political and democratic transition in Puntland and to strengthen their civil and political rights.

As result of this, Bareedo Platform Somalia actively contributed in promotion of youth's political, influence and representation in political processes and governance structures of Somalia with 81 youth members across Somalia trained on leadership and advocacy skills and also taught them about their legal and constitutional rights and responsibilities.

OPEN DATA

- *Open Data Day in 2020 commemorated*
- *Joined the Open Covid Pledge and encouraged others to open up data and information that can contribute in ending the COVID-19 pandemic*
- *Statement calling for government to be open and transparent in procurement and contracting of COVID-19 supplies*
- *Working Group with more than 100 members established for COVID-19 response*
- *Contributed in fight against disinformation and myths against COVID-19 pandemic*

Commemoration of Open Data Day Event

On March 7, 2020, Bareedo Platform organized commemoration of Open Data Day under theme of " Encouraging uptake of local public contracting data in Somalia" in Garowe, Puntland, Somalia. The event was participated by 35 participants from the government, media, civil society organizations, private sector and academic institutions.

The participants openly discussed the possible ways of opening up of local public contracting system and identified the challenges, strengths and opportunities and come up pertinent solutions. While having interactive discussion, participants shared lessons, practices and recalled several major infrastructure projects either failed or delayed by cause of poor contracting, one perfect example is rehabilitation project of the main road connecting Garowe and Galkacyo tows in Somalia. With existence of these live examples, participants had a chance of that the event was broadcasted in State TV and live streamed

in several Facebook pages which added a weight to the increasing public demand for greater transparency.

COVID-19 Open Data Responses

As Coronavirus pandemic brings anxiety, urgent action was required to stop the COVID-19 pandemic, inform public effectively and treat those it has affected. In this difficult time, it was indispensable that all data and information related to the pandemic to be open and available free of charge for use in ending the COVID-19 pandemic and minimizing the impact and spread of the disease.

Bareedo Platform joined in the Open Covid Pledge and encouraged others involved in the matter to open up data and information and all tools that can contribute in ending the COVID-19 pandemic and minimizing the impact and spread of the disease. Bareedo Platform also established COVID-19 Volunteers Working Group with more than 100 members that committed to support the response work and already contributed in volunteering to work in

the remote areas or hard to reach areas as medical or awareness rising teams. Furthermore, Bareedo Platform contributed in fight against disinformation and myths that has been challenge to the work of prevention of the virus or people to take preventive measures.

Open contracting demanded during COVID-19

Somalia is among the world's most corrupt countries, with no open and transparent procurement and contracting system and for that reason, there is a higher risk inflated prices ,fraud, bribery and corruption in emergencies. Therefore, Bareedo Platform issued a statement calling for government to be open and transparent in procurement and contracting of COVID-19 supplies and informed them how inefficient procurement systems may undermine the response to the pandemic and deprive people of health care.

DIGITAL RIGHTS

- *Recorded 9,890 inflammatory posts, insults, hate and spread of violence*
- *Child's digital safety survey conducted*
- *Small survey on online harassment against women and girls conducted*
- *1,800 women and girls who have been in threat assisted*
- *112 journalists trained on digital* security

The use of technology has experienced an exponential growth in Somalia and the online users and access to internet have been getting momentum with increasing number of people turning to social media platforms as a key source for the latest news and information. While awareness rising about using secure and safe Internet is not common in Somalia, the problem is often overlooked and is not perceived as a serious form of violence or an issue in Somalia.

Fake News, Disinformation & Misinformation

COVID-19 has spread to nearly every country in the world. There has been preventive measures including lockdowns and overnight curfews which are followed by work-from-home policies imposed by the local authorities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. With limited information and updates offered to the public in these challenging times, cybercriminals take advantage of people's fear and need for information by sending fraudulent email and WhatsApp messages pretending to be the health authorities in attempt to lure people into clicking on official information on the virus, malicious links or opening attachments to steal sensitive information.

Disinformation is on the rise in Somalia and poses a threat to the stability, freedom of information and safe access to internet. Bareedo Platform monitored disinformation focusing primarily on the role of social media.

Hate Speech

Some heated debates on Mogadishu's representation in the Upper House and arrangements on the federal elections at the Lower House triggered inflammatory and hate speech, disinformation and confrontation among Somali social media users. Such political vague coarsen public discourse and prompted unhealthy discussions and hate-fuelled tik-for-tats in the social media platforms. Bareedo Platform recorded 9,890 inflammatory posts, insults, hate and spread of violence against to particular clans, officials and public figures in the social media platforms. These incidents are highest ever to be recorded compared to 2,321 in 2019 and 1,521 in 2018. There has been similar incident that led to catastrophic tragedy in the past, and now these numbers are significant and enough to undermine the country's political and social stability and peace.

Some public officials, politicians proved less responsibility to promote tolerant and healthy discussions and refrain from any act that can ignite social unrest or violence.

Bareedo Platform issued a statement calling for Federal Government and member states to hold accountable those who incite violence or things that can endanger the country's social and political stability while freedom of speech and expression are paramount values.

Children's Online Safety

Young people use Internet more than ever before in Somalia and are now accessing the internet in the early years prior to starting school. Despite of using Internet for attending virtual classrooms, video calling, online gaming, entertainment and social media, it is also their top entertainment in a country where other entertainments are inexistent. Internet also offers them a way to escape painful feelings or troubling life situations in the country as some of them even make a living.

The onset of COVID-19 pandemic and closure of schools as part of the measures imposed to contain the spread of the pandemic, has further exacerbated the use of Internet by the young people. Some Internet Providers eased the cost of Internet for students, which also boosted the affordability. Many education institutions migrated to online classes to enable learning to continue while COVID-19 preventive measures are still in place and this put many young people to rely on Internet more than before.

As more young people have access to the internet in general and social media in particular, parents see signs of internet addiction, safety concerns and loss of appetite to education and missing out on real life experiences. A small survey conducted by Bareedo Platform's Online Desk in 2020, shows the parents panic, the underlying causes and possible solutions.

Online Violence Against Women & Girls

While more people make their way into the internet, it is no surprise that the amount of electronic violence against women also rises and it is not a new phenomenon on the world but is dealt as part of violence and discrimination that women and girls face offline and online throughout their lives. While awareness rising about using secure and safe Internet is

not common in Somalia and there is limited data on online harassment and violence, the problem is often overlooked in discussions of violence against women and is not perceived as a serious form of violence or an issue in Somalia and women do not often speak about online harassment and violence. There has been more than 31,000 online violence cases.

There has been speculation and heated discussions over a video showing the private parts of a young girl posted and distributed in the social media without her consent. This has been one of dozen disastrous online violence.

Bareedo Platform issued a press statement calling for recognition of online violence against women together with offline violence as a larger barrier for women and girls in exercising their full range of human rights and asked the relevant stakeholders to take the necessary measures to keep internet free from rising threats and make it a safe place for women and girls in Somalia.

- Conducted a small survey in Puntland state, the largest and longest functioning state in Somalia, focused on the experience and impact of online harassment on university female students aged between **20-35**, given that they are vulnerable to online harassment and abuse due to their extended use of internet and social media platforms.
- 1,800 women and girls who have been in threat were assisted with technical assistance as well as tips and knowledge related to the digital security and being a safe in the online.
- 35 young women from some popular education institutions and women-led organizations trained on digital security in Garowe.

Digital Security Training for Journalists in Somalia

Somalia is the world's most dangerous country for reporters, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. The online harassment and censorship against journalists and social rights activists in Somalia have been on the rise in a time most of the Journalists depend on the Internet and digital communications for research, interaction and news distribution. The widespread use of Internet and social media for news distribution, interaction with audiences without basic digital safeguards has facilitated harassment against journalists in online settings by a variety of means, including by disseminating threats and disinformation, stalking and broadcasting private or personally identifiable information while authorities have set up dedicated teams who troll journalists and report them to Facebook's standard enforcers in order to disable their accounts and silence critical media voices. Due to these growing threats, many journalists have given up their jobs and others left from the country.

Amid Somalia's deteriorating environment for freedom of speech and expression, Bareedo Platform conducted small survey in February and found that 89% of the surveyed journalists had personally experienced a security issue due to their work and unfamiliar with the widely available strategies and sophisticated digital security tools that could protect them in the digital space.

With these difficulties facing Somali journalists, Bareedo Platform Somalia trained 112 journalists, bloggers and media personnel on digital security knowledge to help them defeat the growing digital threats and do their vital work safely and effectively and make their families and their sources considerably more secure. They were trained on how Internet works, setting up security and privacy features of android mobiles and windows computers-which are the two biggest systems used by Somali journalists, the tools and tactics used to defend your devices and data from malware and phishing activities, the best practices on how to safely protect emails and use internet, how cookies work, what are the safe internet websites, how to remove internet browsing history, what is incognito browsing, what is anonymity network, how it protects identity of email account user, encrypting mails and hard-drive, hiding information with veracrypt and creating strong passwords.

Due to their extended use of social media platforms for news distribution and interaction with audiences, they were also trained on effective and secure use of social media accounts and pages, how to set up security features of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts, how to report abusive contents, profiles, photos and videos to these social sites.

furthermore, Bareedo Platform established a desk that worked with journalists and media organizations to provide them with emergency technical assistance and help them develop effective and resilient practices for digital security. This desk also facilitated collection of relevant data and information of online threats, censorship and abuse against journalists in Somalia that resulted in increase awareness around digital security issues in the face of shrinking online spaces.

Samsung Quad Camera
Abdikhayr Medi

Bareedo Platform expanded its collaboration and partnership to the following range of stakeholders, networks and groups that share vision and mandate.

1. **People Powered,** a global hub for participatory democracy based in USA.
2. **Open Data Charter,** a collaboration between over 100 governments and organisations working to open up data based on a shared set of principles.
3. **Design for Democracy Coalition,** a coordination mechanism between groups of democracy and human rights organizations around the world that are working at the forefront of technology and democracy issues.
4. **#KeepItOn,** a coalition working together to advance free Internet and fight Internet shutdowns around the world.

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