

SUMMARY

Strengthening the Health System through Partnership

Somaliland Strategy 2021-2025



WHO WE ARE

King's Global Health Partnerships (KGHP) works to strengthen health systems and improve the quality of care in four countries: Somaliland, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia. We bring together health, academic and international development expertise from King's College London, the UK's National Health Service (NHS) and our international partners to:

- Educate, train and support healthcare workers
- Strengthen healthcare and training institutions
- Enhance national health policies and systems.

Since the partnership began in 2000, we have made a notable contribution to the development of the healthcare system in Somaliland.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE KING'S-SOMALILAND PARTNERSHIP



Trained over 700 medical, nursing and midwifery students through interactive, distance education courses, with over 500 students examined



Trained 100 university staff on student-centred teaching, pedagogy, assessment and curriculum development – strengthening the quality of health professionals' education



Supported the development of the **first national Medical Education Policy** and independent assessment of medical schools in Somaliland, in line with international standards



Implemented a **multi-level health professions education reform programme** with impact on the health workforce system



Introduced primary trauma care training to 98 health facility workers in Somaliland and implemented a **triage system at the country's main referral hospital**



Advised the Ministry of Health Development on **Covid-19 pandemic response** and delivered training on infection prevention control, Covid-19 triage and case management



Introduced **training on the World Health Organization's Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP)** for health care workers and health students to assess and manage priority mental, neurological and substance use disorders

Our Approach to Strengthening Health Systems

For over 20 years, KGHP has been working with partners in Somaliland to strengthen the health system and improve health outcomes for patients. This document sets out our strategic objectives for the next five years (2021-2025), in response to national health sector priorities. We have a deep commitment to working in partnership and we welcome dialogue with people and institutions who share our values and are willing to collaborate to make a difference in the next five years.

OUR PARTNERSHIP MODEL

Our approach to partnership is a central component of our success, bringing together health professionals and institutions in the UK and Somaliland. These jointly-led partnerships are grounded in high-quality research and teaching, clinical and managerial expertise, and in-depth knowledge of the context in which our partnerships operate.

At the heart of the Somaliland partnership is a remarkable group of professionals from the NHS and UK universities who dedicate their time and expertise to make this work possible. They work alongside our Somaliland partners, creating opportunities for knowledge exchange and collaborative learning. Our programmes are delivered through remote engagement, hands-on support and long-term relationship building.

OUR VALUES

- **Working in partnership:** we work by invitation and engage as peers alongside our partners, in all that we do
- **Relevant:** we are embedded within our partner organisations and communities
- **Locally-led:** we are responsive to our partners' needs and priorities and flexible as these change
- **Accountable:** we are trusted because we are consistent and deliver what we promise
- **Mutually beneficial:** collaboration with our partners enables mutual learning, skills and knowledge exchange.





THE FOUNDATIONS OF A STRONG HEALTH SYSTEM

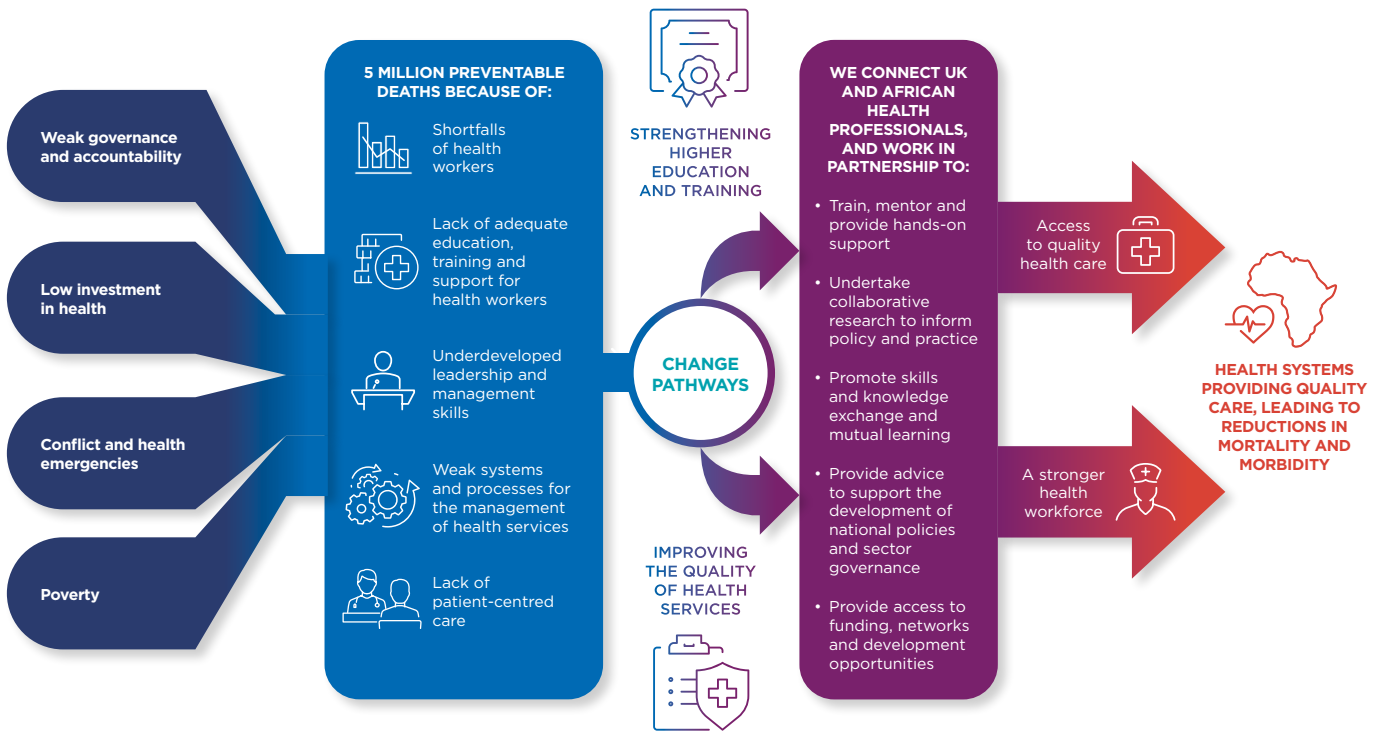
Our work in Somaliland is based on three of the World Health Organization’s (WHO) building blocks for a strong health system: a well-trained and well-distributed health workforce; quality health services; and governance, oversight, and accountability.¹ We have seen the greatest successes in sustainable, system-level change where we have addressed these building blocks together and have worked to strengthen the capacity of individuals, institutions and national governance.

HEALTH SYSTEM CHALLENGES IN SOMALILAND

Somaliland has experienced relative peace and stability since self-declared independence in 1991 following conflict with Somalia. However, the country continues to have some of the poorest health indicators in the world. Life expectancy at birth is just 51.6 years for males and 55 for females. Somaliland also has a long way to go to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on health and wellbeing. Maternal mortality, for example, has fallen to 396 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births from 418 in 2014.² For comparison the SDG target is to reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to 70 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births by 2030.

The Government of Somaliland is committed to improving coverage, access, staffing and service delivery. However, major health system challenges remain, including, financial constraints, human resource capacity, limited infrastructure, donor dependency and a fragmented health system.

King’s Global Health Partnerships’ Theory of Action



¹ Everybody’s Business: Strengthening Health Systems to Improve Health Outcomes. WHO’s Framework for Action, 2007. https://www.who.int/healthsystems/strategy/everybodys_business.pdf

² Somaliland Demographic Health Survey- SL DHS, 2020

Our objectives

In the next five years we want to continue to scale up the impact and sustainability of our work in Somaliland, in order to address some of the main health challenges. Our four strategic objectives are to:

1. Improve the quality of health professions education and preparedness for clinical practice.
2. Improve the quality of health service delivery and patient-centred care, with a focus on maternal and newborn health, emergency care (including trauma) and mental health.
3. Contribute to evidence-based policy and practice across the health system through collaborative research, technical advice and training.
4. Benefit the NHS through creating opportunities for health workers to develop their skills and engage in reciprocal learning.



OBJECTIVE 1: Improve the quality of health professions education and preparedness for clinical practice.

Overcoming the crisis of human resources for health is a key priority in Somaliland. Challenges in the tertiary education sector and a lack of opportunities for students to learn in clinical settings mean that Somaliland health graduates may not have the knowledge, skills, behaviours and practical experience they need to practice safe, quality, patient-centred healthcare. While remarkable progress has been made in recent years, we can do more to strengthen health professions education.

PRIORITIES:

- **Undergraduate medical education**
 - Support implementation of the new, undergraduate national medical curriculum, address capacity gaps and enable continuous quality improvement of educational programmes. We will build on recommendations made through a national assessment of Somaliland medical schools supported by King's, including the need to improve curricula, build research capacity, and increase opportunities for students to gain clinical experience.

- **Nursing training**

- Adopt a multi-level approach to strengthen nursing, acting on recommendations made at a national stakeholder meeting which KGHP convened in 2019. We will continue to support nurse training at the undergraduate, post-graduate and policy level.

- **Postgraduate health professions education for doctors and nurses**

- Support higher training for graduate health professionals to build a more specialised workforce in the health sector, by contributing financial or technical support to faculties.

- **Training of other health cadres and geographical expansion**

- Expand our technical support to additional teaching institutions or new subject areas, such as pharmacy or public health, at the request of the Somaliland Ministry of Health Development (MoHD).



OBJECTIVE 2:
 Improve the quality of health service delivery and patient-centred care, with a focus on maternal and newborn health, emergency care and mental health.

The Lancet Global Health Commission on High Quality Health Systems found that poor quality care is a bigger barrier to reducing mortality than access³. In Somaliland health facilities, obstacles to the provision of quality care include: poor implementation and uptake of guidelines and standard operating procedures; lack of training and continuing professional development for health workers; poor data collection and information systems; poor infrastructure and a shortage of medical equipment and supplies; and a lack of national and hospital level policies in place.

King's has worked with Somaliland MoHD to lay the foundations for a coordinated, nationwide approach to quality improvement, and also supports partner hospitals to improve the quality of healthcare provided.

PRIORITIES

- **Quality health care delivery**
 - Expand our work with the MOHD to support the development of national level policy and an implementation plan for quality health care delivery. We will work with the WHO and our country partners to pilot the WHO's technical package, 'Quality Action Planning for Fragile, Conflict-Affected and Vulnerable Settings.'

- **Quality improvement (QI) work with Hargeisa Group Hospital**
 - Further develop our support and explore how areas of good practice can be transferred to other parts of the health system, for example in leadership and management, integration of QI tools and methods, and nursing supervision.
- **Trauma and emergency care**
 - Continue to support improvements in the delivery of trauma and emergency care at Hargeisa Group Hospital, including Primary Trauma Care training, the Early Warning Scores system, and implementation of best practice in emergency and urgent care. We will work with our partners to identify priorities, working across the emergency health care system.
- **Maternal and newborn care**
 - Support quality improvement initiatives to ensure that women, especially the most marginalised, can access high quality, respectful care in a timely manner.
- **Mental health and psychiatry training**
 - Contribute to the mental health priorities identified in Somaliland's National Mental Health Policy, particularly through research and training.



OBJECTIVE 3:
 Contribute to evidence-based policy and practice across the health system through collaborative research, technical advice and training.

Evidence-based policy and practice is essential to achieve universal access to quality health care. There are few national clinical guidelines, limited health information, no quality assurance systems and weak regulation of healthcare workers and health care facilities in Somaliland. The MoHD has identified the need to strengthen research capacity and conduct operational research in order to inform policy and practice.

Our long-standing collaboration with the regulators for higher education and health, as well as senior government officials has enabled us to support the development and implementation of national, medical education policy and curriculum.

From the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, our technical advisory support group has advised Somaliland MoHD on the national pandemic plan, as well as developing training resources and guidelines for national Covid-19 treatment and referral facilities.

PRIORITIES:

- **Health research capacity building**
 - Draw on the strong academic community across King's College London and King's Health Partners to develop research capacity and co-produce research with academic partners in Somaliland.
- **Policy development**
 - Engage in policy-focused work to increase impact and the likelihood of sustainable change. Where relevant, we will seek ways for our partnership work to inform policy and strengthen research capacity for evidence-based policy development.

³ Kruk, M. et al (2018) High-quality health systems in the Sustainable Development Goals era: time for a revolution



OBJECTIVE 4:
Benefit the NHS through creating opportunities for health workers to develop their skills and engage in reciprocal learning.

There is a growing body of evidence that the benefits of health partnerships extend beyond the low and middle-income countries (LMICs), and that international partnership work benefits health professionals who engage from the UK and the wider NHS. As an organisation with over 20 years' experience of facilitating collaboration and learning between individuals and institutions in the UK and Somaliland, we are uniquely placed to offer opportunities for UK-based health professionals to donate their time, and to contribute to the body of evidence of the reciprocal benefits to the UK.

PRIORITIES:

- **Institutional links**
 - Build on our institutional links with King's Health Partners and our three partner NHS Foundation Trusts – Guy's and St Thomas', King's College Hospital, and South London and the Maudsley. We will develop more structured opportunities for staff to share their expertise and benefit from participating in our work. We will also capture and evaluate the reciprocal benefits to individuals and to the NHS.

OUR PARTNERS IN SOMALILAND

As we move forward with our new strategy, we will continue to work with committed stakeholders across the health and higher education system in Somaliland – including government departments, professional bodies, regulators, nursing, midwifery and medical schools, health facilities and development partners. This collaboration is critical to our shared success.



I have grown with King's Somaliland Partnership, first as a student, then as a junior doctor, now as a clinical team leader. This partnership is more like a 'familyship' and has given me the confidence and skills to compete internationally."



DR JINAW QALIB,
CLINICAL COORDINATOR,
UNIVERSITY OF HARGEISA



I have met many inspiring individuals that have influenced the way I think about healthcare provision, healthcare education and what it means to be a nurse."



GEMMA OLDFIELD,
NURSE & EXPERT
VOLUNTEER SINCE
2014

KING'S COLLEGE LONDON

Centre for Global Health and Health Partnerships
Suite 2.13 Weston Education Centre,
Cutcombe Road,
London SE5 9RJ

T: 020 7848 5060

E: kghp@kcl.ac.uk

W: kcl.ac.uk/KGHP

 [@KingsGHP](https://twitter.com/KingsGHP)

