

ZAMZAM FOUNDATION

Annual Report 2023



مؤسسة زمزم
ZAMZAM
FOUNDATION



This annual report affirms the positive impact of programmes implemented by Zamzam Foundation to support Somalia’s poorest and most vulnerable people



More than half the pupils are girls in Zamzam’s high-quality schools

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Involving and empowering women is a critical component of all our programmes, from maternal health and education to livelihoods and peacebuilding (pictured)



In 2023 our work touched the lives of more than 2.2 million people, providing life-saving emergency aid alongside support for healthcare, clean water, food security, sustainable livelihoods, education, and peacebuilding.

Our Zamzam teams are grappling with a combination of poverty, climate change and conflict that is unparalleled anywhere else in the world. Somalia is not only one of the very poorest nations but also heads the rankings for vulnerability to conflict (Fragile States Index) and to climate change (Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative index – ND-GAIN).

It was a huge relief to see the end of the worst drought on record with the onset of the Gu rains from March onwards. There was a stark reminder, however, of a different aspect of climate vulnerability later in the year when heavy Deyr rains resulted in the worst floods for a generation, affecting 2.5 million people.

We would like to thank our board of trustees and our staff and volunteers for their hard work in the face of so many challenges this year. Their energy and effort have been outstanding. There is still much to do, however, if we are to build a brighter and better future for our country and our people. Over 10 million Somalis live below the poverty line and 6.9 million rely on humanitarian aid to survive.

Our future hope rests on the extraordinary resilience and resourcefulness of the Somali people. Our aim is to support and empower the most vulnerable – including pregnant and breastfeeding women, malnourished and orphaned children, the elderly, and people with disabilities – and to inspire and equip the next generation through education and training.

This annual report explains how we are working to empower women and girls across all our programmes, and details how our various programmes complement and support each other. There can be no hope of survival without good healthcare and clean water, no hope of stability and security without peacebuilding, no route out of poverty without education and sustainable livelihoods.

We can only make significant progress in partnership with others, and we are enormously thankful to the partners we are privileged to work with. In 2023 we became the first Somali charitable body to join the International Council for Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), and we were awarded special consultative status with ECOSOC, one of the UN’s main bodies. We also attended and contributed to the UN’s COP 28 climate conference and its summit on the Sustainable Development Goals.

We are proud to be part of the wide-ranging Building Resilient Communities in Somalia (BRCIS) initiative, working closely with Save the Children and International Rescue Committee. We applaud donors like the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, which is ensuring that 43% of its support for BRCIS is channelled through Somali organisations.

We were part of the working group that developed UNHCR’s Multistakeholder Pledge Advancing Localisation, and we stand ready to forge more partnerships like BRCIS that realise the localisation vision of the 2016 Grand Bargain agreement – empowering organisations like Zamzam to play a leading role in their own countries’ development.

Shuaib Abdullatif
Chair

Omar Jama
Executive Director



OUR MISSION

Zamzam Foundation works across Somalia to deliver life-saving humanitarian aid and to transform lives through health, education, livelihoods, WASH, and peacebuilding programmes.

We envision a day when there is no more poverty in the Horn of Africa and every person's dignity is protected, especially those affected by human and natural crises.

Our mission is to provide people affected by human and natural crises in the Horn of Africa with emergency relief, educational programmes, clean water and food security, health care, protection for children and orphans, and sustainable socio-economic programmes, as well as to promote peacebuilding and effective governance, while integrating our values of respect, impartiality, quality, accountability, advocacy, and innovation in all our work.

Strategic plan

Under our five-year strategic plan (2020 to 2024) we continue to work hard to deliver on our vision and mission, in alignment with our core values, through a \$75 million programme of strategic investment across five key focus areas:

- Education and social welfare
- Health, together with water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)
- Emergency response, livelihoods, resilience, and economic development
- Peacebuilding and governance
- Organisational strengthening



We have been working to transform lives for over 30 years



Our values

RESPECT

We are committed to treat the people we serve with dignity and to listen to them for solutions that work for them.

IMPARTIALITY

We believe in serving all people who are in need with impartiality and in an equitable manner.

QUALITY

We strive to meet our objectives, serve our beneficiaries, and satisfy expectations of all stakeholders to the best of our ability.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We are committed to being responsible and transparent in all our activities.

ADVOCACY

We seek to ensure that the most vulnerable people in our society are able to take part in decisions that affect their lives.

INNOVATION

We are a learning organisation dedicated to seeking appropriate and effective interventions for poverty and enhancing standards of living in the Horn of Africa.

In line with core values our strategic plan delivers our mission across five key focus areas



EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE

In education and social welfare our aims include building and managing schools, providing high-quality education materials, and giving healthcare, education and financial support to families looking after orphans. We are also working to expand and improve technical and vocational education and training (TVET), helping young people to acquire employable skills.



HEALTH AND WASH

In healthcare our aims are to provide high-quality maternal and child health and other critical services, to improve health facilities, and to increase community awareness to limit the spread of disease. In WASH we enable communities to get access to clean water and sanitation, and to manage projects effectively.



EMERGENCIES AND LIVELIHOODS

We aim to strengthen emergency response to support vulnerable communities affected by conflict and extreme weather events. We are also working to improve community resilience and adaptation to climate change by enabling farmers to farm productively and providing grants and loans to help people earn a decent income.



PEACEBUILDING

In areas prone to tensions and conflict we promote strong participation by local people in local peacebuilding activities. The conflict-resolution projects we implement reduce violence over access to water, pasture and other scarce resources. We are also working to strengthen governance institutions and improve local administrations' accountability to local communities.



ORGANISATIONAL STRENGTHENING

In organisational strengthening we are committed to continuing investment in staff training and development; sound financial management systems; digital transformation; and cost-effective procurement and logistics. In 2023 we made significant strides towards streamlining many key areas of operations to enhance effectiveness - including partner collaboration, project management and reporting, information security and data visualisation - through using Microsoft applications (Teams, SharePoint, Planner and Dynamics 365) and Power BI.

SOMALIA IN TRANSITION

Zamzam Foundation was established in 1992 to support the people of Somalia through an unprecedented humanitarian crisis following the collapse of the central government the previous year. Since then, we have grown into the biggest national aid and development organisation supporting communities across Somalia.

Somalia is still a country in transition from those times, full of potential but hampered by the complex challenges of poverty, climate change and conflict. Our aim, through Zamzam’s array of inter-connected and complementary programmes, is to build a brighter, more prosperous future.

Extreme poverty

Somalia is one of the world’s poorest countries, according to Global Data Lab Analysis. More than half the population (54%) live below the poverty line.

The number of people requiring humanitarian aid dipped from 8.25 million to 6.9 million in the course of 2023 as three years of severe drought came to an end, agricultural livelihoods revived, and inflation fell. But this lower figure still represents more than a third of the population (37%), and over half the population are unemployed.

GDP growth has averaged 2-3% a year in recent years but the country’s population is growing at an average annual rate of 2.5%, which means more mouths to feed from the increased output. It is to be hoped that the \$4.5 billion in debt relief secured in December will help to reduce government borrowing and increase investment in public services.

Humanitarian country profile

Population	• 18.6 million
Economy	• \$25.5 billion estimated GDP (\$1,400 per capita) • 10.1 million people (54.4%) live below the poverty line • Over half the population are unemployed • 6.9 million people (37%) need humanitarian aid to survive
Health	• 8 million people (43%) lack access to safe water and sanitation • 1.5 million children are acutely malnourished • 56.5 years is life expectancy, 7 years below the African average
Environment	• Ranked first of 185 countries for climate vulnerability
Displacement	• 3.8 million people (20%) are displaced by poverty, climate change and conflict
Education	• 3 million children are out of school • 6 out of 10 adults (59%) are illiterate

Somalia experienced the worst drought in decades in 2023, followed by the most extensive floods in generations

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

A challenging climate

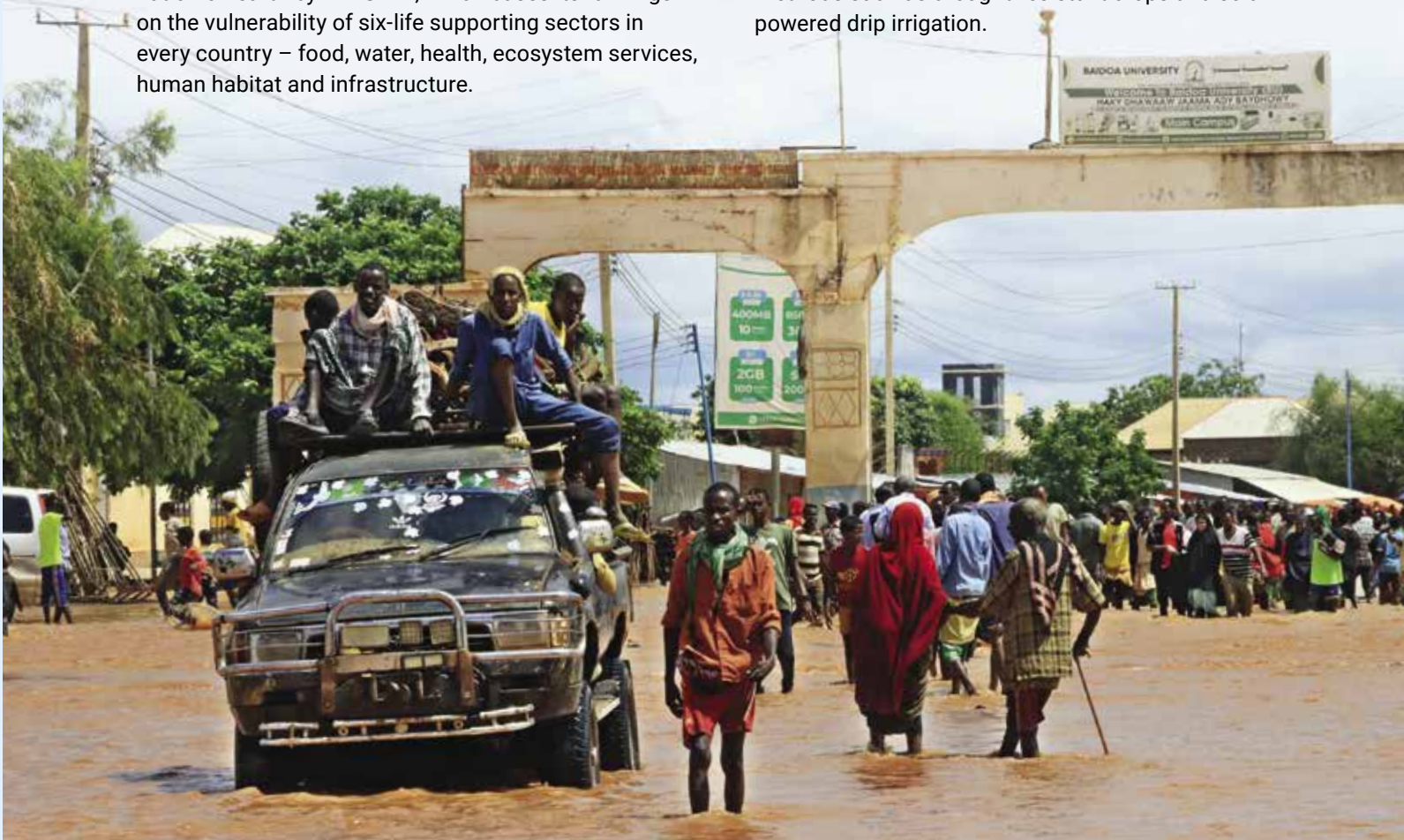
In 2023 Somalia’s worst drought on record finally came to an end but was swiftly followed by severe floods. In a single year the weather lurched from one extreme to the other, demonstrating how exposed our country is to the impact of climate change.

Tens of thousands of people and millions of livestock perished in the drought, while millions of people saw their agricultural livelihoods decimated. The floods adversely affected 2.5 million people, driving 1.2 million from their homes. Income surveys have indicated that more than half of families saw their incomes reduced in this unprecedented period of drought and floods.

Somalia is ranked as the most climate-vulnerable nation on earth by ND-GAIN, which bases its rankings on the vulnerability of six-life supporting sectors in every country – food, water, health, ecosystem services, human habitat and infrastructure.

All Zamzam Foundation’s programmes take account of climate change and the need to help communities adapt to it:

- Our emergency response programme saves lives when families have lost everything due to droughts or floods
- Our livelihoods programme enables those affected to rebuild their lives and become more resilient in the face of future disasters
- Our peacebuilding work focuses on resolving conflicts over scarce resources such as water, while our WASH programme delivers extensive water resources by providing new boreholes and wells
- Our health teams prioritise treating malnutrition and deadly water-borne diseases as well as vaccinating vulnerable children, while our training programme includes help for farmers to adopt climate-resilient methods such as drought-resistant crops and solar-powered drip irrigation.



Zamzam Foundation is striving to overcome the cumulative effect of poverty, climatic shocks and conflict

Ongoing conflict

It is estimated that conflict has cost more than half a million lives in Somalia over the past three decades.

Over 8,500 Somalis were killed in conflict in 2023, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project. A further 650,000 people were driven from their homes, increasing the pressure on overcrowded camps and stretching the limited resources of aid agencies.

650,000 Somalis were displaced by conflict and insecurity – 80% of them women and children

Aid organisations sometimes struggle to deliver aid in conflict-affected areas, with 23 of Somalia’s 74 districts currently reported to be “hard or very hard” for humanitarian groups to reach. The UN’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) says in its Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan for Somalia:

“The existence of diverse armed actors with varying command structures and geographical presence, as well as rapidly changing national, bilateral and regional forces, have created an environment where territorial control by loosely allied groups shifts regularly.”

Zamzam Foundation and other aid organisations are striving to overcome the cumulative effect of poverty, climatic shocks and conflict. But our country’s ‘vital signs’ in terms of human development show how far there is to go.



Education in crisis

Over three million children are out of school in Somalia, and six out of ten adults are illiterate (59%).

Poor families who want their children to be educated face many barriers. These include school fees, the cost of books and uniforms, long distances to school, safety concerns, and a shortage of teachers. Classrooms tend to be overcrowded, and water and sanitation facilities are often inadequate

Educational access and attainment can be hampered by all these challenges, but education has the potential to lift people out of poverty. The rate of poverty is 56.4% among people who have had no education but half that (28.7%) among those who have received secondary education. Only one in ten university graduates are living in poverty (9.6%).

Limited access to clean water

In a context where waterborne diseases frequently kill the most vulnerable, eight million Somalis do not have access to safe water and sanitation – 43% of the population.

Two-thirds of newly displaced families are water insecure, which means they do not have a safe and reliable supply of clean water within reach of their temporary homes. When women are forced to give birth in poor and unsanitary conditions in overcrowded camps, the lives of mothers and babies are put at risk.

Drilling more boreholes and digging more wells is critical to protect the health of the most vulnerable, along with community education to encourage good hygiene practices. Zamzam Foundation is in the forefront of providing water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programmes across Somalia.

Health services at full stretch

Life expectancy in Somalia is just 56.5 years, more than seven years below the average across the African continent. One in eight Somali children dies before reaching the age of five, and 1.5 million children are acutely malnourished.

Children who do not have enough food are particularly susceptible to infectious diseases, anaemia, vitamin A deficiency, and acute malnutrition. In its most severe form, malnutrition carries a risk of severe muscle wasting, stunted growth, and even starvation.

OCHA says most of Somalia’s disease outbreaks can be attributed to lack of clean water resources, low vaccination rates, a shortage of functional health facilities, and limited capacity for rapid response to disease alerts. The health of pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and their babies is a particular concern, and is a particular focus of Zamzam’s health programmes.

Healthcare is limited, which heightens the risk of maternal and infant mortality, and increases rates of preventable diseases like cholera

OCHA



OUR REACH

Our peacebuilding, orphans and education programmes offer hope to communities longing to build a brighter future for their children and our country

We provide vital food, healthcare and clean water for people devastated by climate change and conflict



Our emergency food aid aid (pictured), shelter kits and cash assistance are a lifeline for displaced people



Over the years we have established more than 120 schools across Somalia, educating many thousands of children



The new boreholes we drill and the new wells we dig bring safe water to hundreds of thousands of people across Somalia each year

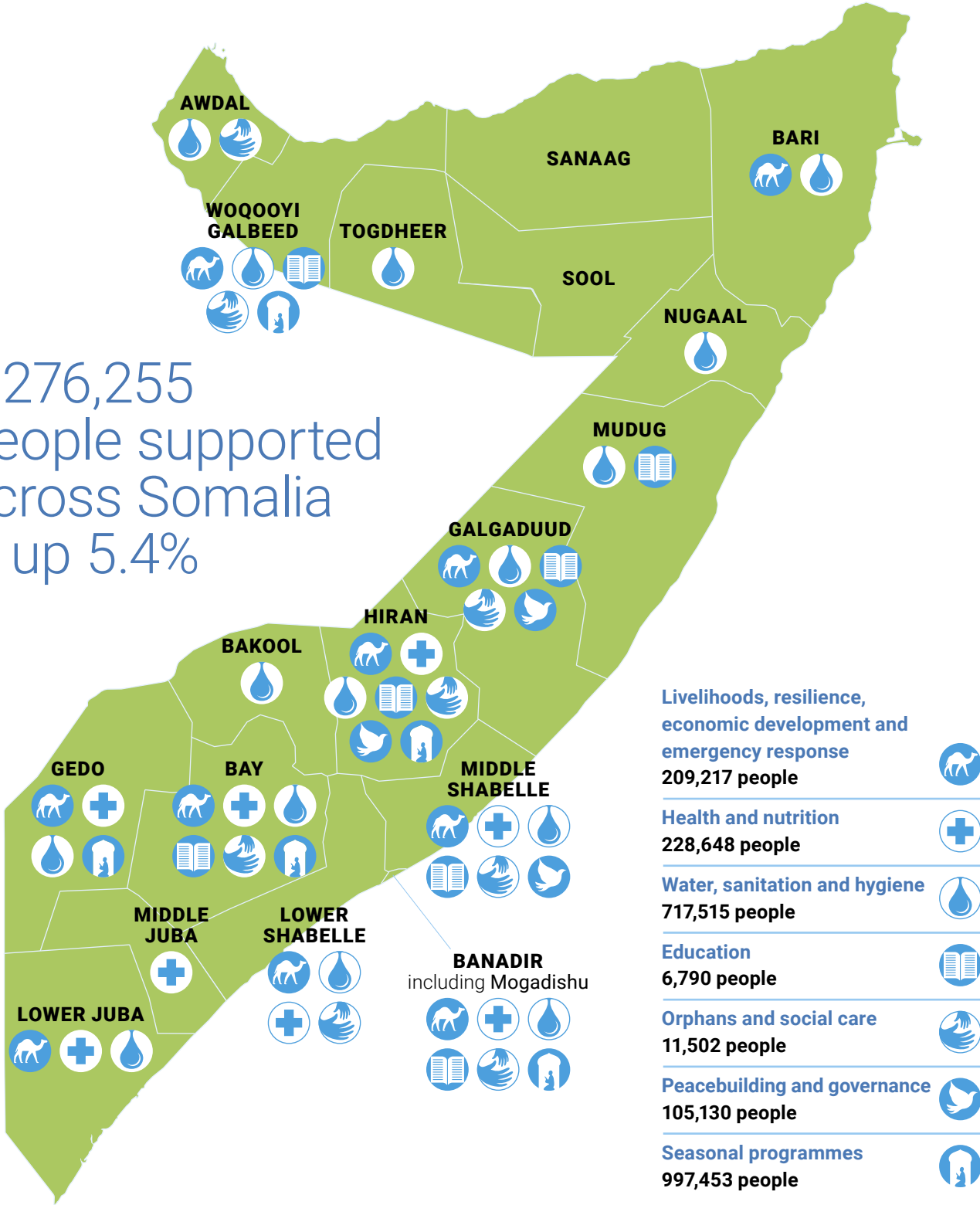


We support agricultural livelihoods by distributing animal fodder (pictured), seeds, tools, replacement livestock and veterinary drugs



Our health work includes cataract surgery (pictured), maternity services and vital treatment for malnutrition and tuberculosis

2,276,255 people supported across Somalia – up 5.4%



OUR IMPACT

Over
2.2 million
people helped by
Zamzam in 2023

111 000
people received
life-saving
emergency
aid



Almost
1 million
people fed through our
seasonal distributions



More than
11 500
orphaned
children's
families
helped



40 000
women and children
received specialist
maternity and
post-natal care
or vaccinations



706 000
people enabled to
access clean water



30 000
people are living
more harmoniously
after our teams
helped resolve two
local conflicts



60%
of children
graduating
from
Zamzam
schools
were
girls

OUR FINANCES

We spent nearly \$14.5 million on directly supporting people in need across Somalia

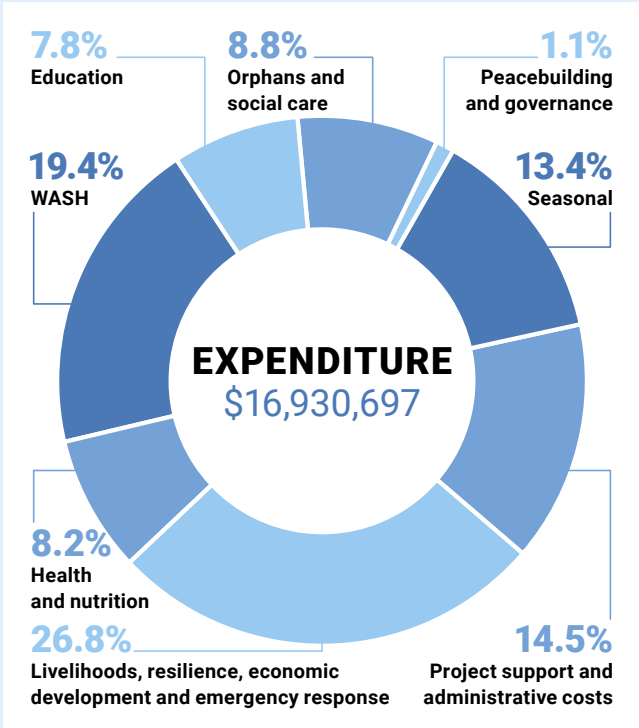
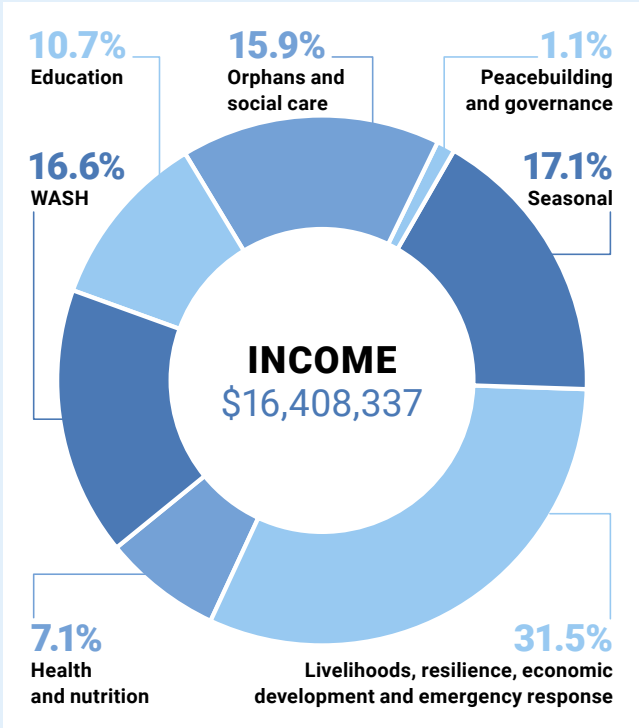
Zamzam Foundation’s generous supporters and funders gave us nearly \$17 million towards our vital aid and development programmes and operating costs in 2023.

Nearly a third of donations (31.5%) were for livelihoods, resilience, economic development and emergency response programmes - the biggest income category. Just over a quarter of giving (26.6%) was earmarked for education, orphans and social care. Just under a quarter (23.7%) was for WASH, health and nutrition.

We spent nearly \$14.5 million on directly supporting people in need through our seven key programme areas – 85.5% of total spending and a 13% increase on 2022. The other 14.5% of expenditure related to project support and administrative costs to keep all our programmes running in an integrated, efficient and effective way, to the benefit of all the communities we serve.

Top 10 funders by % of our income 2023

- Al Najat Charity 18%
- King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre 14%
- Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH) 14%
- Al-Imdaad Foundation 11%
- Danish Refugee Council 9%
- Human Appeal International (Australia) 8%
- International Rescue Committee 8%
- Muslim Aid Australia 7%
- Islamic Development Bank 6%
- Human Concern International 6%



\$3.3 million
on clean water and sanitation for 700,000+ people



\$2.8 million
on education and orphan support for 11,500+ children



\$2.3 million
on Ramadan and qurbani food and Eid gifts for 1 million people



\$5.9 million
on life-saving emergency aid, health care and livelihoods for 400,000+ people



\$176,000 on peacebuilding to help ease conflict in three regions

EMPOWERING WOMEN

Our programmes are driving positive change in many different ways

- **Empowering** girls and women with transformative knowledge and skills through equal access to high-quality education and training
- **Equipping** small business enterprises run by women, providing financial assistance and support with business development
- **Enhancing** women's access to and control over productive resources such as land, credit, technology, and markets
- **Engaging** in policy dialogue and advocacy to amplify women's voices and ensure their participation in decision-making processes
- **Providing** comprehensive healthcare services for women and girls, including a focus on sexual and reproductive health
- **Taking** action to address gender-based violence
- **Creating** mentoring, training and networking opportunities to support women's leadership development

At Zamzam Foundation, women and girls are at the centre of all our programmes. Our objective is to uplift and empower women in every area of life.

Our sisters are the ones most likely to miss out on education, most likely to die prematurely because of inadequate healthcare, most reliant on subsistence farming for their livelihoods, most responsible for finding and fetching water, and most likely to be displaced and left caring for children on their own because of conflict and climate change. We are taking practical action to improve food security, education, healthcare, livelihoods and protection for women and girls across Somalia.

The Somalia Women's Charter, published in 2019, describes the country's women as "resourceful, resilient and a bedrock of our society". It calls for new laws to protect women's rights and changes to the constitution "to guarantee equal access to, ownership of and control over property, natural resources, technology and financial services". Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN Women, said in a speech about Somalia to the Security Council in 2023: "It is only when women are included in all areas of public life that we will have a chance at peace and at ensuring that we support the rebuilding of a society that is resilient to future shocks."

Zamzam's commitment to gender equity and women's empowerment was recognised in 2022 with a certificate of achievement from the International Labour Organisation. We have policies in place that protect women and girls, and we are working towards the effective implementation and enforcement of laws that promote gender justice.

Women are pivotal to Somali society and the economy, so our programmes empower women and girls

Amina Abdinoor Ahmed
Zamzam's Head of Health and Nutrition



Women's economic empowerment, full participation and socio-economic rights are cornerstones for equality and sustainable development

Somalia Women's Charter



SUCCESS STORY

Rising again from the ashes of a ruined business

Farduus Ahmed (above right) watched her livelihood go up in flames in the northern city of Hargeisa.

The 49-year-old's vegetable shop was destroyed by a fire, which engulfed the city's Waheen Market. It was a huge blow, as Farduus is her family's main breadwinner – her son and six daughters all rely on her income. The fire caused an estimated \$2 billion worth of damage, with 17,000 market traders adversely affected.

Today Farduus is back in business, thanks to our support: "In the aftermath of the fire I was left without a source of income. That's when Zamzam reached out to me and offered support."

Like all our livelihoods programmes, the support we have provided to 50 Waheen market traders like Farduus puts a strong emphasis on helping them to develop financial management and other practical skills that will help them to sustain their businesses for the long term. We have enabled them to open new mobile bank accounts and provided individual business coaching support.

"Zamzam provided me with financial assistance to rebuild my business, and offered training to help me improve my business skills," says Farduus. "I now have a more stable source of income, and I feel empowered to meet my family's needs."

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Our emergency response teams sprang into action as heavy rains caused the most severe flooding for decades

Somalia's needs

- **6.9 million** people (37%) are reliant on humanitarian aid
- **3.8 million** (20%) are displaced by poverty, climate change and conflict
- **2.5 million** people affected by worst floods for a quarter of a century

Our response

- **74,533** people received immediate food aid, longer-lasting family food packages or hot meals
- **38,550** people benefited from cash assistance to spend where most needed
- **1,500** displaced people given emergency shelter kits

Building Resilient Communities in Somalia (BRCIS)

The BRICS III programme in which we are participating is providing wide-ranging support to over a million vulnerable people across 20 districts through crisis early warning systems, self-help groups and better market access for farmers; climate-resilient water installations; and measures to strengthen co-operatives, conserve soil and water resources, and regenerate grazing land.

In 2023 we provided vital food aid, shelter kits and cash assistance to 111,583 people affected by drought, floods, and conflict across Somalia.

The Gu rains that began in March provided much needed relief after two-and-a-half years of failed rains had plunged Somalia into its worst drought since records began. Zamzam Foundation played its part from 2021 to 2023 in a huge, ultimately successful effort to avert a full-blown famine.

The aid effort throughout the drought was not helped by a significant shortfall in the funds requested from the international community to support the UN's annual humanitarian response plans. Only 43% of the \$2.6 billion required in 2023 was delivered, and OCHA continues to describe the humanitarian situation in Somalia as "severe and extreme".

From October to December our emergency response teams sprang into action again, providing immediate support as three months of heavy Deyr rains caused the most severe flooding for decades, affecting 2.5 million people and displacing 1.2 million from their homes.

Partnership is pivotal in delivering an effective humanitarian response. We are a member of the Somalia NGO Consortium, working closely with UN bodies and other aid agencies in a coordinated way to save lives. In 2023 we initiated a new project in partnership with Save the Children to reduce humanitarian needs and displacement under a segment of the Building Resilient Communities in Somalia (BRCIS) programmes, funded by the UK Government.



Our response teams provided vital food aid to nearly 75,000 hungry people in 2023



SUCCESS STORY

Taking refuge from climate change

A weary smile plays on the lips of 38-year-old Dhigan Adan Mohamed (above) as she describes life in Dhalandool, an overcrowded camp for displaced people in the south-central city of Baidoa.

"We were fortunate to be selected as beneficiaries of Zamzam's housing project, which has provided us with a permanent shelter we can call home," she says. "Access to food, water, shelter, healthcare and education is vital for families like mine."

"Before we had this house, life in the camp was incredibly challenging. We lived in a makeshift shelter, struggling with overcrowding and lack of privacy and exposure to the elements."

Every day is a long day for Dhigan, fetching water and preparing meals for her seven children while finding what casual work she can in the limited time in between. The family are in Baidoa because of the impact of conflict and climate change around Qanshdhere, the busy market town they come from in southern Bay. It is an area that has been hit hard by drought and floods in recent years, wiping out crops and livestock and forcing many families to seek refuge elsewhere.

"The uncertainty and stress of being displaced weighed heavily on us, affecting our well-being," she says. "With a roof over our heads, we can focus on rebuilding our lives and planning for the future."

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Our programmes and services aim to cut the alarming death toll among young mothers and children



Somalia's needs

- **1.5 million** children are acutely malnourished
- **1 in 20** women aged 15–49 die in childbirth or from pregnancy-related causes each year
- **Respiratory disease**, including tuberculosis (TB), is Somalia's biggest killer

Our response

- **89,061** people diagnosed and treated through our health facilities and clinics
- **29,461** women received specialist maternity, pre-natal and post-natal care
- **41,412** people benefited from health awareness sessions covering issues such as safe infant feeding and malaria prevention
- **10,601** mothers and children vaccinated against deadly diseases
- **6,923** women and children treated for acute malnutrition and 2,993 people treated for TB
- **2,400** people benefited from newly built or improved health facilities
- **1,935** people received sight-saving cataract surgery



Our mobile health clinics (pictured) and main health facilities served nearly 90,000 people

Our health and nutrition programmes focus on three areas: saving lives threatened by malnutrition and deadly diseases, providing high-quality health services for the most vulnerable, and delivering community education to protect people from harm.

Somalia ranks as one of the three countries worst affected by hunger, according to the Global Hunger Index. The extensive Somali Health and Demographic Survey of 2020 found that one in five under-fives was acutely malnourished, 27% were stunted (short in stature for their age) and 12% were wasting (of a dangerously low weight for their height). In 2023 we screened 28,244 pregnant or breastfeeding women and children for malnutrition, and provided life-saving treatment to 6,923 of those worst affected.

Our health facilities and mobile clinics delivered consultations and care for 89,061 people. We screened 25,406 people for tuberculosis (TB) – one of the respiratory diseases that are the single biggest killer in Somalia – and treated 2,993 people who tested positive. We also carried out sight-saving cataract surgery on 1,935 patients.

Nine out of ten children in Somalia have not been vaccinated against deadly diseases such as measles, TB and polio, and nine out of ten young mothers do not receive a health check-up within 48 hours of giving birth. UNICEF says that four in every 100 Somali children die during the first month of life, and one in 20 women aged 15–49 die every year from pregnancy- or birth-related complications.

To reduce this heart-breaking toll of preventable disease and death, we vaccinated 10,601 children and young mothers in 2023, and provided 29,461 women with specialist prenatal, post-natal and maternal health care. Our teams ensured that 3,427 of these women gave birth with the assistance of a midwife or other health professional at one of our health facilities.

We built or extended three of our health facilities in 2023, benefiting an additional 2,400 people. Our health awareness sessions gave 41,412 people a better understanding of how to protect their health through measures such as safe infant feeding, regular handwashing, and the use of sanitation facilities and malaria-limiting mosquito nets. We also provided professional training to 128 of our health staff, strengthening their knowledge and skills to benefit those they serve.



We performed cataract surgery on 86% more patients this year

SUCCESS STORY

Fleeing the floods to a healthier future

Access to healthcare can be limited in rural Somalia. For Mako Dhuxulow (above), a subsistence farmer in the village of Hanitwadag in the Buloburde district of Hiran region, connecting with Zamzam's local outreach team proved to be a lifeline.

"It used to be difficult to address health issues effectively," says the 49-year-old mother of six. "Now our lives have changed a lot. We have access to regular health check-ups, preventive care, and treatment for various illnesses."

Mako was raised in the village of Madina, not far from Hanitwadag, but was forced to leave in 2023 because of severe flooding caused by heavy rain linked to the effects of El Niño on the local climate.

Mako earns a modest income from keeping goats, cleaning people's houses and other casual work. In the future she hopes to build up her earnings from goat milk and continue her role as a traditional midwife, inspired by the maternal and other health services Zamzam provides.

LIVELIHOODS AND RESILIENCE

Rural families urgently need emergency agricultural assistance to restore their ability to grow food and improve livestock production

UN Food and Agriculture Organisation

Somalia's needs

- **10.1 million** people (54.4%) live below the poverty line
- **More than half** the population are unemployed
- **More than half** of households have reduced incomes as a result of the 2020–23 drought

Our response

- **5,684** farmers given seeds, tools, and help to prepare land for cultivation
- **6** vital irrigation channels built or repaired to support farmers growing crops
- **16,100** livestock farmers provided with new animals, or fodder, or veterinary drugs
- **4,432** people earned an income from working on community infrastructure projects
- **200** farmers trained in innovative climate-resilient methods
- **175** women, young people and families received income-generating grants and microfinance loans

Our livelihoods programmes support farmers, traders and small businesses to enable them to earn an independent income. The economy revolves around agriculture, which according to OCHA accounts for up to 26% of GDP, 90% of informal employment and 90% of exports.

In 2023 we provided 5,684 farmers with seeds, tools, and help to prepare land for cultivation. We also built or rehabilitated six irrigation channels to help maintain or re-establish crop production, and trained 200 farmers in water-saving, climate-resilient farming methods. Our support for livestock production included supplying veterinary drugs, fodder or replacement animals to 16,100 farmers.

The average family size in Somalia is six people, which indicates that the combined impact of our support for agriculture was to provide direct food security for over 69,000 people. We are working in partnership with International Rescue Committee under the Operationalising Agro-Sustainability in Somalia (OASIS) project to help improve the livelihoods of 2,787 farmers in the Beledweyne district of Hiran. This involves a range of measures including new investment finance and revolving loans; training and marketing advice; use of climate-resilient crops and seeds; better storage of produce; and improved family nutrition.

By employing 4,432 people in cash-for-work programmes, we built vital infrastructure such as irrigation systems and schools. The 175 grants and loans we provided empowered families to earn a sustainable income through a wide range of enterprises including dairy farming, tuc-tuc taxis, sewing and tailoring, and small shops and market stalls.



Our cash-for-work programmes enabled communities to rebuild after flooding in 2023



SUCCESS STORY

Driving opportunity through small-business grants and loans

At the age of 24, Abdirahman Farah Abdullahi (above) carries a lot of responsibility on his young shoulders. Since the death of his parents, he has been the main breadwinner in a family of 11 orphans – six sisters and five brothers.

After morning prayers and an early breakfast, Abdirahman sets out each day to earn his living by driving a taxi around the dusty streets of the capital city, Mogadishu. The three-wheeled tuc-tuc he drives was given to him by Zamzam in 2023 through our livelihoods programme, which encourages and supports small business enterprises with grants and microfinance loans.

“I learned about the support programmes offered by Zamzam and saw an opportunity to improve my livelihood,” Abdirahman recalls. “I decided to reach out to seek assistance. I had previously relied on renting a moto-taxi, and this limited my earnings and my autonomy. Now that I own a taxi outright, I have full control over my work and can maximise the benefits. I can provide for my family and pursue my goals with greater confidence and security.”

In the future Abdirahman hopes to buy a second tuc-tuc: “Ultimately I am determined to continue striving until I achieve my goals and secure a brighter future for myself and my family,” he says.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

In 2023 we drilled 15 new boreholes and rehabilitated 10 existing ones



Somalia's needs

- **8 million** people (47%) lack access to safe water and sanitation
- **Third-biggest** killer is diarrhoeal disease

Our response

- **600,000** people and their animals given access to clean water from new or upgraded boreholes
- **92,000** people served by new shallow and artesian wells
- **14,000** people received emergency water supplies trucked in to help displaced families
- **7,000** people benefited from health-and-hygiene awareness sessions
- **4,200** people given hygiene kits



We develop and deliver new water resources in close consultation with local communities

Zamzam Foundation takes its name from the Zamzam well in Makkah – holiest city in the Islamic world – and the pure, mineral-rich water it supplies. Providing clean water to drink and a reliable supply of water to support farming is a vital part of our work across Somalia.

The poor quality and limited quantity of water available to so many Somalis is a life-and-death issue. In a country where 8 million people do not have access to clean water, children and other vulnerable people can fall prey to deadly waterborne diseases – diarrhoeal diseases such as cholera and acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) are Somalia's third-biggest killer. In a country that is heavily dependent on agiculture, many people can die when the rains fail and there is not enough water to sustain people and their animals – the UN says over 43,000 Somalis lost their lives in 2022 alone because of severe drought.

We have drilled over 160 boreholes and provided more than 5,000 artesian and open-surface wells across Somalia in the past 30 years. In 2023 we drilled 15 new boreholes and repaired or upgraded ten existing ones, providing clean water from deep below ground for 600,000 people and their animals. We also provided an additional 154 artesian and shallow wells, benefiting a further 92,000 people.

Investment in sanitation, hygiene, and community education and mobilisation is also vitally important. Research shows that improved sanitation can reduce diarrhoeal disease by a third. In 2023 our teams built 40 latrines, distributed hygiene kits to 700 families and conducted health-and hygiene awareness sessions for 7,000 people in the communities we serve. We also trained 50 community leaders and local authority representatives on how to plan, design and implement WASH projects, and trained 25 members of community WASH committees on the management and maintenance of WASH facilities.

As climate change bites, our ongoing work to continually improve Somalia's water infrastructure is critical if poor communities are to survive droughts of increasing frequency and severity. But our maintenance of existing infrastructure is also important – as the severe Deyr floods of late 2023 have illustrated.

The UN's Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan for 2024 explains: "An increase in cholera and AWD cases is expected, including outbreaks in areas where cholera has not been observed in years. This increase is anticipated due to 2023 Deyr flooding having damaged WASH facilities and health/cholera treatment centres (CTCs), and polluting water sources such as boreholes and shallow wells."



Our boreholes provide separate watering points for animals to avoid contaminating the water supplied to families

SUCCESS STORY

Clean water triggers better health and education

Getting safe water on tap in her home village in Lower Shabelle region is saving Nimco Cali Ibraahim (above) a lot of time every day. The new borehole we have provided is also giving her peace of mind about the health of her eight children. The youngest three – Yasir, Abdiqani and Idil – are under five years old.

"We used to walk for miles in search of clean water, which required a lot of effort and energy," the 34-year-old explains. "This borehole has profoundly changed our lives, and the lives of everyone in our village."

New water resources can have lots of positive knock-on effects in poor communities. Nimco's husband works as a farmer, but his income is not enough to meet all the family's needs. Now Nimco is hoping to find work to supplement his earnings – something she did not have time for before. More income will help feed her family and make healthcare and education more affordable – a huge plus for her children's well-being and their future prospects.

Men are 23% more likely than women to have completed secondary education

UNICEF



Somalia's needs

- **3 million** children are out of school
- **6 out of 10** adults (59%) are illiterate
- **Poverty** rates among people without any education are double the rates for those who have had a secondary education (56.4% v 28.7%)

Our response

- **3,322** children educated in our schools in 2023
- **395** pupils graduated at secondary-school level – 60% of them girls
- **2,400** people provided with new Qur'an school buildings and mosques
- **1,000** children benefited from new or upgraded school buildings
- **2,000** farming students benefited from our agricultural training faculty
- **468** young people empowered to earn an income via vocational training



More than half of pupils in Zamzam schools are girls

Investment in education is vital if we are to inspire and empower the next generation to lift themselves and our nation out of poverty. Zamzam's education programme includes building and running new schools, providing high-quality teaching materials, training teachers, and delivering vocational training to help young people find employment.

Our approach is aligned with the strategic plan of Somalia's Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education. The ministry's main priorities are to increase access to good-quality education for children and to help young people gain the skills and knowledge they need to contribute positively to Somalia's long-term social and economic development.

There is much work to be done by government, the private sector and pioneering non-government organisations like Zamzam to lift standards and improve educational attainment. Three million children are out of school, and six out of ten adults (59%) are illiterate. Education is one of the sectors receiving least support from the international community, with the UN receiving barely a quarter (27.1%) of the \$105.7 million it requested from donors in 2023 for the education aspect of humanitarian response.

Zamzam has established over 120 schools across Somalia in the past 30 years, equipping and initially managing them before handing them over to local authorities and communities to operate. In 2023 we renovated classrooms or built new ones for four schools to extend and improve capacity. A total of 3,322 children were educated in the seven schools we managed directly, with 395 Zamzam pupils completing their education at secondary level. Our school attendance rates were 92% – remarkably healthy in a context in which so many families are struggling to make ends meet.

It is no accident that 52% of our pupils and 60% of our secondary-school graduates were female. The Somalia Health and Demographic Survey of 2020 reported that fewer girls than boys go to school in Somalia, while men are 23% more likely than women to have completed secondary or higher education. We are working to address these imbalances in Zamzam schools and other educational institutions.

We provided vocational training for 468 young people in 2023 to help them find employment. Our Zamzam University is in the forefront of scientific research, and 2,000 farming students benefit from the new agricultural training facility we established in 2022. Our continuing commitment to educational excellence was reflected by the two teacher training courses we delivered in 2023, equipping 60 teachers to maintain and improve professional standards.



Pupils are thriving at this school we established in the Heliwala district of Banadir region

SUCCESS STORY

'I hope for the best so that I can support others'

For a fortunate few who excel at school in Somalia, we have supported or co-funded numerous students to continue their studies abroad over the years. Mowlid Hasan Elmi (above in his school uniform) is one of the latest beneficiaries of this scholarship programme, striving for success at a school in Türkiye after showing huge promise at the Al Fajr School we helped to establish in Banadir region.

"I lived in Hiran region before I came to Banadir," the bright 16-year-old says. "The main reason I moved to Banadir was because I wanted to learn, and my family were not able to pay for my education. Now I am enjoying further education in Türkiye, thanks to a scholarship made possible by Al Fajr School and Zamzam Foundation."

Mowlid is determined to keep working hard and share his success with his family. "It used to feel like my whole life had been taken away but now I am getting an education. I hope for the best so that I can support others too."

ORPHANS AND SOCIAL CARE

Children who have lost one or both parents are less likely to get the education they need without orphan sponsorship

Somalia's needs

- **19%** of Somali households are home to at least one orphaned child
- **Half** of children aged 5–14 in central and southern Somalia work to help feed their families.

Our response

- **11,502** orphaned children's families supported across Somalia
- **532** more children enrolled in our orphans programme in 2022
- **75** more orphans started school
- **17** hardship grants and loans to orphans' families

We supported the families of 11,502 orphaned children in 2023 – thanks to the orphans and social care programme we established in the 1990s to meet the needs of some of Somalia's most vulnerable children and young people.

Orphans are mentioned 23 times in the Qur'an, which emphasises the responsibility of all believers to care for orphans in need. Our orphans programme is a practical response to hard economic reality: children who have lost one or both their parents are more likely to be living in poverty, and less likely to get the education they need.

The Somali Health and Demographic Survey of 2020 found that 32% of households were home to a foster child and/or orphaned children, with at least one orphan in 19% of families. We extended our support to 532 new orphans in 2023, and enrolled 75 more of our orphans in school.

Financial assistance is the main support we give. Our donors enable us to provide regular cash sponsorship to those caring for an orphaned child alone, whether that be a sole surviving parent, another family member, or a guardian from the wider community. The money can be used to meet whichever of each family's needs are most pressing, an element of choice that respects their dignity, but our primary purpose is to fund educational costs – fees, books and uniforms – so that children can go to school.

Orphans who live near Zamzam health facilities and schools can access free education and healthcare. In 2023 we also provided grants or loans to 17 families to support income generation and increase self-reliance.



Our teams gave Eid gifts of clothes or toys to 690 orphaned children



SUCCESS STORY

'With the shop provided by Zamzam, I have a stable source of income'

Like any loving mother, Saccia Abdullahi Hassan (above) wants to see her seven children "excel in their education and build successful careers". But as a young widow devastated by her husband's untimely death, it was a real struggle to make ends meet until Zamzam Foundation stepped in.

Saccia, 37, has lived in Yaqshid – a poor neighbourhood of Mogadishu – all her life. Thanks to our orphans and social care programme, she has been able to send her children to school and establish a small shop to earn an independent income. Orphaned children too often miss out on education because their families cannot afford school fees, uniforms, books, and other costs.

"It used to be a constant challenge for me to provide for my children's basic needs, especially education," Saccia says. "With the shop provided by Zamzam, I now have a stable source of income to support my family's daily expenses. Zamzam's sponsorship of my children's education has relieved me of the financial burden of school fees, allowing my children to pursue their studies without hindrance."

Saccia's sons and eldest daughter have completed their education. Her four youngest daughters, aged 9 to 14, are thriving at school. "I want my family to have stability and prosperity," she says. "Our lives are filled with newfound hope and opportunity, thanks to the support and assistance provided by Zamzam."

PEACEBUILDING AND GOVERNANCE

Somalia's needs

- **Over half a million** lives lost through conflict in the past 30 years
- **650,000** Somalis were driven from their homes by conflict in 2022 alone
- **Around 80%** of those displaced are women and children

Our response

- **45,000** people benefited from local conflict resolution and peace action planning
- **40,000** people given access to cultural events arranged to strengthen community harmony
- **20,000** religious, business, and community leaders, and other people of influence, engaged by Zamzam peace-building teams to support community action

Our community peacebuilding programme is bringing communities together to resolve the kind of localised conflicts that have plagued Somalia for decades.

Somalis have experienced significant levels of conflict and instability since the fall of the military regime in 1991. Our country is the most fragile in the world according to the Fund for Peace's Fragile States Index, which ranks the security situation in 179 countries in the context of other social, political and economic "pertinent vulnerabilities" such as levels of poverty and inequality.

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), conflict was the primary cause of displacement for more than one in five of those driven from their homes in 2023 (22%). As well as hostilities between government forces and armed opposition groups, Somalia is riven by clan-based clashes. The biggest cause of clan-based violence is tension over access to scarce resources such as water and pasture as climate change bites.

Zamzam's approach is to bring divided communities together in dialogue to address the socio-economic challenges they have in common. In 2023 our efforts helped to resolve two localised conflicts, enabling 30,000 people to live together more harmoniously. Our ongoing activities under existing peacebuilding processes benefited a further 15,000 people. We also organised community cultural events targeting 40,000 people, and reached out to 20,000 community leaders and other influential people to support our peacebuilding work and strengthen the prospects for peace.

What we do is aligned with the concept of the triple nexus – the idea that humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programmes need to be coherently interlinked to meet people's needs effectively and move towards sustainable peace. In 2023 our peacebuilding programme operated in three regions faced by the interlinked challenges of significant humanitarian needs and clan conflict - Hiran, Middle Shabelle and Galgaduud.

In resolving a conflict in the Balanballe district of Galgaduud region, our identification of health as a critical issue led to the construction of a shared health facility co-owned by the two conflicting clans. In a current project in the Bulaburte district of Hiran, we are helping people in three villages affected by conflict to implement a community action plan that they have developed together to improve health, education, and access to clean water.

Programmes need to be coherently interlinked to meet people's needs and move towards sustainable peace



SUCCESS STORY

From making sugar to making peace

After a colourful life spanning more than seven decades, Elmi Jidow Olow could be forgiven for slowing down a little. But this 73-year-old father of 12 is passionate about working for peace in a country so often divided by conflict.

Elmi spent most of his career working at the Isnay sugar factory in the Jowhar district of Middle Shabelle region. Now he can afford to pursue an active voluntary role in the community, thanks to the money sent home each month by one of his sons who works in Saudi Arabia: "I serve as a voluntary clan elder, dedicated to promoting peace. I attend a daily meeting with the district elders in Jowhar, where we discuss new developments and address current issues in maintaining peace."

Since 2017 Elmi has been serving as a member of the peace committee we established to help build more harmonious community relations in Middle Shabelle. "Having Zamzam's logistical support has been incredibly valuable when engaging in resolving inter-clan conflicts," he says. "I have acquired valuable negotiation and mediation skills that have enabled me to effectively manage conflicts and resolve disputes between clans."

The clans now place greater emphasis on community consultation and dialogue (see above) instead of violence as a way to address their differences. "Our vision is of a region that is safe and prosperous, where our people are united as brothers and sisters," Elmi says.

SEASONAL PROGRAMMES

Somalia's needs

- **6.6 million** Somalis suffered acute food insecurity in Ramadan 2023
- **1.8 million** children were acutely malnourished
- **40,000** people faced what the UN called 'catastrophic hunger'.

Our response

- **887,496** people received qurbani meat to celebrate Eid Al-Adha
- **73,062** Ramadan food baskets distributed
- **33,895** people provided with hot meals during Ramadan
- **3,000** food packs allocated at Eid Al-Fitr through zakat donations

Our seasonal programmes aim to ensure that vulnerable people in poor communities do not go to bed hungry during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and the festivals of Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha.

For many Somalis Ramadan 2023 was one of the toughest in living memory. When it began in March, much of the country was in the grip of hunger after two-and-a-half years of failed rains. By the time it ended in April, however, the Gu rains brought some respite, and nearly 110,000 people had benefited from the hot meals and food packs we provided.

Zamzam's teams cooked and served 33,895 hot meals this Ramadan, providing nutritious iftars for the most vulnerable to break their fasts. We also distributed enough Ramadan food baskets to feed 73,062 people – 28% more than in 2022. Each of our food packs provides enough supplies to enable families to prepare their own meals for the whole of Ramadan, including flour, cooking oil, cereal grains, milk powder and sugar.

Fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam, and another is zakat – the practice of giving 2.5% of disposable income to support those in need. Many Muslims choose to give their zakat during Ramadan, and at Eid Al-Fitr this year we were able to distribute 3,000 food packs and allocate 20,868 cash grants, thanks to the generosity of our zakat donors. In our biggest seasonal programme of all we provided qurbani meat for 887,496 people, enabling families to celebrate Eid Al-Adha and boosting livestock farmers' incomes.



Our distribution of qurbani meat to displaced people in and around Mogadishu brought smiles to many faces as families prepared to celebrate Eid Al-Adha in June

OUR VOICE

Zamzam has an increasingly prominent presence on the international stage, contributing to UN summits and other major events that shape the global landscape in international aid and development.

Our aim is to be an influential voice supporting well targeted international aid; climate justice and community resilience; women's empowerment; joined-up 'triple nexus' programmes that integrate aid and development with peacebuilding; and effective 'localisation' that puts more power and resources in the hands of local organisations.

This has been a landmark year in which we became the first Somali charitable organisation to join the influential International Council of Voluntary Organisations (ICVA) and secured special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) – the UN's central forum for discussing international economic and social issues.

We played an active role both at the UN's global summit on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in New York and at the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP) climate conference in Dubai. Zamzam's work is aligned with meeting key SDGs in areas such as poverty reduction, health and well-being, education, gender equality, WASH, economic development, climate action, and peacebuilding. Our climate resilience work includes innovative agricultural approaches such as hydroponic fodder production.

After attending the Riyadh International Humanitarian Forum (RIHF), organised by the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KS Relief) in partnership with the UN, we signed a new Memorandum of Understanding with KS Relief to implement a wide range of projects across Somalia. In 2023 we also attended the Civil Society Policy Forum at the Annual Meeting of the IMF and World Bank in Marrakech, as well as the European Humanitarian Forum in Brussels, and we took part in an online debate on the role of diaspora communities and local aid agencies organised by the World Humanitarian Action Forum.

On the localisation front we also participated in 'Supporting Local Actors Across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus' – a conference in Copenhagen convened by the Danish and US governments and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Zamzam was a member of the working group on inclusive decision making set up by UNHCR and ICVA as part of their joint Pledge on Advancing Localisation. As a member of the Somalia NGO Consortium's localisation committee, we are strongly backing the collaborative implementation of our country's localisation framework for 2024–28.



Our Executive Director, Omar Jama (far right), took part in important discussions about climate adaptation at COP 28 alongside Nimo Hassan (third from right), Director of the Somalia NGO Consortium, and other NGOs



In our first year of ICVA membership, we attended the organisation's annual conference in Geneva



Nimo Hassan, Director of the Somalia NGO Consortium (left), was again alongside our Zamzam team to raise awareness about Somalia's challenges, needs and future potential at the European Humanitarian Forum

OUR PARTNERS

Zamzam Foundation is privileged to work with a wide range of partners to fulfil our vital mission

Our partners include the Federal Government of Somalia and local authorities within the country, leading UN agencies, major international institutional donors, and lots of non-government organisations – global, regional, national, and local.

We sincerely thank all our partners, funders, and supporters for the enormous contribution they continue to make in assisting us to address the impact of poverty in Somalia and work for positive and sustainable change in the lives of the country's most vulnerable people. We look forward to continuing to work with you in pursuit of enduring prosperity and peace. Our work would simply not be possible without your support. Thank you.



Muslim Aid Australia has been a leading supporter of our mobile health clinics



We formed a new partnership with the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre



The Life and Peace Institute, based in Sweden, is working closely with our staff on peacebuilding programmes in three regions of Somalia

In 2023 we signed a partnership agreement with the London-based Somali Relief and Development Forum (SRDF). This will enable Zamzam Foundation to establish itself in the UK through SRDF's UK charity registration. In 2024 SRDF Chair of Trustees, Tahir Tahir, and Zamzam's new Senior External Relations Advisor, Martin Cottingham (right), will work together to create a new website for Zamzam in the UK, form new community and charity partnerships, and start fundraising in the UK for our vital work in Somalia.



- Al-Imdaad Foundation
- Alnajat Charity
- AlSafa Humanity
- Danish Refugee Council
- European Commission
- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)
- Human Appeal
- Human Appeal International (Australia)
- Human Concern International
- Humanitarian Forum
- Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH)
- International Association for Development and Relief (ONSUR)
- International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)
- International Islamic Charity Organisation
- International Labour Organisation (ILO)
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)
- Kaaf Humanitarian
- King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre
- Life and Peace Institute
- Medair
- Muslim Aid Australia
- Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC)
- Oxfam
- Penny Appeal Canada
- Qatar Charity
- Save the Children
- Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri Charity Society
- Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency)
- Somalia Humanitarian Fund
- Somalia NGO Consortium
- Somalia Stability Fund
- Spark
- Tanmeia
- Tika
- Union of NGOs of the Islamic World
- United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- UN World Food Programme (WFP)
- Weltweiter Einsatz Für Arme (WEFA)
- World Health Organisation (WHO)
- World Vision
- Zakat House of Kuwait



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