

Elman Peace

KBF Africa Prize 2022

Elman Peace is a non-profit organisation which seeks to build a peaceful society in Somalia. Founded in 1990, during the early years of the country's long civil conflict, it speaks up for human rights and offers learning and opportunities that aim to give overlooked Somalis, notably women and young people, a greater role in constructing their nation's future.

The KBF Africa Prize recognises Elman Peace's fight for social justice and against violence, and in particular its success in empowering and cultivating leadership skills among women and young people. Its methods have the potential to inspire other societies, in Africa and beyond, to put conflict behind them and find and follow a more inclusive path.

Established by Elman Ali Ahmed and Fartuun Adan, and now run by Adan and their daughter Ilwad Elman, the organisation, and the family, have shared in the sufferings of fellow Somalis. Adan fled her homeland with their three young daughters. Her husband remained and was murdered in 1996. Ten years later, Adan returned from refuge in Canada to resume his work and was followed by their daughters. The eldest, Almaas, was also killed, in 2019.

Now with more than 200 people based in Mogadishu and eight regional branches across Somalia, Elman Peace has a range of programmes, run locally by young, committed, and professional teams, working closely with their communities.

Notable among these is *Drop the Gun, Pick up the Pen*, first instituted by Elman Ali Ahmed to draw children and teenagers away from clan militias. It does so by providing schooling and a route to earning a living without carrying a rifle for tribal warlords. Thousands of young men and women across the country have benefitted from the programme.

With *Sister Somalia*, Elman Peace has provided the first rape crisis centres in the country, offering medical, psychological, and social support for victims of sexual and gender-based violence. The *She Will* programme delivers resources for educating teenage girls, as a means both to empower women in society and bolster local economies. It also aims to transform community relationships, with a view to lowering levels of violence. Elman Peace is opening a school for 200 girls from disadvantaged backgrounds. Named in memory of the late Almaas Elman, it will offer four-year courses in leadership for the digital age.

The organisation offers a number of projects to provide skills training and jobs for young people, with a particular emphasis on matching local demands. Elman Peace also sets store by care for the mental wellbeing of those affected by conflict, including those like its own activists working to promote peace and human rights. It uses Mogadishu's magnificent ocean beaches to provide therapy, including meditation, yoga and sports.

<http://elmanpeace.org/>