



Concept Note: Somali Roots Off-Grid Swimming & Sports Facility – Garowe, Puntland



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Executive Summary

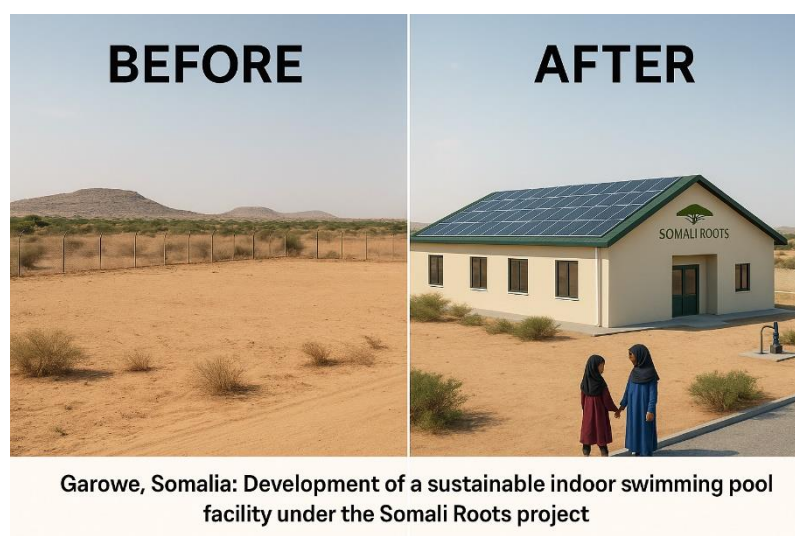
Somali Roots, a UK- and Somalia-registered non-governmental organization (NGO), is dedicated to climate resilience, inclusive education, and sustainable community infrastructure. We develop social enterprises that bridge the gap between urgent local needs and long-term development goals. This concept note outlines the **"Somali Roots Off-Grid Swimming & Sports Facility – Garowe, Puntland"** project. This initiative involves developing a fully off-grid, gender-inclusive indoor swimming and sports facility on secure land owned by Somali Roots in Garowe, Puntland, Somalia.

The facility is designed as a multifunctional youth and health hub, aiming to provide access to swimming, football, and physical education for local youth, promote health and life skills, and enable trauma recovery and psychosocial support through sport and water therapy. It will specifically target underserved populations including girls, children with disabilities, and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) communities, offering a culturally appropriate, safe, and inclusive space. The project will operate 100% off-grid using solar power and borehole water, demonstrating sustainable, climate-adaptive community infrastructure while also creating local employment and vocational training opportunities.

The total project cost is estimated at **\$80,000**. Somali Roots will independently cover the costs for land, borehole installation, solar energy system installation, and engineering. We are seeking up to **\$40,000** in grant contributions to support construction materials, facility completion, and program delivery. All infrastructure and setup costs will be covered independently by Somali Roots to ensure full community ownership, and the funding is sought as grants only, with no co-ownership or equity arrangements. We seek partnerships and funding from ministries, NGOs, and international donors to bring this vital community asset to fruition.

Project Background & Justification

Somali Roots operates as a social enterprise with public impact, focusing on climate resilience, inclusive education, youth empowerment, and community infrastructure to address critical local needs and contribute to long-term development



The proposed Off-Grid Swimming & Sports Facility in Garowe, Puntland, addresses a significant gap in community infrastructure and services

Garowe has a population of approximately 190,000 people, including thousands of displaced families. Despite having over 25 public and private schools, the city lacks any structured indoor swimming or youth-focused sports facility. Puntland is

home to over 400,000 IDPs (UNHCR, 2023), with many youth facing exclusion from safe recreational spaces, physical education, and psychosocial support programs — particularly girls, IDPs, and children with disabilities [User Feedback]. There is an urgent need for safe,

accessible, and inclusive spaces where youth, especially vulnerable groups, can engage in physical activity, acquire life skills, and receive psychosocial support. In many contexts, including Garowe, access to structured sports and recreational facilities, particularly for girls, children with disabilities, and IDP youth, is severely limited. This project will provide a dedicated space for physical education, promoting health, hygiene, and life skills through structured sport.

Furthermore, the facility is strategically designed to enable trauma recovery and psychosocial support through sport and water therapy, which is crucial for groups such as girls, IDP children, and survivors of gender-based violence (GBV).

. By creating local employment and vocational training opportunities, such as for lifeguards, instructors, and maintenance staff, the project also directly contributes to economic empowerment within the community. The decision to make the facility fully off-grid using solar power and an on-site borehole system is a deliberate choice to demonstrate sustainable, climate-adaptive community infrastructure in a region vulnerable to climate challenges, ensuring operational independence from unreliable municipal supplies and promoting long-term resilience.

Description of the Facility

The "Somali Roots Off-Grid Swimming & Sports Facility" will be constructed on secure land owned by Somali Roots in Garowe, Puntland, Somalia. The site is centrally located, secure, and easily accessible, making it suitable for school access and NGO programming. This facility is envisioned as a multifunctional youth and health hub designed to cater to diverse community needs and ensure low operational costs with high community benefit.

Key features and components of the facility include:

- A 20m x 8m main indoor swimming pool for general use and structured lessons.
- A 6m x 4m learner/kids' pool, specifically designed for teaching and young children.
- An AstroTurf football pitch (5-a-side size) to provide a versatile space for sports activities.
- Separate men's and women's changing rooms equipped with toilets and showers to ensure privacy and comfort.
- A unisex sauna and steam room, intended for physical rehabilitation, recovery, mental health support, and gender-safe use.
- A welcoming reception area and accessible washrooms to ensure the facility is user-friendly for all.
- A 100% off-grid energy system via solar power with battery storage, ensuring reliable and sustainable power supply independent of the grid.



SOMALI ROOTS

INDOOR COMMUNITY SWIMMING POOL

A fully off-grid facility promoting health, life skills and trauma recovery through swimming and sports.

-  **60% girls**
-  **100% solar**
-  **Trauma support**

 25+ schools, 0 public pools in Garowe

 400,000+ IDPs in Puntland

 Girls and disabled youth excluded from sport access

\$40,000 co-funding needed to complete phase 1

Sep	Oct	Nov
Site Prep	Pool Build	Launch & Train

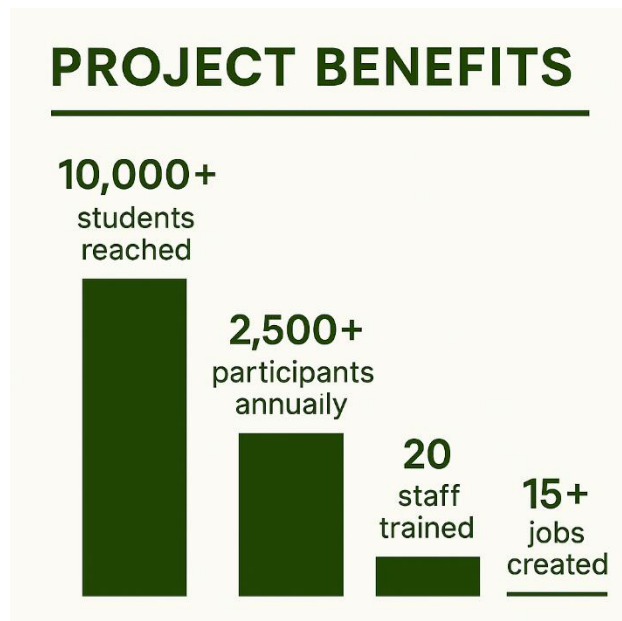
- An on-site borehole water system, providing an independent and reliable water source separate from municipal supply.

Objectives and Expected Outcomes

The Somali Roots Off-Grid Swimming & Sports Facility is designed with several core objectives aimed at fostering holistic community development and well-being.

Core Objectives:

- To introduce swimming, water safety, and physical education into the school curriculum, addressing critical gaps in physical literacy and safety skills among youth.
- To promote health, hygiene, and life skills through structured sport. Engaging in regular physical activity within a supportive environment helps in developing essential life skills, discipline, and healthy habits.
- To provide trauma recovery and mental health support, especially for vulnerable groups such as girls, Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) children, and survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). Water therapy and sport offer unique avenues for psychosocial well-being and healing.
- To create employment opportunities for youth, including roles such as lifeguards, instructors, and maintenance staff. This directly contributes to local economic empowerment and skill development.
- To serve as a replicable off-grid model for climate-resilient, community-owned infrastructure. By demonstrating a fully self-sufficient facility, the project aims to inspire and provide a blueprint for similar sustainable initiatives in the region.



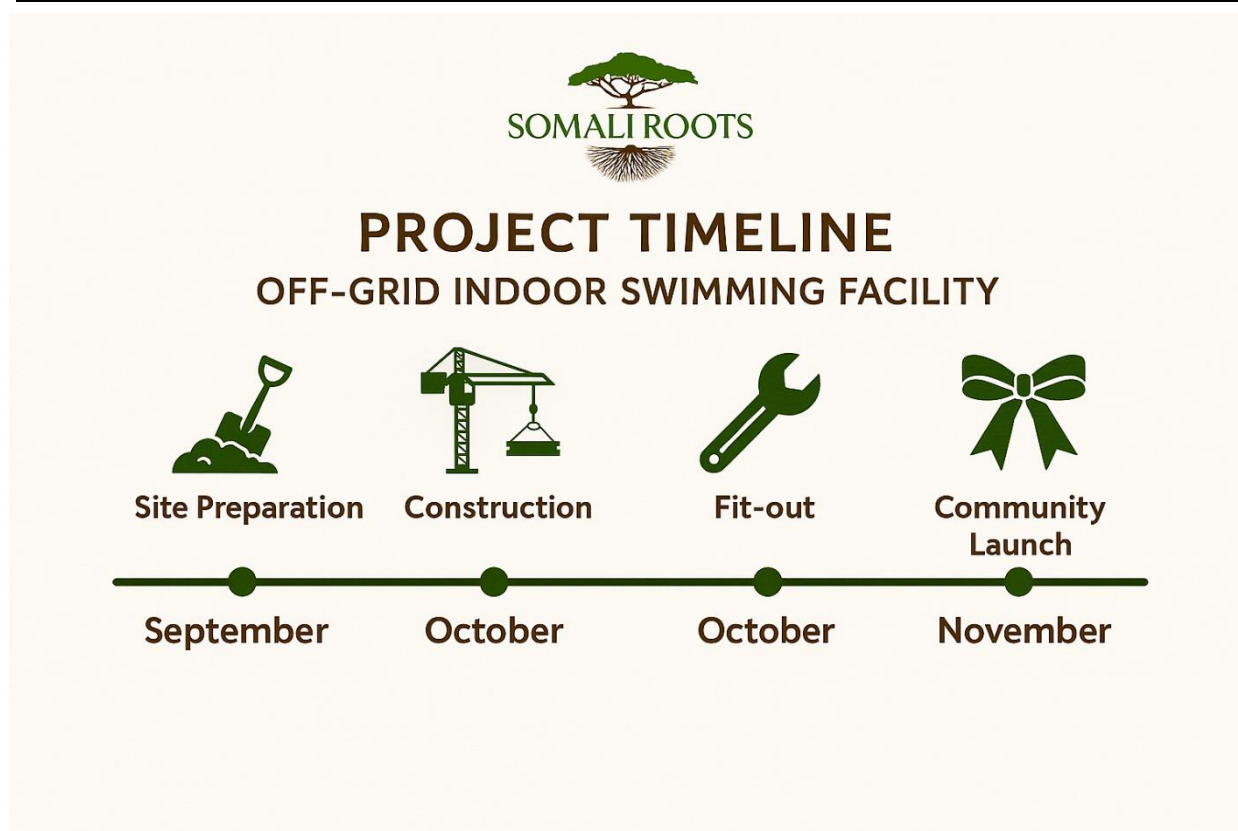
Expected Outcomes:

- Increased participation of local youth, especially girls and children with disabilities, in structured sports and physical education programs.
- Improved health, hygiene practices, and life skills among participants.
- Enhanced psychosocial well-being and trauma recovery for vulnerable groups through dedicated sports and water therapy sessions.
- Direct employment and vocational training opportunities for members of the local community, building local capacity.
- Demonstration of a successful, sustainable, and climate-adaptive off-grid community infrastructure model that can be replicated across Puntland and Somalia.
- Development of a safe, inclusive, and culturally appropriate space for diverse community members, including IDP youth, to engage in recreational and therapeutic activities.

Implementation Timeline:

This accelerated timeline outlines the key phases for the construction and operational launch of the Somali Roots Off-Grid Swimming & Sports Facility:

Phase	Month 1 (September)	Month 2 (October)	Month 3 (November)
Site clearance, borehole and foundation			
Pool construction (main & learner), filtration, changing rooms and structure framing, off-grid solar system			
Sauna/steam install, reception finishes, interior works, local hiring, final testing and launch prep			



Target Groups

The Somali Roots Off-Grid Swimming & Sports Facility is specifically designed to cater to a diverse range of beneficiaries, ensuring inclusivity and addressing the needs of underserved populations.

The primary target groups include:

- Students from public and private schools (ages 6–18): The facility will integrate swimming and sports programming into school curricula, providing a vital resource for physical education.
- Youth from Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) communities and vulnerable households: Special programs will ensure access for these populations, who often lack
- recreational and therapeutic opportunities.

- Girls' groups and women-focused NGOs: Emphasizing a gender-inclusive indoor facility with separate changing rooms and culturally appropriate programming will encourage participation from girls and women.
- Children with disabilities and youth requiring physical therapy: The facility's design includes accessible washrooms and a unisex sauna and steam room for physical rehabilitation and recovery, ensuring it can serve those with diverse needs.
- Local NGOs working in education, WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene), mental health, and protection: These organizations are crucial partners for sponsored access, programming, and inclusion support.
- Sports clubs and youth networks: The AstroTurf football pitch will provide a versatile space for local clubs and networks to engage in activities.



Sustainability Model (off-grid power, operations, affordability)

The sustainability of the Somali Roots Off-Grid Swimming & Sports Facility is central to its design and long-term viability, emphasizing low operational costs and high community benefit. The model integrates innovative off-grid solutions with a strategic operational approach and an affordability framework.

Off-Grid Power and Water Systems:

- **100% Off-Grid Energy:** The facility will be powered entirely by a solar energy system with battery storage. This ensures a reliable and sustainable power supply, independent of the often unreliable municipal grid, while significantly reducing recurring energy costs and the facility's carbon footprint.
- **On-Site Borehole Water System:** Water for the swimming pools and other facilities will be sourced from an on-site borehole system, making the facility completely independent from municipal water supply. This guarantees a consistent and controlled water source, crucial for hygiene and operational continuity, and also reduces utility expenses.

Operations Model:

- The facility is designed for low operational costs through its reliance on renewable energy and independent water sources.
- Local Employment and Training: Operations will be supported by a locally trained workforce, including lifeguards, instructors, and maintenance staff, contributing to sustainable local capacity and reducing external dependency.
- Community-Owned Infrastructure: As an initiative on secure land owned by Somali Roots, the facility embodies a community-owned infrastructure model, fostering local stewardship and long-term commitment.

Affordability:

- The facility will implement a simple cost-recovery model to ensure long-term financial sustainability while maintaining affordability and accessibility for the target groups.

- This model will include school bookings during dedicated hours, providing schools with an affordable option for physical education.
- Public hours will also be available, likely with a tiered pricing structure that considers the economic realities of the community.
- Crucially, sponsorships from NGOs and donors will be sought to provide free or subsidized access for children from vulnerable backgrounds, including IDPs, children with disabilities, and girls' groups, ensuring that financial barriers do not prevent access for those most in need. This blended approach allows for self-sufficiency while maintaining a strong social mission.

Alignment with Government Policies and SDGs

The Somali Roots Off-Grid Swimming & Sports Facility is strategically aligned with key government priorities and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), increasing its eligibility for funding, endorsements, and NGO partnerships.

Alignment with Government Priorities:

- **Education:** The project supports the Ministry of Education by integrating swimming, water safety, and physical education into school curricula and offering school access for programming.
- **Youth:** It provides a safe and structured environment for youth development, physical activity, and skill-building, aligning with the Ministry of Youth & Sports' objectives for youth engagement and sports development.
- **Gender:** By providing a gender-inclusive and culturally appropriate indoor facility with separate amenities, it directly addresses gender equality by increasing access for girls and women in sports and well-being activities, aligning with national efforts for women's and girls' empowerment.
- **Climate Resilience:** The 100% off-grid solar power and borehole water systems exemplify climate-adaptive infrastructure, demonstrating sustainable practices crucial for a region vulnerable to climate change, which aligns with government climate resilience strategies.

Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- **SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being:** The facility promotes physical health through sport, hygiene education, and provides mental health and trauma recovery support, especially through water therapy.
- **SDG 4 – Quality Education:** By integrating physical education and life skills into school curricula and providing a space for learning, the project contributes to inclusive and equitable quality education.
- **SDG 5 – Gender Equality:** The design and programming ensure safe and inclusive access for girls and women, empowering them through sports and fostering gender equality in recreational spaces.
- **SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation:** The on-site borehole and water management systems, coupled with hygiene promotion, contribute to sustainable water management and sanitation practices.
- **SDG 13 – Climate Action:** Operating entirely off-grid with solar power and sustainable water sourcing directly contributes to climate action by reducing reliance on fossil fuels and demonstrating climate-resilient infrastructure.

Requests to Stakeholders

Somali Roots seeks to collaborate with key stakeholders to ensure the successful establishment and sustainable operation of the Off-Grid Swimming & Sports Facility in Garowe. Our requests are tailored to foster strong partnerships that maximize the project's impact and reach within the community.

Requests to Ministries:

The concept note will be submitted to relevant ministries for partnership and endorsement.

From the Ministry of Education:

- An official endorsement letter supporting the project.
- Approval to partner with public schools for the integration of swimming and sports programming into extracurricular or co-curricular physical education curricula.

From the Ministry of Youth & Sports:

- Recognition of the facility as an official youth sports venue.
- Referrals from local clubs and schools.
- Participation in regional tournaments or government events.

From the Ministry of Health:

- Partnerships for rehabilitation and hygiene training, leveraging the facility's unisex sauna and steam room for physical rehabilitation, recovery, and mental health support.

Requests to NGOs and Donors:

Somali Roots is seeking partnership or funding from various NGOs and donors, including Save the Children, UNICEF, GECPD, DAN, World Vision, INTERSOS, Somalia Humanitarian Fund (SHF), UNDP, NIS Foundation, CARE Somalia, and Relief International.

- Somali Roots is seeking up to **\$40,000** in grant contributions to support construction materials, facility completion, and program delivery.
- All infrastructure and setup costs will be covered independently by Somali Roots to ensure full community ownership.
- This funding is sought as grants only, with no co-ownership or equity arrangements.
- Sponsorship for children from vulnerable backgrounds, particularly for Internally Displaced Youth (IDPs), children with disabilities, and girls' groups, ensuring free or subsidized access to the facility.
- Program partnerships to deliver specialized sessions, such as girls-only sessions, disability inclusion programs, and psychosocial support.

Contact Information and Organisation Details

This section provides essential information about Somali Roots, the organization spearheading this vital community infrastructure project.

Organisation Name: Somali Roots

Organisation Type: A UK- and Somalia-registered non-governmental organization (NGO).

Focus Areas: Somali Roots is dedicated to climate resilience, inclusive education, youth empowerment, and sustainable community infrastructure.



Organisational Model: Operates as a social enterprise with public impact, combining nonprofit outcomes with a self-sustaining design to bridge the gap between urgent local needs and long-term development goals.

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