

BRCiS: OVERVIEW

The Building Resilient Communities in Somalia (BRCiS) Consortium was created in the aftermath of the 2011 famine which resulted in an estimated 258,000 excess deaths in Somalia. To prevent such mass suffering again, the Consortium focuses on addressing the root causes of communities' vulnerabilities. Committed to a bottom-up model of decision-making, BRCiS thinks beyond emergency response packages. Consortium Members work together to leverage integrated programming models, flexible multi-year funding streams, community participation and ownership structures, and the expertise and resources of local and international organizations. BRCiS programmes are implemented through an area-level approach that seeks to build the resilience of households with a focus on those that are most vulnerable and marginalized. This means that investments are made from a multi-sectoral perspective to generate systemic change and transformational resilience gains. BRCiS has invested significantly in ensuring that programming is driven by the communities, that programming is responsive to changes in the context, and that underlying causes that hinder resilience are addressed. BRCiS has also been at the forefront of adaptive programming, responding to crises in coordination with local authorities and communities. In its eighth year of constant learning, the consortium has evolved to be able to quickly meet emerging needs, putting in place systems and partnerships that are centred in the communities, adaptable, and responsive to the changing context. The Consortium's 5-year vision is the following: "Vulnerable people at the margins of the Somali society are capacitated to engage with and influence their institutions, so that their needs are served in a more inclusive and sustainable way". BRCiS is aiming to be more than a programme and to reflect an approach that engages on the spectrum of resilience in Somalia, pursuing both humanitarian and development approaches. By layering intervention packages, BRCiS can deliver on multiple mandates at once, being a mechanism that links projects together to achieve results. This vision therefore presents an overall approach to programming, that can be delivered through multiple projects and partnerships. BRCiS will continue delivering effective humanitarian programming that reduces the severity of humanitarian needs but will also ensure that long-term resilience and moving people out of chronic poverty is directly

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addressed. These approaches are not mutually exclusive and can be achieved through layering interventions as well as through a holistic programme.

Today, BRCiS comprises nine national and international NGO members and leverages the technical expertise and resources of each partner. BRCiS operates in 34 districts of Somalia and is present in all Federal Member States. More than 450 communities have participated in BRCiS resilience projects since 2013. The multiprogramme, multidonor consortium has implemented over \$230 million of funded activities since 2013. BRCiS' efficient scale-up capacity allowed to reach more than 70,000 people at the height of the 2018 food security and nutrition crisis, contributing significantly to averting the risk of famine. In 2020, the consortium helped more than 26,000 households with cash assistance to mitigate the economic impacts of COVID-19. Results derived from annual surveys demonstrate substantial progress towards improving food security, access to water and community participation, indicating enhanced levels of community recovery in BRCiS operational areas. This trend is shown by advances in standard food security indicators, including the average household dietary index and the food consumption score, with the latter growing from 41.49 to 52.94 on average since the baseline data collection. Similarly, seasonal surveys are showing promising results with the number of households reporting poor food consumption scores having decreased from 24% to 7% between July 2019 and February 2020.

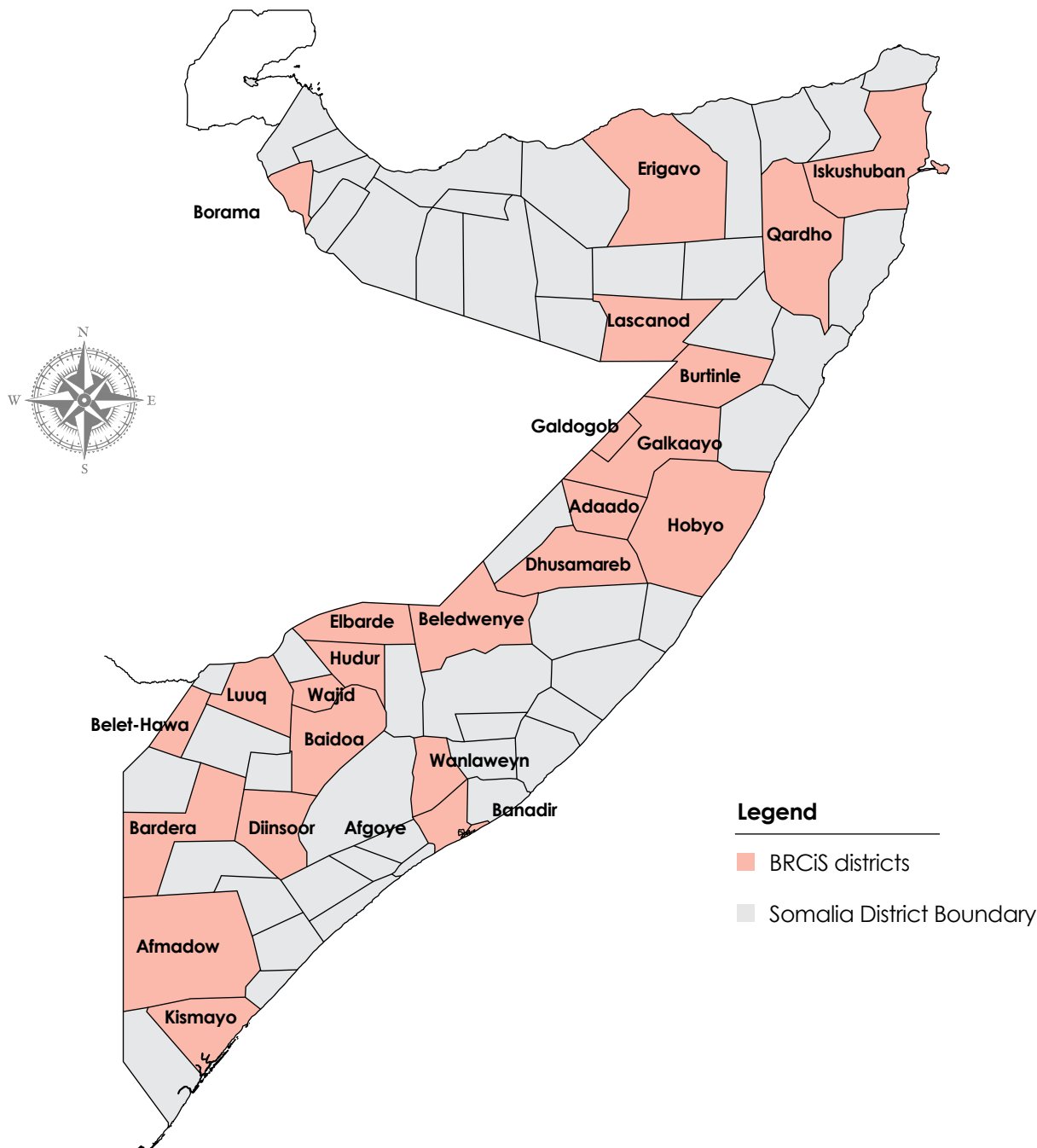
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CONTRASTO, Marco Gualazzini, BRCiS

BRCiS FOOTPRINT

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Transformational Community Engagement

Because community engagement is both an outcome and a process of the resilience building approach, BRCiS always collaborates with, and ultimately empowers the communities engaged. Providing space for communities to speak openly on the issues that are important to them builds trust between beneficiaries and project implementers, opening the door to meaningful problem-solving. BRCiS employs the People First Impact Method to guide programming with a practical way to transfer decision-making back to the communities it serves. By building on these relationships, the Consortium is able to address important issues of marginalisation.

Social Protection and Livelihoods

The BRCiS approach draws inspiration from the sustainable livelihoods framework, prioritising investment in human capital with a nutrition-sensitive lens. When engaging on livelihoods in vulnerable communities, it is key to understand both capacity as well as vulnerability. Using financial inclusion as the entry point, interventions are layered and sequenced to provide holistic support that recognizes the unique starting point of individuals and households. The focus is on ensuring that people are adequately equipped according to their capacity to allow them to at first stabilise their situation, then once stable, to enhance their access to income.

Financial inclusion is tailored to the needs of the household. Long-term safety nets can be used as consumption support – a reliable source of income that stabilizes the household food security. At the next level, households are supported to increase their savings and gain access to loans through informal savings groups that simultaneously work as support networks. As these groups mature, they shift households from the capacity to save towards the capacity to invest. Progressively, individuals and groups can directly be linked to formal financial services.

Providing support to stabilize and then grow a household's income must be done hand in hand within investing in the services – physical, financial, social and environmental – that surround them. In Somalia, livelihoods are intrinsically linked to the social and natural environments in particular so investing in these whilst supporting individual resilience pathways is critical.



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Shock Responsiveness

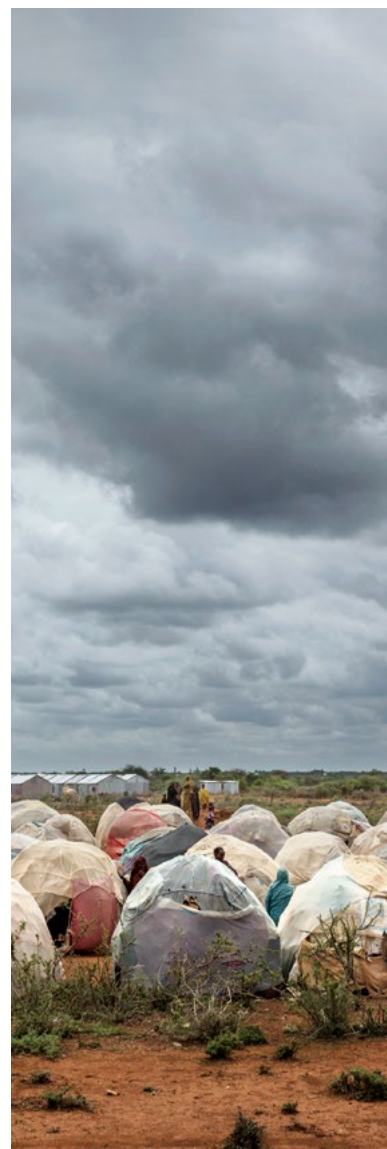
BRCiS established a robust early warning and early action framework to protect the resilience gains of communities in the face of shocks and stresses. In 2019, the Consortium also rolled out its own early warning system, with monthly data collection on 30 early warning indicators in the communities where BRCiS operates. The data is available on a dashboard and informs programme adaptations and advocacy.

Shock-specific frameworks guide harmonised early action and early response; when shocks and stresses reach certain thresholds, they trigger interventions. These interventions can be funded through internal reprogramming, community contributions or, in case of larger needs, through the activation of a crisis modifier funding mechanism. The crisis modifier modality was successfully activated five times since 2019 in response to conflict, drought, flooding and socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19.

Accelerate Learning and Innovation

The participatory knowledge production structures set up by the Consortium Management Unit (CMU) have created a learning and adapting environment in which BRCiS Members are more confident in adopting practices that have been tried and tested by other Members. What is more, the positioning and reputation of the Consortium in the humanitarian, resilience and development landscape in Somalia mean that the Consortium can influence the sector by leading and convening conversations on some specific agendas, such as early warning early action, community participation and ownership, DRR, and others.

Finally, the BRCiS monitoring and evaluation system aims to build a strong evidence base regarding what works in resilience-building and provide readily adaptable learning to inform programme planning and change. BRCiS conducts an annual survey collecting detailed information on demographics, resilience capacities and general wellbeing. The Consortium designed the survey in partnership with Tango International, a leading organisation in the field of resilience measurement. Additionally, seasonal surveys monitor how households adapt to the growing scarcity and seasonal fluctuations in access to water and livelihood opportunities. Surveys are complemented through qualitative methods to unpack their quantitative insights.



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Government Coordination

The Consortium closely coordinates decision-making processes, communication and monitoring with the Government of Somalia. In each Federal Member State, BRCiS has focal points responsible for coordination with state ministries. This collaboration includes the delivery of capacity building projects to support policy development, trainings and learning events. At the national level, the Ministry of Planning Investment and Economic Development regularly monitors the project. The feedback and recommendations contribute to the strategic and operational direction of the projects. In addition, it contributes to supporting the Government on specific initiatives that directly align with important project outcomes. For example, the Consortium has a partnership with the Scaling Up Nutrition Somalia initiative, shares Early Warning information and data with the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management and supports the Ministry of Health with different learning outputs.

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