



What Accountability Means in Somalia

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Question

A literature review of what accountability means in Somalia and what has worked to strengthen demand and supply-side accountability in the Somali context. With particular reference to the outputs of the previous DFID Accountability Programme (IAAAP).

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The K4D helpdesk service provides brief summaries of current research, evidence, and lessons learned. Helpdesk reports are not rigorous or systematic reviews; they are intended to provide an introduction to the most important evidence related to a research question. They draw on a rapid desk-based review of published literature and consultation with subject specialists.

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1. Summary

This rapid literature review finds that accountability programming in Somalia is focused on working effectively with the country's hybrid governance. A number of programmes have generated findings on the potential of non-state actors to improve accountability, with a focus on contextual analysis and adaptive programming.

Accountability is defined as mechanisms to hold people in power to account according to an agreed standard. Improving accountability may be difficult in fragile and conflict-affected states such as Somalia where power is dispersed and informal. Somalia is commonly described as a hybrid political order. Regions in Somalia have more and less robust governments and non-state actors have a number of important but informal roles in governance. Moreover, the prevalence of clan-based politics and patriarchal norms limits the inclusivity of accountability mechanisms, with women and members of minority clans among those commonly excluded.

This report is focused on accountability in governance. It surveys both evidence on the status and contours of accountability in Somalia, and on programmes to improve accountability. It is based on evidence from the Implementation and Analysis in Action of Accountability Programme (IAAAP) Somalia programme, as well as other relevant programmes. It describes the findings on the barriers and enablers to greater accountability in Somalia, as well as lessons on implementing programmes. It does not survey every accountability programme, or programme with accountability components, but instead focused on published evaluations and evidence syntheses.

Several programmes, such as IAAAP, have sought to research, improve and learn lessons on accountability in Somalia. IAAAP ran from 2013 to 2019 and had a budget of GBP 23 million.¹ It worked as an innovation laboratory to test models for greater accountability through adaptive programming.² IAAAP worked on different themes, including civil society-state engagement, financial flows and extractive industries.³

The report first discusses definitions of accountability and evidence on accountability in Somalia (section 2). The next section looks at evidence from IAAAP and USAID programmes on improving accountability in state institutions (section 3). Section 4 looks at lessons from programmes working with non-state actors, who exercise significant governance functions in Somalia. Section 5 looks at evidence on including marginalised groups and encouraging more demand for accountability.

Findings include:

¹ <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-203383/summary>

² <https://www.sddirect.org.uk/our-work/projects/dfid-implementation-and-analysis-in-action-of-accountability-programme-iaaap/>

³ <https://www.sddirect.org.uk/our-work/projects/dfid-implementation-and-analysis-in-action-of-accountability-programme-iaaap/>

- The importance of adaptive programming is widely emphasised in order to be able to respond to new findings in complex environments.
- Disadvantaged groups in Somalia – including members of minority clans, women, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons and youth – all face particular barriers to having their voice heard. Nevertheless, activists from these groups have pushed for greater representation in the past few decades and programming should look to ‘differentiated pathways to accountability’.
- Citizens’ awareness of their rights was often found to be limited. The use of media is shown to have the potential to increase awareness of citizens’ rights, and transparency regarding government actions. Media may reflect existing power relations, however.
- In developing forums for accountability, diversity is important to bring different voices together and create shared positions. In particular, it is helpful to engage both rights-holders and duty-bearers. However, in some cases segregated forums (e.g. by clan) may be helpful in creating space for certain voices.
- The limited capacity of some governance institutions, and the hybrid governance of the country as a whole, shape how accountability can be realised. Alongside formal local and national government, elders, religious leaders and armed groups are among those holding power.
- Many point to the potential of Shari’ah to provide a more rules-based form of law than xeer in contexts where the limited resources or integrity of state justice institutions means justice is often applied according to power dynamics. However, it is also noted that the development of Shari’ah jurisprudence is limited and some interpretations are literal and discriminatory towards women.
- Political economy analysis was found to be useful to identify the networks of power and accountability, and to identify ‘champions’ and ‘spoilers’ of possible improvements.
- The value of political insiders to help gain access to important leaders and institutions was highlighted by a number of programmes. Non-confrontational techniques were pointed to as effective ways of improving relationships between citizens’ groups and governing bodies.
- The persistence of clan favouritism and gender preferences in government decisions and those of non-state actors with governance functions.
- Non-state actors lack full accountability but are constrained to some extent by norms. They may also be amenable to training, certification and other accountability processes that increase their legitimacy as service providers.
- Programmes engaging with non-state actors need to avoid entrenching the latter’s lack of accountability. For example, elders can help to make local government more accountable, but elders are often put in power by a minority and do not represent women or members of minority clans in particular.
- In advancing ideas of equality of citizens and particularly gender equality, the use of local actors and idioms to minimise the impression of Western influence was suggested.
- Many programmes found that their volunteers were committed, but nevertheless unsure whether their work could continue after the end of external funding. Similarly, capacity building for parliamentarians was found to be useful, but questions remained over its sustainability without external support.

- Research gaps have been identified on women in governance; the long-term impact and sustainability of programmes; and the possibility of incorporating new legal practices, such as human rights law, into Somali traditional law (*xeer*).

2. Definitions and accountability in Somalia

Accountability is defined as the ‘processes, norms and structures that require [power-holders] to answer for their actions to another actor, and/or suffer some sanction if the performance is judged to be below the relevant standard’ (from Grant and MacArthur, 2008, in Nixon et al., 2017, p. 7).

Accountability usually has four elements (Nixon et al., 2017, pp. 12–13):

- standards: which define the behaviour expected of power-holders, and thus the criteria by which they will be judged
- assessment: which evaluates the extent to which power-holders have met these standards
- answerability: a process by which power-holders are required to explain and justify their activities, outcomes and/or procedures;
- sanctions: a process in which power-holders are punished when they fail to meet the standards expected of them

Conceptions of accountability are linked to norms about the legitimacy of certain actors holding power or holding others to account, and therefore vary according to the nature of the polity and social contract (Nixon et al., 2017, p. 7). Accountability may take the form of horizontal accountability between powerful actors, as well as vertical accountability between citizens and those representing or ruling them (Herring et al., 2020). It may be mediated by processes and institutions such as news and communications media, elections, audits and non-state actors. Institutions and processes that provide accountability mechanisms may be more or less inclusive – in Somalia many formal and informal barriers prevent women and members of minority clans, among others, from holding government and others to account.

Fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS) states lack legitimacy and society is fragmented. Many foreign aid programmes focus on ‘institutional reconstruction and capacity development’, focusing on economic growth and services. ‘Social accountability’ is one approach to overcome difficulties raised by FCAS and focuses on helping citizens hold government to account (Nixon et al., 2017).

Since 1991, Somalia has seen civil war, territory has been administered by combinations of clans, the state, warlords and Islamist groups (Felbab-Brown, 2018). The national, secular legal system works alongside *sharia* (Islamic law) and *xeer* (clan-based law) (Ahmed, 2018). Governance in Somalia is fragmented, meaning there are ‘no agreed authority relations or agreed means or settling disputes over those authority relations’ (Herring et al., 2020, p. 187). The federal government, federal member states, Somaliland, the Islamic armed group Al Shabaab, commercial actors all govern, sometimes concurrently. ‘Traditional’ and ‘modern’ forms of governance co-exist. In Somalia, accountability of the state institutions is too narrow (e.g. assessing performance and punishing through elections), as authority is fragmented and the

state lacks capacity in many instances. The distinction between state and non-state actors is widely blurred – e.g. clan elders may perform state functions.

Important non-state actors include the Islamic armed group Al Shabaab, elders, religious leaders, informal service managers in displaced persons camps, and telecoms and finance companies. For example, Al Shabaab is the most efficient tax gatherer in the country and governs over much of South-Central Somalia; being reliant on taxation rather than foreign donors may make it more accountable to citizens (Ahmad et al., 2022). Elders perform governance functions at the local level, using the xeer legal system. They are usually selected by a minority, and there is no evidence that they make demands on behalf of their community. They produce little vertical accountability, but do create increased cooperation with local government, which will lead to increased ‘coherence of governance’ and ‘demands for increased horizontal accountability’ (Herring et al., 2020, p. 193). The degree of accountability that can be fostered by working with elders is therefore limited by the exclusionary nature of the institution. The telecoms and finance sectors are among Somalia’s most successful businesses. They provide services ‘that do not discriminate with respect to clan’ (Herring et al., 2020, p. 199).

The clan structure of Somalia, the prevailing legal systems and ideologies, and pervasive corruption limit accountability (Rahman, 2017). The competing rules arising from xeer, sharia and national law make it hard to enforce court decisions as, for example, clan solidarity undermines attempts to hold people accountable to the national laws (Ahmed, 2018). Judges are reported to show partiality to relatives, clan members and the wealthy and powerful. The judiciary is not seen to be independent, or sufficiently trained. There is a lack of resources in the judiciary, and low public confidence in the system (Ahmed, 2018). Entrenched patriarchal views present significant barriers to women’s inclusion (Haegeman, 2017).

IAAAP worked in Somalia and has generated a number of findings about accountability and working effectively in the context. IAAAP’s theory of change is focused on engaging five elements (Nixon et al., 2017): spoiler economy; rights-holders; champions; duty-bearers; international engagement. Studies of its work suggest that IAAAP is more likely to see greater accountability (Nixon et al., 2017, p. 32):

- in more conducive contexts that uphold basic political and civil rights (i.e. more likely in Somaliland and Puntland than in Somalia, and in particular jurisdictions within these regions more than others);
- where accountability relationships between duty-bearers and rights-holders are already established (i.e. elected officials and citizens);
- when projects include substantial involvement of duty-bearers (both informal and formal) and not simply rights-holders;
- when interlocutors or intermediation are used effectively;
- at a more local level;
- when they use collaborative rather than confrontational approaches;
- and when dealing with public goods rather than private goods and strategic assets.

3. State institutions

The weakness of Somali state institutions can hinder efforts to improve accountability. A recent analysis of anti-corruption efforts in Puntland finds many barriers to their successful implementation (Ahmed, 2018). Looking at the relevant institutions – the office of auditor general (OAG), Puntland’s good governance and anti-corruption bureau (PGGACB), Puntland’s police, Attorney General office (AGO) and Puntland’s courts – it finds a lack of capacity and competing incentives (Ahmed, 2018). There have been attempts to improve accountability and fight corruption, including a 2015 Anti-Corruption Commission, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG), and new legislation (World Bank, 2017).

A 2015 report also emphasises the difficulties facing the OAG, whose role is to fight corruption and increase accountability in state institutions (Abyrint, 2015). Difficulties include limited capacity and training opportunities, as well as external weaknesses. The institutions audited by the OAG often have weak or out-of-date processes, cash transactions are common in public spending, there is a lack of financial infrastructure, and insecurity and weak rule of law make auditing difficult (Abyrint, 2015). It is argued that the OAG has significantly improved since then, due in part to the support of international donors such as the Royal Norwegian Embassy, the INTOSAI Development Institute (IDI), the Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions of English-speaking African Countries (AFROSAI-E), the World Bank and the European Union (Omer et al., 2021). Reforms were instituted, partly in order to ensure eligibility for debt relief from the World Bank, based on international best practice. In 2019, OAG issued audit reports on the financial statements on the Federal Government, a consolidated compliance audit report for all security sector entities, and a consolidated compliance audit report for 20 non-security sector entities, for the first time (Omer et al., 2021).

Analysis of the legal system points to weaknesses in its accountability (Coffey, 2017). Findings include (Coffey, 2017; USAID, 2020):

- Limited separation of powers between the executive and judiciary, with leading politicians making appointments and influencing decisions, leading to a justice system serving the interests of the powerful;
- Inconsistently applied policies across the country;
- The dominance of community level dispute resolution, focused on conflict prevention rather than administering justice. It is led by elders and does little to uphold rights, as it often favours powerful clans and keeping the peace.
- A lack of resources hinders transparent and accountable justice institutions, and a lack of regular funding encourages corruption.
- The costs of accessing justice such as bribes makes it harder for marginalised Somalis to get access.

One report recommends the development of a ‘mutually agreed-upon justice sector model’ through a consultative process, alongside efforts to stimulate more awareness of, and demand for, accountable justice services (Coffey, 2017, p. 2). The provisional constitution and many Somalis are in favour of greater use of Shari’ah law, which is a rules-based system, and may enable a more regular and rights-based system of justice than is provided by the Xeer system. However, the current application of Shari’ah does not appear to be always based on

jurisprudence, but rather on local religious authorities' interpretations; moreover, Al-Shabaab's interpretation may have limited support for women's rights (Coffey, 2017; USAID, 2020).

Somali Parliament

USAID. (2021). *Strengthening public accountability in parliament (DAMAL)*. USAID.
<https://chemonics.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Final-Report-Damal.pdf>

The USAID programme, **Strengthening Public Accountability in Parliament (Damal)**, focused on improving the accountability of the Federal Parliament of Somalia. It helped improve the parliament's legislative and oversight responsibilities, particularly regarding financial governance and oversight, and sought to increase public participation in the public financial management process. It ran during 2019-2021 and cost USD 2.4 million.

The programme:

- provided training for MPs and civil society.
- 'supported the Budget and Finance Committees (BFCs) within the House of the People (HoP) and Upper House (UH) of Parliament to reach key national budget milestones'.
- helped amend the Audit Bill.
- hosted a public finance management (PFM) oversight forum.
- helped publicise 'oversight fora through livestreaming, television, and radio broadcasts, including the first televised oversight meeting of a fiscal year close of accounts'
- used consultative platforms, including a 'public oversight forum on inclusive politics for youth, women, and disability community representatives'

Results and lessons include:

- **The programme used a 'learning-by-doing' approach to ensure that it met the needs of parliamentarians.** It aimed to co-create in order to build trust and support.
- **It found that MPs were increasingly willing to hold public hearings.** It also found that they were willing to hold public hearings broadcast over radio, television or the internet.
- **Navigating political dynamics.** Damal created platforms for knowledge-sharing and training, with the aim of bringing varied political actors together to develop common understanding.
- **It identified a need for more training in parliamentary process for MPs.** It produced a pocket guide to legislative PFM oversight functions. However, it found that 'a permanent, professionally trained staff is needed to generate the analysis required to the meet the international oversight standards that are being advanced by the Damal project.'
- It also found that **improved sustainability is needed.** MPs expected foreign funding, and will need to be able to generate their own funds in the absence of more programmes.

Hargeisa council

Grant, E. (2018). *Voice of the voiceless: Learning from SORADI's project to strengthen accountability in Hargeisa*. IAAAP.
https://www.sddirect.org.uk/media/1549/iaaap_kp7_soradihargeisa_web.pdf

From 2015 to 2018, Social Research and Development Institute (SORADI) ran a project to strengthen accountability within Hargeisa Local Council (HLC), Somaliland.

The project was based on findings that HLC has low levels of accountability. The councillors elect the mayor and the boundaries between the legislative and executive functions are poorly defined. The councillors spend much of their time on other tasks, according to interviewees. Staff are often poorly trained and appointed through connections rather than merit. The performance of staff is not monitored. Men and members of certain clans are favoured for jobs. Citizens in Hargeisa are often 'unaware of their rights' or how to hold officials to account. Clan structures remain central to governance.

The project highlights the importance of 'differentiated pathways to accountability'. Members of minority clans, women, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons and youth all face particular barriers to having their voice heard. Nevertheless, activists from these groups have pushed for greater representation in the past few decades.

SORADI did the following:

- A Reform Forum consisting of activists
- A Ga'an–Libah Community Forum
- Capacity building of local government officials
- 'Capacity building and awareness raising with Hargeisa youth

The outcomes from capacity building were mixed. There were some difficulties, such as councillors and senior managers not wanting to participate in the training, or being busy in election periods. The report suggests that councillors learning from other regional councillors might be more effective. It also suggests the need to explore ways to convince senior officials to participate. Mid and low-level officials were more willing to undertake the training, but sought to reserve spots for male colleagues at the expense of women.

Many participants disagreed with the views advanced in SORADI's gender and social inclusion training. The report therefore suggests asking Muslim authority figures to support the training, and thereby convince those whose opposition is based on religious reasoning. Longer workshops are also recommended.

The Reform Forum has been successful in getting the attention of the Somaliland parliament and Attorney General, because of the know-how of former mayors and others with political experience and connections within the group. It was found that the diversity of the committee was an important factor of its success. It included women, minorities, activists, politicians, media and business. The same was true for both fora.

The report also cites the non-confrontational approach of SORADI as a factor in its success, contrasting it with a more confrontational social media campaign that was not well received by councillors.

It was found that seeking to 'influence executive government, rather than parliament, is more effective'.

The reform forum identified a new election law as a priority. The law includes educational criteria for councillors, fewer councillors, links to voting constituencies, the election of the mayor and deputy mayor. It addresses the problem of the 'low capacity and poor quality of the elected leadership' (p. 13).

The internet was found to be a useful way to transmit information.

Volunteers are committed, but worry about the programme once funding from SORADI has stopped.

4. Non-state actors

Gatekeepers, elders and accountability in Somalia

McCullough, A., & Saed, M. (2017). *Gatekeepers, elders and accountability in Somalia*.
<https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/11938.pdf>

In hybrid political orders, such as Somalia, 'the relationship between formal and informal spheres of governance are being renegotiated.' The state is often weak or absent, meaning programmes seeking to increase accountability need to also consider certain non-state actors who have a significant role in governance. The research highlights 'the importance of understanding power relations in terms of networks of dispersed relations rather than between those with power and those without' (p. 8). Non-state actors with significant roles in governance in Somalia include IDP 'gatekeepers' and elders from villages.

IAAAP therefore identified key actors and worked to strengthen relationships between formal and informal powers.

Lessons on non-state actors' interests and potential to improve accountability

Religious leaders from Sufi and Salafist traditions are influential in Somalia and are often critical of corrupt governments. Sufists are integrated into the clan system, and therefore have a say in how *xeer* is implemented. They may hold elders to account, or may be co-opted by corrupt elders. Salafists push for a more radical reform, such as lobbying against clan-based voting. They provide services, and have established an Islamic Courts Union (ICU) for example. Salafists have opposed quotas for more women's involvement in politics, however.

Business leaders, who are Somalia's main tax payers, and are expected to pay *zakat*, were identified as having the potential to push for greater accountability. They also have the potential to act as spoilers to projects that threaten their business interests.

Elders are key governance actors at a local level. They are involved in administering the *xeer* system of law, arbitrating conflict and working with the state and NGOs. They are not representative, however, and are often chosen on clan lineage, although may also be chosen according to their skills, expertise and experience. Women cannot be elders. Although elders are constrained by norms, they do not lose their positions if they contravene them.

Citizen Directed Negotiated Accountability (CDNA) project aimed to improve the accountability of the local district administration for ten villages in the Dholeby Sub District in Lower Juba Region, South Central Somalia by working with elders. It worked towards the following aims (p. 19):

- Improving the ability of the community to express its needs to local authorities ('voice'),
- supporting the government to respond to these needs,
- creating space for engagement and negotiation between government and community representatives,
- developing mechanisms for monitoring and sanctioning government representatives.

The programme helped improve relationship between elders and district administration. For example, the elders built an office near to the local administration and established a better relationship. There is some evidence of agreements being reached between citizens and the administration, arising from these meetings, but no evidence of enforcement yet. It was found that 'elders saw themselves as collaborators with district administrators rather than as whistle-blowers' (p. 25). Therefore, 'any programme seeking to work with elders to increase the accountability of international actors or the private sector needs to include measures to prevent elders being co-opted by those they seek to hold accountable, whether through stipends or through perks such as free accommodation in urban areas' (p. 26).

More widely, it was found that the provision of services was a way to increase legitimacy in the eyes of NGOs, local government, and citizens.

On sustainability, it was noted that 'beyond the increased legitimacy that the association with an international NGO offered the gatekeepers, there were few tangible incentives for gatekeepers to continue with more accountable camp management' (p. 26)

The report emphasises that in asking certain actors to advance accountability, they themselves should be accountable. For example, elders may push for more accountability with local administrations but they also need to be held to account.

Future research

It emphasises the need to understand the long-run impact of its accountability project (elders and local government) and whether these actors will still push for accountability without the incentive of programme funding (p. 26).

More research is also required on 'incorporating other legal practices into the xeer. Elements of sharia have already been incorporated into the xeer, setting a precedent for the incorporation of additional legal traditions, including, for example, human rights law' (p. 26).

Informal settlements

Bryld, E., Kamau, C., & Mohamoud, M. A. (2020). Using an adaptive approach to making gatekeepers accountable to internally displaced persons in Mogadishu, Somalia. *Somalia, Development in Practice*, 30(8), 982–993. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2020.1754765>

The project sought to enhance accountability in informal IDP camps. The managers of informal IDP settlements, called gatekeepers or informal settlement managers (ISMs) perform a wide variety of functions including distributing aid, mediating conflict and arranging funerals. They are self-appointed and have no formal accountability mechanisms. ISMs operate in an 'erratic and unaccountable' but not entirely arbitrary manner.

The programme conducted research with ISMs. It offered training, help to make their service delivery more transparent, and sought to introduce an approval process and certification system for ISMs with local government and NGOs.

The research undertaken showed that ISMs wanted to be trained, as they saw themselves as 'legitimate service providers' and felt that training could bolster their legitimacy as such (see also McCullough & Saed., 2017, pp. 18-19).

The programme focused on helping boost the accountability and legitimacy of ISMs who NGOs felt were 'better'. It was believed that IDPs would switch settlements to more 'accountable' ones. But IDPs had limited freedom of movement/high transaction costs, and chose settlements through family/friendship networks, so this did not come to pass.

It asked ISMs to make and publicise commitments for their role to increase accountability within the settlements. However, it was found to be difficult to implement the certification process for ISMs. Local government was against the certification process, as it raised difficult issues of settlement and return. Instead 'Informal Settlement Monitoring Committees' were invented. This involved some members of local government, and monitoring sessions held in front of IDPs. It was seen as a step towards greater accountability.

Findings from the programme emphasise the importance of an adaptive approach, and that:

- Any intervention must be based on a thorough analysis and comprehensive understanding of the specific political economy and cultural context – there is especially a need to take account of potential spoilers and devise ways to manage them.
- Full buy-in from the formal power structures is a prerequisite for durable change, though it might not be easy to obtain. The real challenge here is to convince both the formal and the informal power structures that they can coexist and complement each other. Trust and bridge-building between actors in the political economy are critical and time-consuming steps.
- Project design must be flexible and based on realistic expectations – inflated expectations and an idealistic rather than pragmatic project design will not create durable change. This also requires resources to investigate and research changes (and lack of change) throughout the implementation.
- All actors involved in the process, government, NGOs, and so on, must be willing to take risks and ready to challenge their own perceptions. Often, we find, these perceptions are the biggest obstacles to positive change.
- Results need to be documented alongside the assumptions and realities on which they are based.

5. Demand-side accountability and inclusion

Marginalised groups

Grant, E., Haegeman, E., & Parke, A. (2018). *Pathways to accountability for women and marginalised groups in the Somali context: The role of non-state actors: The Implementation and*

Analysis in Action of Accountability Programme (IAAAP). IAAAP.
https://www.sddirect.org.uk/media/1622/final-gesi-learning-brief_web.pdf

The prevalence of patriarchal norms and clan networks, among other factors, pose significant barriers to inclusive governance. The report shows that non-state actors can both advance accountability for marginalised groups and prevent it. It can be difficult to challenge discriminatory norms around gender and other issues, but is possible.

Gender-equality and social inclusion political economy analysis is necessary to understand resistance of different stakeholders. There are ‘important differences in perceptions and experiences of accountability among diverse marginalised groups’ so it is important to tailor approaches.

So far, donors have shown ‘limited focus on developing strategies to systematically incorporate [gender equality and social inclusion] in FCAS contexts’. Investment needs to be sustained in order to encourage more inclusion of marginalised groups.

Women and girls, internally displaced persons (IDPs), persons with disability (PwD), people from minority clans, and youth are all excluded in Somalia. Moreover, a 2018 survey ‘found that knowledge of formal institutions and civic engagement levels are relatively high, but significantly lower for groups such as IDPs and those with lower levels of education’ (Grant et al., 2018, p. 4). The political system is dominated by men.

IAAAP ‘has produced ground-breaking evidence and analysis’. However, there is **a lack of evidence on including women in governance structures and other similar issues.**

IAAAP has identified non-state actors who play the role of:

- ‘champions’ (‘those “who are ‘reform-minded”, perceived as genuine representatives of certain groups, and who have the skills, knowledge or experience to play a facilitative role’). It argues that it needs to support them but ‘to avoid the impression that the legitimacy of champions is derived from external or international sources’.
- and ‘spoilers’, who seek to de-rail efforts to foster greater accountability and inclusion.

IAAAP has worked with institutions and actors, such as clan elders, who are not fully accountable. As these institutions will persist for the foreseeable future, working with them is ‘a reasonable way of drawing on existing power bases to build support for the Federal Government of Somalia’ (Grant, et al., 2018, p. 6). Clan elders can play both positive and negative roles. They can exacerbate nepotism and corruption, but can also work in more accountable ways or put pressure on other actors to improve accountability.

Its analysis shows the potential roles of the following factors and actors:

- **Culture.** Views about women’s roles and positions undermine equality. Religious leaders can work for and against greater inclusion of women.
- **Former politicians** often have useful insider knowledge, but are not constrained as they were in office, so may be able to help IAAAP goals.

- **Informal service managers (ISMs).** They are sometimes less bound by tradition than elders or religious leaders, for example, and some women act as ISMs..
- **NGOs.** Can be inclusive, but often reflect wider biases, e.g. women are often under-represented.
- **Spoilers:** e.g. local authorities and religious leaders. They emphasise the importance of a 'non-confrontational approach' when working with potential spoilers.

Effective mechanisms for accountability programmes include:

- **multi-stakeholder forums** help to build points of consensus among a wide range of voices. Highlighting common markers of vulnerability can be helpful to create shared grievances and unity.
- **media** can help overcome broader social barriers – e.g. limited knowledge and confidence. Better awareness of citizens' rights is needed. **There is a lack of demand for accountability.** Civic education is needed. Knowledge of certain governance issues can be built up through media. Interactive formats have been shown to be effective. Radio is the most trusted medium in Somalia and more Somalis have access to it than television. The internet is more used by men than women (Grant et al., 2018).

Other findings on demand-side accountability

Findings from IAAAP on ensuring the inclusion of marginalised citizens in accountability forums include that:

- Levels of literacy are often low among excluded groups, so the use of diverse communications methods can help improve their engagement (IAAAP, 2017b).
- Holding meetings with clan-neutral facilitators can help overcome clan bias. Holding meetings at times and places where women can attend is also helpful (IAAAP, 2017b).
- Many groups within Somali civil society have worked for greater accountability over the years (Grant et al., 2018). Donor initiatives, such as the Hufnaan network, can build on these efforts. Hufnaan is a 'network of accountability champions in Somalia and Somaliland' with diverse membership in terms of age, clan and experience, and members from civil society organisations, business and academia (IAAAP, 2017a).

Media platforms can provide spaces for citizens, particularly marginalised citizens, to voice their concerns about governance. The Common Social Accountability Platform (CSAP), led by Africa's Voices Foundation (AVF) ReDSS and the Banadir Regional Administration (BRA), in 2018 produced 'a four-part interactive radio series designed to build public dialogue in Mogadishu on critical displacement topics and to gather public opinion to inform ongoing durable solutions programmes and decision-making' (Moman & Mohammed, 2019).

Radio call-in shows are often posited as a way to improve accountability (Abyrint, 2015). As such donors have supported call-in shows in Somalia and elsewhere. The Somali Media Support group is supported by international donors, Radio Ergo and Radio Bar-Kulan are supported by the UN, the BBC and Voice of America support Somali stations, and the Federal Government

also runs a station (Stremlau et al., 2015).⁴ The aim of this approach is to facilitate ‘voices’, typically citizens or civil society groups that will encourage the ‘accountability’ of a particular actor, most often the government’ (Stremlau et al., 2015, p. 1513).

Many of the stations in Somalia are privately owned and ‘clientistic’ (Stremlau et al., 2015). They do not necessarily function as ‘dynamic spaces’ for interaction between citizens and government. Shows can be more or less structured, and call-in shows are often influenced by owners, with a focus on particular talking points. As such they often reproduce existing power relations (Stremlau et al., 2015).

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