Hiil Hooyo Poetry Competition Pilot Evaluation Study Report

December 2020
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<th>Acronym</th>
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<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>Antenatal Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCDO</td>
<td>Foreign, Commonwealth &amp; Development Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HHPC</td>
<td>Hiil Hooyo Poetry Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVR</td>
<td>Interactive Voice Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI</td>
<td>Population Services International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAHAN</td>
<td>Somali Advocates for Health and Nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHDS</td>
<td>Somali Health and Demographic Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHINE</td>
<td>Somali Health and Nutrition Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nation Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nation Population Fund</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
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</table>
Acknowledgement
The evaluation study and development of this report involved various people whose support and dedication are highly acknowledged. Heart-felt gratitude goes to the study participants including Hiil Hooyo poetry competition (HHPC) Facebook followers and key informants like Yuusuf Shaacir, a well-known Somali Poet.

Special appreciation goes to the hundreds of the competition participants who devoted their time to composing high-quality poems on antenatal care, nutrition and birth spacing. Appreciation also goes to the thousands of Facebook users who follows the Hiil Hooyo Poetry Competition Page, and regularly give feedback, comments, and suggestions.
1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Somalia/Somaliland Context

Women in Somalia and Somaliland have a one in 22 lifetime risk of maternal death making the maternal mortality rates in Somalia and Somaliland amongst the highest in the world. Most of these deaths (94%) occurred in low-resource settings, and most could have been prevented (WHO, 2019). It is estimated that the maternal mortality ratio is 699 deaths per 100,000 live births in Somalia (SHDS 2020). In addition, one in 12 women die of childbirth and pregnancy related reasons (UNICEF, 2019). Accordingly, the lifetime risk of maternal death in Somalia and Somaliland is among the world’s highest, 1 in 22, exceeded by only Chad and Sierra Leone.

FCDO (formerly DFID) is implementing a health system strengthening programme under the name Somali Health and Nutrition (SHINE) from 2016 to 2021. This program has both a supply side strengthening and demand creation components. PSI is implementing the demand creation for health services, called SAHAN (Somali Advocates for Health and Nutrition) component which aims to increase utilization of reproductive, nutrition, child, and maternal health services and to promote healthy behaviour change.

SAHAN is using an adaptive, evidence-based, participatory design process to better understand the persistent barriers to uptake of health services and health-seeking behaviour and develop and test innovations to increase demand. These strategies target both internal factors to an individual, social, and physical environment factors that influence or constrain health seeking behaviours.

1.2 Hiil Hooyo Poetry Competition Intervention Summary

Hiil Hooyo Poetry Competition is an innovative competition where both young and aspiring Somali poets are challenged to bring their creativity into action by using poetry as a tool to address complex issues surrounding maternal health. This competition is expected to draw attention to the challenges mother’s experience during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postnatal period. Using poetry as a method for expressing empathy for the mother can be an effective way of increasing awareness and sensitizing the Somali communities on the support required by mothers during this period. In Somali language, the word ‘hiil’, means giving deliberate support by any means to someone who is entitled (mother, brother sibling, friend, ally), while the word ‘hooyo’ means mother. Hiil hooyo therefore roughly translates to support the mother.

The goal of the poetry competition is to provide key health messages and knowledge to the society at large so it can make better health decisions for Somali women and their children.

The Somali community has a longstanding poetic tradition with the Arabic poetry being one of the oldest in history. Poets in the Somali community memorized volumes of poems from ancient history and used them to teach and entertain their kinsmen. Somalia is known as ‘A Nation of Poets’ because of their longstanding oratory tradition. Poetry is an important way of communicating complex and sensitive human topics in Somali culture. Poems are used to pass ideas which are political, spiritual, emotional, or philosophical to explore people’s perception, for pleasure and beauty, and to elicit certain emotions about something, teach or challenge certain societal grounds that people may have.

Given the low literacy levels, SAHAN co-creation sessions and behavioural sciences’ natural spontaneous behaviour, poetry was identified as most spontaneous way in which the Somalis learn and adopt new knowledge and way of life. This was so evident that during the testing of the poetry competition it was very easy to get nationally renowned poets and the national cultural centre, Hiddo Dhawr, in Somaliland ready and willing to not only own the competition but also provide the venue and platform for the competition.

To sustain the awareness raising and knowledge gained from the use of poetry, a competition angle was weaved into the design to provide the much-needed edutainment and edge to the health messages that would
be passed through poetry. Edutainment has been defined as the art of integrating social issues into popular and high-quality entertainment formats like poetry and drama. As confirmed through research, these kinds of programme format get people talking - not only about exciting storylines, and interesting characters, but also about the issues that are woven into the programmes. It is also often easier to speak about certain issues, such as birth spacing or sex in the third person. These formats stimulate constructive public debate and are thought to be a powerful change agent in development communication and generally create a supportive environment for social change.
2.0  Purpose, Objectives and Study Scope

2.1  Study Objectives

Objectives of this study is to determine the effect and document the successes and failures of the Hiil Hooyo Poetry Competition.

2.2  Specific objectives

The specific objectives are to:

▪  Document the number of users reached and the people’s reaction to Hiil Hooyo Poetry Competition, specifically on Facebook.
▪  To find out the effect of Hiil Hooyo poems on its audience
▪  To find out which SAHAN thematic area was most liked (ANC, Birth Spacing, or Nutrition)
▪  Document successes, failures and lessons learnt of Hiil Hooyo Poetry Competition
▪  Find out the Somali poets’ views on Hiil Hooyo Poetry Competition
3.0 Methodology
The survey consisted of both quantitative and qualitative studies. The quantitative study was conducted through Facebook. A questionnaire in the form of Facebook survey application were posted on the Hiil Hooyo Facebook page and sponsored so that large number of Facebook users throughout are reached. For a wider reach and to get many respondents, a minimum of 7 days was sponsorship was done. The Hiil Hooyo Facebook page had a following of more than 8,000 people and therefore it was expected to get that the study would get a sample of 200 study participants. As part of the qualitative study, the competition’s judges (well-known Somali poets) were interviewed as key informants and their views incorporated in this report. Secondary data analysis was also conducted including Facebook follower reactions and comments.

3.1 Sampling
The Hiil Hooyo Poetry Competition Facebook page had a following of more than 8,000 people and its posts have more than 3,000 engagements (reactions, comments, shares etc.). The page had also reached more than 45,000 people since its creation. Due to inaccessibility of the intervention beneficiaries, as there was no written list of the intervention beneficiaries, the study is happened to employ a non-probability voluntary response sampling method, whereby only those who are voluntarily going to take part in the study are included in the study. The study was expected to get around 200 respondents in the seven days of sponsoring the online survey questionnaire and link posted on Hiil Hooyo Facebook page. After the seven days, a total of 142 respondents had filled out the open-to-public questionnaire. Therefore, the study findings are based on those 142 respondents.

3.2 Data collection
Structured questionnaire was used to collect data on the three themes covered in the Hiil Hooyo Poetry Competition (ANC, Birth Spacing and Nutrition). The questionnaire was minimized as much as possible to capture only the main objectives to ensure that we got as many online respondents as possible. Moreover, secondary data analysis and qualitative data collection was done.

3.3 Data Cleaning and Validation
The data cleaning and validation was part of the data collection by employing a skip logic in the online questionnaire. Further data cleaning was done at end of the data collection and only clean and relevant data was synthesised for the report.
4.0 Key Findings of the evaluation survey

4.1 Quantitative Study

The link for the survey was clicked by 2,730 times by the last day of the data collection, reaching 44,232 unique Facebook users and received 203 reactions, mostly likes. There was no negative feedback on this post. 142 Facebook users filled out the survey questionnaire. However, only 111 questionnaires were complete. The analysis is therefore based on the responses provided by the 111 respondents who fully completed the questionnaire (N=111).

4.1.1 Study participants' location

Majority of the study participants were from Banadir and Marodijeex regions with percentages of 27% and 26% respectively.

![Study Participants' Location](image1.png)

Figure 1: Study participants Location

4.1.2 Gender and age of respondents

There were more female study participants than men study found that 53% of the participants were female while the rest (47%) were male, and majority of the study participants were aged between 18-24 and 25-34 with 44% and 42% respectively.

![Age Distribution of Participants by Gender](image2.png)

Figure 2: Gender and Age of respondents
4.1.3 How study participants found out about Hiil Hooyo Poetry Competition

50% of the study participants found out about the poetry competition on the Hiil Hooyo Poetry Competition Facebook page, while 26% were told by someone. A small number of them heard about the competition on TV, radio, and other media channels.

![Figure 3: How study participants found out about Hiil Hooyo Poetry Competition](image)

4.1.4 Stage at which study participants found out about the competition

Many of the study participants (47%) heard about Hiil Hooyo Poetry Competition in the first phase (the call to submit poems) with 31% finding out at the final stage when the winners were announced.

![Figure 4: Stage at which study participants found out about the competition](image)
4.1.5 Respondents’ perception of the poetry competition and the use of social media as a channel

A huge majority (91%) of the study participants thought that Hil Hooyo Poetry Competition was useful, 2% saying it was not useful, while the remaining 7% thought it was just normal. On the art of using poems on social media to educate the Somali people on maternal and child health 81% thought it was an effective way of addressing health demand challenges.

![Figure 5: Perception on the use of Social Media as a channel](image)

Further, majority the study participants (68%) reported that what they liked most about the Hil Hooyo poetry competition was the use of poems as a medium for health demand creation. A further 20% liked the fact that the competition was primarily on social media.

![Figure 6: Like most about HHPC](image)

4.2 Qualitative part of the study

Qualitative interviews were conducted to triangulate the quantitative data and enrich the evidence. Below are some of the findings from this study.

4.2.1 Key Informants Interview with the competition judge:

One of the competition’s judges that was interviewed opined that different stakeholders including women need to be involved much more in the competition to have greater and wider discussions. He also proposed that more traditional media was better suited to the women because most of them do not use social media.
“… I would also suggest having a meeting for all the stakeholders and the people who are involved in this issue including women so that a better way of implementing this intervention might be discussed and brought forward. Instead of using social media, I would rather prefer using traditional media like radio and TV, because I think it is the youth who use the social media, married women and elders are not common in the social media. I would also suggest including women in the competition, let women speak themselves in their Somali Buraanbur songs…”

Hiil Hooyo poetry competition judge

The judge added that most of the participants of this competition were young (below 20 years). They were so interested to take part in the competition and not as focused in thorough understanding the challenges the competition was trying to solve.

“… It was youth who were involved in the competition. Actually, they were very enthusiastic towards the competition, but I think they were more interested in taking part in the competition rather than understanding the health challenges and the great idea behind it…”

Hiil Hooyo poetry competition judge

4.2.2 Qualitative data from Hiil Hooyo Facebook Page

One of the challenges faced in implementation was the length of time it took from when the competition was first publicized to when the competition took off, was implemented, and concluded. Some fans lost track of the process and even thought that Hiil Hooyo was different competition when they saw Facebook posts a long lull after it was first publicized.

“… I believe there is a need to change the way the competition was designed if it’s implemented again. It took a year to complete the competition, which could have been finalized much faster. Some people even forget about it and when they saw the postings on Facebook, they thought something else or another competition was happening there…”

Hiil Hooyo poetry competition fan

The contestants said that public voting should not be solely the scoring criteria and welcomed the competition use of judges combined with public voting. This is because the thought that most people voted for competitors they knew or supported and not necessarily for the best poem reciter.

“This is controversial, HHPC. Because this voted people did not cast their votes based on evaluation, they made on the contestants’ poems, but everybody voted for the one he knows or related to each other. There are contestants who precisely focused and discussed on the needed topic by narrowing it down delivering the intended message to the audience.”

“I am one of the contestants, but I can see that things are not going well. For me contestant number 6 is the best because of his piece is both short and delivering precise message.” “As I am one of the contestants in this competition, I would like that poetry judges do the evaluation and that the public voting must not be 100% the metrics which will be judged the results of this competition”

“are we confusing the people, this is a pure scandal are its buying to people’s votes. For people are expected to vote for suitability are now voting for the people they know and those who they in agreement with. Let us stop how the competition is going on. For example, Ali Mahdi is a prominent journalist loved by partially or all the Somaliland youth. For that reason, they are voting for him because he supports Somaliland’s nationhood and others are voting for him because he said vote for me for this competition. To be fair you, they should make some changes because this will not be a competition, but it is who the people know most and his/her familiarity. This paves the eloquent and creative and talented poets away from the competition.”

1 Buraanbur is a poetic form within traditional Somali poetry. It is usually composed by women
“Let’s stop the competition and make some changes!” “Suggestion: jury of prominent poets should be designated to this.” E.g. there is also a teacher who is contesting. He is doing the same if not more. He is in illegal campaign to gain the most votes and I will bring his evidence also….”

“Suggestion: if the plan is to choose to decide the winners because of public voting, this will not be good thing to do because some people were already famous having Facebook page of more than 100k followers. Therefore, to get suitable poems for mothers, it would be good to employed just and pious poetry judges who knows the real meaning of poems. Previously, there were business-based competitions and been stopped after it was realized it was not working…."

People connected to Hiil Hooyo Facebook Page were also campaigning for the one they voted for and requesting their friends on Facebook to do the same.

“Number 1 is the best. For the following reasons: one she is young; two she has confidence; three she is related to the topic more deeply; four she is clear to the point; five for encouragement for better future to nurture her ability”

“Greeting to you all. I watched all the contestants. There are contestants who talked about required content or message (no opening remarks and unnecessary lines of poetry) and convinced the audience well. I would vote for contestant number 9. He composed his poem based on ‘3 phased nodes poetry rules’ (Judges may explain). if we are following poetry aligned rules, he will be the highest one.”

“you should not only consider voting but also looking on the aesthetic or beauty of the used words and how their aligned to the poetry rules. I would suggest the lady who is carrying Tag number 3. I liked her piece

“I voted for number (forgot to mention): because: 1. Younger age comparing to all others; 2. clear and coherent message; 3. voice clarity with empathy.”

“I voted for number 16 because of the weight(quality) of his words”

“I voted for number 1, Deeqa Nuur. I do not know her but I her beauty of words and courage attracted my attention. and because of her young age”

In the Hiil Hooyo Facebook inbox section, there were many people who were eager to participate in the competition. They were posting messages asking to be included in the competition, be informed about the future competitions and when the results would be announced for the competition.

“How can I participate in the competition? Please, give more explanation of HHPC and how do I submit where the most recurrent messages from the people” “Thank you for creating this competition for poets expecting them to participate in the awareness raising in maternal health for the mothers.”

HHPC Facebook page follower

On the other hand, some people embraced the role competition was making in reemphasising the beauty of the mother language (Somali), getting a lot of youth interested. They were also thankful to the competition organizers for providing this platform

“Thank you for making this competition making for people to compete in our mother language. Thank you for organizing this poetry competition which made a lot of youth interested and showed the richness of their mother language. May Allah make it easy for the responsibilities that you are dealing with (the Competition). This programme is very good”

“Thank you very much. This page will be my favourite page. Thanks one again.”
"Thanks, I am very happy with the opening of this page, HHPC"

"I am in Karkar region, and I am one of the talented youths in poetry. Walaal, I want to be part of the competitors, how could you welcome me to this"

"I am Somali poet; how could I participate in this competition?"

"Masha Allah, Thank you very much. I would like to know where HHPC is based? I am in Mogadishu, and I am student who studies in maternal and childcare, specially I know about the cere given to the mother and her child. I don't compose poems, but I will try start composing for HHPC. I want register myself for this competition, how can I do it? I think it is theme based. How can I know which theme to compose poem from?"

"I am a poet. Is the competition closed? I just saw it; can I join this now? When do you think you will start the next competition?"

"Masha Allah, I am welcoming this poetry competition, HHPC, and I am extending my thanks to the winners. You reignited the poetry"

"Walaal, thank you for the good way that you are encouraging the aspiring generation. How can someone participate in this competition?"

"Walaal, I am a mother of one daughter. I want to participate in this competition. How can I partake in it please, can you explain for me?"

"I am fan of Mustage Dirir, I wish victory for you" "Congratulations Dr Abdikarim, I wish that you will be number one because of your knowledge in medicine and your poetry talent. Congratulations it is ours."

"Abdiaziz Mohamed, I don't know you personally, but I am impressed by your poem, congrats"

"Walaal, this is an effort undertaking by PSI, SAHAN. Previously they have produced other project like the one you can call 119 (SHAAFI IVR), in which you can listen messages that is good for the mother"

Judges and other government officials also shared their enthusiasm for the competition. All judges acknowledged that they never had been evolved such kind of competition before and emphasized that all the poems that they scored during the course were relevant to the topics. They recommended for a book to be published containing all the competition's poems from the start to finish.
5.0 Challenges, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Challenges
There were no major challenges during the piloting of the Hiil Hoooyo poetry competition with the only main issue being the length of time taken for the competition to kick off after being publicized. Working with third party players requiring a competitive procurement process e.g., recruitment of judges, media partners including production agencies, tv and radio stations, contributed to some of these delays.

5.2 Conclusions
The poetry competition proved to be a useful channel for communicating health issues to the public at large.
- The Hiil Hoooyo Poetry Competition Facebook page had more than 8,000 followers and more than 3,000 engagements (reactions, comments, shares etc.).
- A huge majority (91%) of the study participants said that Hiil Hoooyo Poetry Competition was useful, 2% saying it was not useful, while the remaining 7% thought it was just normal.
- Majority the study participants (68%) reported that what they liked most about the Hiil Hoooyo poetry competition was the use of poems as a means for health demand creation. A further 20% liked the fact that the competition was primarily on social media.

5.3 Recommendations
- PSI and ministries of health should share the recorded poems with health facilities to incorporate them to their on-screen health education programs at the facilities.
- In future implementation of similar competition, consider decreasing the weighting allocated to public voting while increasing weighting for the judges the scoring. This will mitigate any bias towards competitors with many friends and followers, hence ensuring competitors with the best poems advance and win the competition.
- Incorporating all media channels, including traditional channels like radio and TV (though more costly) in future implementation to ensure that even vulnerable communities, who may not have access to modern social media, are reached and included.
- Including married women in the competition, let women speak themselves in their Somali Buraanbur songs
6.0 Bibliography


### Annexes

#### 7.1 Quantitative Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographic Information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About Poetry Competition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Have you heard about Hiil Hooyo Poetry competition?</td>
<td>• Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How did you hear about it?</td>
<td>• Hiil Hooyo Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Someone else shared with me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. At what stage did you hear it first?</td>
<td>• First phase, the call to submit poems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Second phase, voting for the first-round competitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The third phase, voting for the final stage competitors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Last phase, at grand finale stage, awarding winners</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• At this stage of feedback survey</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How did you see the competition?</td>
<td>1. Useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Normal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Not useful</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. How do you see using social media to educate Somali people on child and maternal health?</td>
<td>1. Very effective approaching to change behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Good approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Not bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. I do not believe social media contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. I believe social media cannot be used health awareness campaigns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Which theme of the poems did you like most?</td>
<td>1. Poems on antenatal care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Poems on nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Poems on birth spacing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What attracted you most about poetry competition</td>
<td>1. Using poems as health awareness campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Using competition as health awareness campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Jury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Using social media</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>6. Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. what are your recommendations on poetry competition?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.2 Qualitative Questionnaire

Qualitative Section

1. Tell us about yourself, how long as poet, and your role in the Hiil Hooyo Poetry Competition?
   (Identifications)
2. Do you think that there is a need to change the way that Hiil Hooyo Poetry Competitions are designed?
   What needs to be changed?
3. What are the main challenges you have encountered during the project implementation? How did you
   solve it?
4. How was the people’s interest in the poems? Explain more
5. Did you receive calls during the competition from competitors or the community at large? What were
   they asking for?
6. From your experience, were there any previously written poems about maternal and child health? If
   yes, could you please name them. Elaborate more
7. Do you think that using poems is a good way of health behavioural changes among Somali people?
8. What are your recommendations in improvement of Hiil Hooyo Poetry Competition?