IMPACT ASSESSMENT EVALUATION REPORT

Berghof Foundation Somalia Programming

A Ten-Year Review (2015 – 2025)

An Independent Evaluation Applying the OECD DAC Criteria

Hirshabelle State • Galmudug State • South West State

Districts: Beledweyne • Balanbale – Guri'el • Adale • Jowhar • Baidoa

Submitted to	The Berghof Foundation
Evaluation Period	March 2015 – December 2025
Geographic Scope	Hirshabelle, Galmudug and South West States, Somalia
Evaluation Framework	OECD DAC Criteria for Peacebuilding (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability) with cross-cutting analysis of gender, conflict-sensitivity and Do No Harm.
Report Type	Final Evaluation Report
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Executive Summary

Programme Background and Approach

The Berghof Foundation has been working in Somalia since 2015, initially in Hirshabelle State, expanding to Galmudug in 2020 and South West State in 2024. The programme aims to address recurring tensions and violent conflicts, particularly those related to dynamics in community relations, land and natural resources, and increasingly exacerbated by climate change and environmental degradation.

The programme promotes locally led conflict transformation by strengthening the capacities of community peacebuilders and creating inclusive spaces for dialogue and joint action. Its core interventions include:

- **Insider Peacebuilders Network (IPN):** Supporting approximately 100 local peacebuilders in Hirshabelle and Galmudug, with a network currently being established in South West State, through capacity strengthening, peer exchange and small grants for community-led peace initiatives.
- **Community Dialogues:** Facilitating inclusive community assemblies (*Shirarka*) and sustained dialogue processes to address local grievances, build trust and identify peaceful solutions to conflict.
- **Participatory Research and Action Planning:** Engaging communities in analysing climate-related conflict dynamics and developing locally owned responses, including Climate Security Action Plans (CSAPs) and participatory visual research.
- **Radio Programming:** Using drama, public discussions and audience engagement to extend peacebuilding dialogue to wider rural and urban audiences.
- **Gender Inclusion:** Strengthening women's meaningful participation and leadership across peacebuilding activities, including in decision-making and dialogue spaces, and policy development and implementation.

The programme's **Theory of Change** is synthesised from the substantially similar project-level Theories of Change provided by Berghof Foundation, is grounded in the assumption that sustained, inclusive dialogue, joint analysis and locally led action can strengthen relationships and trust across social divides, enabling communities to address conflicts more constructively. Meaningful participation by women, youth and other underrepresented and marginalized groups is considered essential to ensuring the legitimacy and sustainability of locally developed solutions.

Purpose and Scope of Evaluation

This report presents the findings of an independent impact assessment of the Berghof Foundation (BF) Somalia programming over a ten-year period from March 2015 - December 2025. The evaluation was commissioned to assess the impact and performance of the Berghof Foundation’s Somalia programming against the OECD DAC criteria on relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability with particular emphasis on impact and sustainability.

The evaluation covered all projects and the overall programmatic trajectory across Hirshabelle, Galmudug and South West States, with district-level fieldwork in Adale, Baidoa, Balanbale, Beledweyne, Guri'el and Jowhar.[1] It triangulates evidence from a desk review of programme documentation, six Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and twenty Key Informant Interviews (KIIs); eighteen with community-level informants (three in each of the six districts) and two with Berghof Foundation programme staff. The 20 KIIs included traditional elders, women representatives and activists, civil society organisations, youth representatives, government officials, a deputy police commissioner and members of the Insider Peacebuilders Network (IPN). The 20 KIIs and six FGDs together constitute a substantially strengthened evidence base, balanced across all three federal member states and triangulated across community and organizational perspectives.

Programme Overview

Berghof Foundation's Somalia programming supports locally led conflict transformation in areas affected by recurrent community conflicts over land, water and natural resources, often intensified by climate shocks. Its main activities are: strengthening the Insider Peacebuilders Network (IPN) of local mediators and peace actors; facilitating Shirarka community dialogues and sustained dialogue processes; supporting participatory research and community-led Climate Security Action Plans (CSAPs); using radio and complementary community outreach to broaden peace messaging; and promoting women's meaningful participation and leadership.

The intended end point is stronger trust and cooperation across social divides, more constructive handling of local disputes, and peacebuilding practices embedded in community and government structures.

Key Findings

Relevance — High.

The programme's focus on community conflict, land, water and climate-driven resource pressures aligns with the most prominent conflict drivers identified by every community consulted. Across all six districts, respondents consistently identified land, water and pasture disputes, intensified by drought and flooding, as the dominant sources of violence. The integration of the climate-conflict nexus into Climate Security Action Plans (CSAPs) and the implementation of programming on the HDP nexus through the Forging a Greener Peace (*Doog iyo Nabad*) project[2] represents a contextually grounded and holistic response to current drivers.

Coherence — High.

[1] Fieldwork districts were selected to provide coverage of the three federal member states and the programme's longest-standing operational areas. South West State was represented through Baidoa; other South West districts were not included because of the programme's more recent entry into the state, the inception-stage status of current programming, and field-access and security considerations. This limits the depth of South West State evidence and is addressed in the methodology limitations

[2] Forging a Greener Peace (Doog iyo Nabad) is a consortium project implemented with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), focusing on climate-related drivers of conflict and the HDP nexus.

High internally; Moderate externally. Internal coherence refers to the extent to which Berghof Foundation's different activities and methodologies reinforce one another rather than operate in isolation. In this programme, dialogue, Insider Peacebuilders Network (IPN) capacity-building, participatory research, radio outreach and gender-inclusion work are mutually reinforcing: research identifies local conflict and climate pressures; dialogues validate and act on those findings; IPN members mediate emerging disputes; and radio extends the resulting messages to wider audiences. External coherence refers to the programme's alignment and coordination with other peacebuilding, humanitarian, development, government and donor actors. It is strong at donor and consortium level, including through the Forging a Greener Peace consortium with IOM and UNEP and partnerships with the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO), the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is more uneven at local level, where coordination among community organisations, religious institutions, government bodies and external organisations remains inconsistent.

Effectiveness — High in targeted districts.

Effectiveness is strongest in districts with sustained programme engagement. The IPN has been expanded from 46 members in 2018 to over 100 by 2025. Of particular significance, self-rated understanding of conflict transformation skills among Forging a Greener Peace participants rose from a 10% baseline (February 2025) to 81% by late 2025. Dialogue and mediation efforts organized and facilitated by members of the IPN have resolved ongoing disputes over irrigation water and grazing land (e.g., Gedo Barakan, Bulo Haji in Jowhar) and bridged decades-long clan divides in the Middle Shabelle region.

Impact — Major, with strong attribution.

Across all six districts, community members report a normative shift from violence to dialogue as the first response to disputes. Trust between clans has improved; women and youth participate in meetings that previously excluded them; revenge killings have declined; joint inter-clan markets have emerged as tangible peace dividends. KII respondents across the districts, most explicitly the government official from Jowhar and member of a youth CSO in Beledweyne, stated that the systematic peacebuilding work observed would have been unlikely without Berghof's training, structure, networks and legitimacy, providing rare contribution evidence in a peacebuilding context. The Jowhar Government official further judged that the programme "strengthened existing systems rather than creating new, dependent ones," with several IPN members subsequently joining community councils or securing government positions.

Sustainability — Positive.

The most encouraging signal is the emergence of self-organized community peace structures, such as SAMADOON in Guri'el, which mediate inter-community conflicts without donor funding. A further significant indication of institutional uptake, which was independently corroborated by two Berghof Foundation staff, is the planned development by MoIFAR (the Ministry for Interior, Internal Affairs and Reconciliation) of a National Insider Peacebuilders Network (NIPN) explicitly modelled on Berghof's IPN approach. Berghof has been asked to support with technical guidance on the establishment and implementation of the network. This federal-level uptake strengthens the institutional dimension of the sustainability rating, anchoring the IPN model above the district level. However, sustainability remains threatened by IPN volunteer burnout, rising economic pressure on members, weak formal institutional

recognition, vulnerability to climate shocks, and the documented risk of reversal if support ends abruptly in remote areas.

Conclusions

- Berghof Foundation's ten-year engagement in Somalia has produced a **credible, evidence-supported contribution** to a **normative shift** away from violence and toward dialogue-based conflict handling in the targeted districts.
- The IPN model, which is inclusive, hybrid (combining customary, religious and modern mediation), and embedded in local institutions, is the programme's strongest, most replicable asset.
- Gains are real but uneven: urban centres and direct participants have benefited substantially, while rural pastoralist communities, displaced populations and the most remote areas remain underserved.
- Women's meaningful participation has advanced visibly but remains constrained by structural exclusion from formal decision-making, the absence of safe reporting spaces, and persistent gender norms.
- Without continued investment in the integration of **Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support (MHPSS)**, **district-level institutionalization** and **radio reach** to under-served areas, **peace dividends** could erode under climate, security or political shocks.

Recommendations (Summary)

- Formalize the IPN's role within government structures. Continue to build on the Jowhar precedent of IPN members joining community councils and administrative roles, while avoiding dependence on individual office-holders and mitigating turnover risks associated with government transitions.
- Assess and adapt the IPN small-grant model. Continue the current Berghof Foundation pilot of one-year grant cycles, evaluate their effectiveness and administrative burden, and use the findings to determine whether multi-year or more flexible support is appropriate.
- Integrate MHPSS into dialogue programming, particularly to address trauma, grief and intergenerational grievance associated with past violence, including revenge killings where these were identified by communities.
- Strengthen the effectiveness and reach of radio programming, particularly in remote pastoralist areas through community loudspeakers, mobile outreach, trusted local intermediaries and integration with existing dialogue processes. The programme could also consider setting up a radio program in South West State to bring the environmental peacebuilding messaging to a broader population.
- Strengthen safe spaces for women, women only dialogue formats and the proportion of women among not only participants, but also trainers and facilitators.
- Invest in district level technical capacity for CSAP implementation, longitudinal monitoring, and enforcement of environmental and customary peace agreements.
- Develop early warning protocols and contingency funds to protect peacebuilding gains during climate shocks, election violence and non-state armed group activity.
- Tighten the MEL system around outcome harvesting, contribution analysis and disaggregated reporting, in line with the programme's Theory of Change.