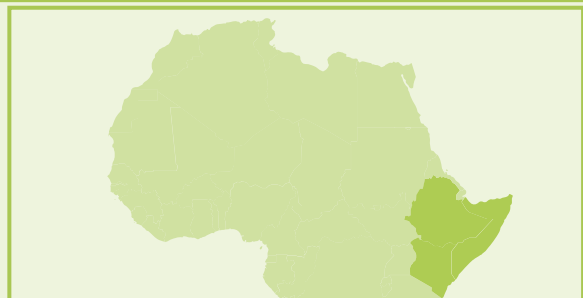


Regional Approach for Sustainable Conflict Management and Integration (Cross-Border PACT RASMI)



EU Trust Fund for Africa – Horn of Africa



Objective of the programme

To prevent and mitigate the impact of local conflicts in the Mendera Triangle through the promotion of peacebuilding, conflict management and conflict resolution capacity at the community and cross-border levels.

Key successes

- > Local actors are more active in managing conflicts through local cross-border administrative structures, engagement in cross-border coordination meetings and dialogues, and the provision of support to county, zonal and national structures to work with communities and local authorities
- > Six peace agreements governing relationships between communities have been reached



EUTF PARTNER: PACT



COUNTRIES:
Ethiopia, Kenya,
Somalia



BUDGET:
EUR 4M



From 11/2017
to 04/2022

The Mendera Triangle – a cross-border area between Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia – has faced persistent challenges such as violent extremism, armed conflicts, violent crimes, political instability and state failure. These issues disproportionately affect youth, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and marginalised ethnic groups, making them particularly vulnerable to irregular migration, forced displacement and recruitment by militia and terrorist organisations.

Between 2017 and 2022, the Cross-Border PACT RASMI programme worked to empower local communities and leaders such as women, religious leaders, security forces and private sector actors. The programme promoted dialogue on conflict issues, supported peace efforts through community leaders, and strengthened their ability to prevent or resolve conflicts.



Nurta, one of the women leaders supported by the project, conducting an awareness session on violent extremism in school.
© BeletHawa Women for Peace and Development (BWFPD)

‘We are thankful to our youth leaders who are addressing issues affecting us in our district, protecting our rights and linking us to livelihood opportunities’, said Abdishakur Mohammed, a youth supported by the programme with livelihood training, who now operates a barber’s shop in Luuq District, Somalia.

The project supported the development of peace agreements to establish relationships between communities and clans across borders. It specifically focused on resource sharing aimed at mitigating revenge killings and preventing violent conflicts by institutionalising cross-clan agreements. The project also facilitated increased interaction among youths through the creation of peace clubs within communities and of early warning systems on conflicts, with the aim of reducing youth engagement in crime and substance abuse as well as radicalisation by extremist groups.

‘So far, we are doing well, and learners are getting the concept of the training,’ says Madam Rahma, a teacher at Mendera Boystown Primary School. ‘What’s more, the girls are enjoying the sessions while others are persistently requesting to be given the opportunity to join the peace club group. Since large groups are nearly unmanageable, we limited membership to 30 students, but we advise members to convey information to their counterparts at school and in their household, since they are probed with questions like “What were you learning? What were you told? Please tell us.”’



Women for Change leaders in Mandera County, Kenya, conduct a cross-border dialogue campaign © W4C Forum

How did the EUTF help?

By the end of its first phase in February 2021, the project reported that eight of PACT's fifteen Boundary Partners¹ were effectively taking on leadership roles in preventing or mitigating violent conflicts independently, without material or financial support from the project. During the implementation of the second phase from February 2021 to April 2022, these partners, jointly and without financial or logistical support from the project, took actions that either **resolved or mitigated the potential escalation of five conflict incidents**. Furthermore, **six peace agreements** were developed across the two project phases to guide cross-border clan and community relationships, with a particular focus on the topic of resource sharing.

According to RASMI's Boundary Partners, **relationships between cross-border communities improved** over the first three years of implementation. At the end of the first phase, the vast majority (93%) of Boundary Partners reported that their views of the neighbouring communities had substantially improved and 90% attested that they had a shared vision of how to effectively and peacefully address conflicts.

Keys to success

Context-specific programming: The project's successes can be credited, at least in part, to its system-based approach to analysing conflict at the local level and designing tailored responses to specific local conflict drivers and patterns.

¹ Boundary Partners are cross-clan and cross-community leader groups supported by PACT to better address and manage conflicts. These include youth leaders, women leaders, local authorities, peace committees, traditional leaders (elders) and religious leaders.

² The Women for Change (W4C) Forum is a network that brings together local Somalis and non-Somali women to address radicalisation and inequality across the Mandera Triangle through change aimed at resolving the root causes of conflicts.

'Boundary Partners' approach: Bringing together key stakeholders (or 'Boundary Partners') who share common interests (such as youth, women, elders and chiefs) to form cross-clan and cross-border groups, and subsequently reinforcing them as formal peace structures, proved to be an effective implementation strategy.

Quick wins: For example, the project brought together and supported Mandera-based Somali and non-Somali women, who were often targets of Al-Shabaab, and invested in building their skills and knowledge on countering violent extremism and conflict management. These women quickly developed a shared vision and brainstormed potential peace initiatives in Mandera, leading to the creation of the 'Women for Change' forum² and strengthening the role of women in promoting stability and security in the region. These types of 'quick wins' helped Boundary Partners and communities realise that positive changes were achievable despite decades of conflict in the Mandera Triangle.

Building on success

RASMI II's endline data indicates that the project's approach to conflict resolution in border areas has proven effective and could be built on in the future. To implement this approach in future programming, the project's final reports recommend providing more flexibility to implementing partners so that they can amend the project design over the course of implementation, as well as including an extended contingency budget which could allow the implementing partner to promptly intervene in skirmishes before they escalate.

The EU opened a call for proposals in March 2023 to find an implementing partner for its next programme in the Mandera Triangle, titled 'Peaceful and resilient borderlands in the Horn of Africa', which will also cover other East African borderlands. This €14M follow-up intervention aims to provide full continuity to the actions started by the RASMI project.



EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa

Disclaimer

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