



Carruurteena "our children"

UNICEF Somalia Newsletter

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Time to put an end to violence against children in Somalia

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All violence committed in Somalia has an impact on children. Whether children's experience of violence is direct or indirect, they suffer disproportionately from its effects.

In many instances, children in Somalia experience violence directly. They are recruited as child soldiers. They are maimed on their way to school by landmines or roadside bombs. They are killed in the crossfire as bullets are exchanged between warring parties. They are subjected to female genital mutilation/cutting, corporal punishment in schools, arbitrary arrest, imprisonment, rape and stoning.

In other instances, children do not experience violence directly, but grow and develop in a country in which violence has eroded the resources required for the realization of their rights.

Years of war in Somalia have deprived children of parents, teachers, nurses and doctors. Violence has undermined livelihoods, exacerbating deprivations associated with chronic poverty. Forced to flee from violence and chaos, children are the first to suffer from malnutrition, disease,



Every Somali child has a right to be protected from armed conflict. © UNICEF Somalia/2007/Kamber

psychological distress and lost education.

Violence in Somalia – in its various manifestations – poses the following critical challenges to the country's progress in achieving MDGs:

Conflict and violence deplete the physical, economic and human resources and threaten child survival. These factors

endanger the progress towards the goals to **eradicate extreme poverty and hunger** and to **reduce child mortality**. One child in six under five years of age in Somalia suffers from acute malnutrition and one in seven will die before reaching the age of five. Violence, conflict and displacement are contributing to these alarming statistics.

In addition to various factors linked to underdevelopment, progress towards the goal to **achieve universal primary education** has been undermined by the presence of armed conflict and the lack of respect for international humanitarian law. 144 schools were closed in five districts of Mogadishu as they were attacked or risked attack while surrounding areas were militarized.

34 schools in Mogadishu were occupied by armed groups. As a result, 50,000 children were forced to abandon their studies. The goals to **promote gender equality and empower women** and to **improve maternal health** have been challenged by early marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting and sexual violence.

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A former child soldier tells his story

Omar's mother abandoned him at a tender age of two years and left the country and his father, a truck driver, died in 2000. He lived with his aunt in the capital, Mogadishu, although she herself lived in poverty and could not afford to send him to school. He earned money shining shoes on the streets of war-torn Mogadishu. During this time, he chewed khat (a narcotic leaf) and sniffed glue to help him to numb feelings of hopelessness, isolation and fear. Desperate, hungry and addicted to khat and glue, he joined clan militia in 2006. "What other options did I have?" he asked himself rhetorically.

He learned how to operate small arms and was deployed to the front line to participate in armed combat. After four months, he left Mogadishu and went to Lower Shabelle where he was recruited into the police. Fortunately, Omar was discovered by a UNICEF-supported child protection agency and was assisted by a psychosocial worker to put down his gun. However, put-

ting the past behind him was a challenge. "I killed many people in Mogadishu, and destroyed many things" he explained.

"I will be hunted and killed if I do not have a gun to protect myself". Omar went to school for the first time and lived with his family. The psychosocial worker, trained to support children and families to cope with the devastation of war, helped Omar and his family. After six months in school, the fear of being killed gradually diminished and -

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One out of seven Somali children will die before reaching the age of five...

Strengthening communities for social transformation

There are many approaches used to support development and positive social change in African communities. Molly Melching has developed innovative approaches that empower communities to decide how they wish to develop and equips them with the tools required to manage change. She is the Founder and Director of Tostan, a community-led development NGO based in Dakar, Senegal, with operations in African countries, including Somalia where it is a UNICEF partner. Below is an interview with her.

How does change “happen” in African communities? First, let me tell you how I think change does not happen. It does not happen by outsiders dictating to rural communities what their future should look like. It does not happen by criticizing communities or imposing outside belief systems on them.

So how can positive social change be promoted? Throughout the 34 years I have spent in Africa, I have constantly asked myself this question. I am convinced that this answer is knowledge. I have consistently found that people in rural communities are hungry for information and knowledge available in their own languages. Tostan emphasizes knowledge in its Community Empowerment Programme, a 30-month programme consisting of over 200 sessions on democracy, human rights, problem-solving, hygiene, health, literacy, and management skills.

How is this different from other community development approaches? The Community Empowerment Program helps people to decide what they want for the future. Tostan does not dictate to communities the goals that they should be striving towards. We use methods that emphasize the value of African traditions, including theater, storytelling, dance, artwork, song, debate, and the sharing of personal experience. This places communities at the centre of the change process. They are not beneficiaries. They become empowered agents of change.

What kinds of social change does this programme contribute to? We saw an amazing example in Senegal recently. As villagers advanced through the programme, they became aware of their human rights. As they became aware of their human rights, they realized perhaps for the first time that they had choices. They no longer needed to accept things as they were. When a woman was beaten by her husband, the participants decided to address the issue of violence in their community.

Collectively, they said “no” to violence by peacefully marching through their village, singing for peace and dialogue and sharing this announcement with their neighbours. What a tremendously powerful statement! After this event, people’s perceptions changed. This is positive social change.

Tostan is now working in Somalia. Can this approach work on the other side of the continent from Senegal where it was developed?

I believe that this model can be applied to all cultures. The programme uses the framework of human rights to allow participants to address their own issues. We also provide

needed information in national languages on hygiene, health and management skills.

How did Tostan start working in Somalia? I was participating in a seminar on female genital cutting in 2004. UNICEF invited me to come to Somalia to undertake workshops in Somalia to explain our approach to development. We received a very positive response from Somalis and, in 2005 we started implementing the Community Empowerment Programme in 42 communities in Somalia in partnership with UNICEF.

What is Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)

I use the term Female Genital Cutting (FGC) to describe this practice, which involves cutting away part or all of a girl’s external genitalia. It is practiced among communities in and from Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

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Molly (centre, back row) with colleagues involved with Tostan’s work in Somalia. © 12-08/Tostan

Stop violence against children in Somalia

From Page 1

98% of Somali girls have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, from which they will experience health consequences throughout their lifetimes.

In normal situations, healthcare and education systems work hand in hand to keep children healthy through health information and medical care. However, years of conflict in Somalia have devastated health and education infrastructures, posing significant challenges to the goal to **combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases**. The objective to **ensure environmental sustainability** has been threatened by decades of armed conflict in Somalia, preventing any official response to environmental challenges. These include chronic drought, deforestation by charcoal-burners, overgrazing by nomadic herders, soil erosion and desertification and over-fishing by foreign fleets using seine nets. The opening lines of the 2006 UN study on violence against children remind us that “no violence against children is justifiable”.

This issue of *Caruurteena* (“our children” in Somali) highlights the unjustifiable violence faced by children in Somalia. It also provides a window into the progress made by UNICEF, Somali authorities, international donors, non-governmental partners and Somali civil society to address violence against children in spite of extraordinary challenges. The UN study goes on to declare that “every society, no matter its cultural, economic or social background, can and must stop violence against children.” This issue of *Caruurteena* aims to amplify this call so that it may be heard – and responded to – by concerned citizens of Somalia and the world.

Communities are being empowered to see benefits of ending FGM/C...

Traditional leaders tackle youth violence in Hargeisa

Ahmed is 17 years old. His father died and his mother supports him and his three siblings by selling milk at the market. Ahmed has a history of coming into conflict with the law from time to time. A community leader, Ms. Muna, who is also a member of the child protection committee, feels that “problems such as these are a result of lack of parental supervision. Children and young people need guidance.”

Ahmed is a member of a sports team called the “Rangers”. They often compete with another sports team, “Fire”. Problems started one day when each one of the two groups wanted to play soccer on the playground in the Sheik Nur IDP settlement area in Hargeisa, Somaliland. A dispute led to fighting and a youth from the Rangers group was wounded. The youth were separated by the community leaders and police. At this point the groups began to resemble gangs. The next day, in order to avenge their wounded member, the Rangers attacked Fire. Ali, a 16-year old member of the Fire group was attacked with a knife. He was severely wounded on the arms and the head. He was hospitalized and required a blood transfusion. The police arrested six youths but two of the youths escaped.

At this point, traditional leaders intervened. After studying the facts of the case, they made arrangements with the head of the Sheik Nur police station to have the case resolved through traditional means. They evaluated the wounds of the injured youths and ruled on *badhigooyo* an initial payment designed to

cover the medical costs of the injured person. The perpetrators stayed in police custody for three weeks, while the injured boy recovered from his wounds. Afterward, the elders engaged in mediation to settle the dispute, using clan/family customary law, *xeer* (pronounced “hair”). Through this process, the child offenders were made to feel remorse for their misconduct and to accept responsibility for the harm they caused. Through the mediation process, Ahmed came to regret the troubles he caused, particularly to his family. “I don’t want to cause more problems for my mother” he said with a degree of remorse. “She works hard to raise me and my sisters and brother. I want to follow her advice and go back to school.”

Meanwhile, the traditional elders continue their work of mediating and resolving confrontations through traditional methods. One of them spoke about their work on behalf of children in conflict with the law. “Some young people from our community have gone to Mandhera prison and other prisons for their misdeeds. This only makes the young men more difficult to deal with once they leave prison and come back. We try to mediate the cases so they do not go to prison and to maintain the peace”, said Aqil (Chief) Ali Jama.

In partnership with the United Nations Development Programme and the Somaliland Ministry of Justice, UNICEF supports child friendly procedures in formal and traditional justice.

Strengthening communities for social transformation

From Page 2

Between 100 and 140 million girls in the world today have gone through this procedure. In Somalia, approximately 98% of girls have undergone this practice.

That is a very troubling statistic. What are the effects of FGM/C on these girls? Girls and women who have undergone this practice could face lifelong health risks, including pain, bleeding, infections and psychological problems. FGC also increases health risks to mother and child during childbirth. It is often practiced with unclean instruments far from health facilities.

Why does this practice continue in Somalia and other countries if it so harmful? There is great social pressure on families in Somalia to continue with this practice. It has a long history in Somali culture and tradition. Many families fear that they will be stigmatized and rejected by their communities if they decide to abandon this practice. It is believed that if a girl is not cut, she will not have the opportunity to marry. Many Somali mothers and grandmothers feel that they have no choice but to have their daughters and grand-daughters cut.

What is Tostan’s approach to FGM/C? We use a respectful approach that allows villagers to make their own conclusions about FGC and to lead their own movements for change. We empower villagers with human rights knowledge and good information and then they decide what the most positive future is for their communities.

Tostan program places villagers in charge of decisions regarding the practice. Change must come from within.

Has the Community Empowerment Program led to abandonment of FGM/C by communities? In Senegal and Guinea, it has led to large scale abandonment of the practice. As community members learn about their human rights, they naturally start questioning practices that do not help them to achieve their goals. If a community decides to abandon this practice, it needs to be a collective decision. One individual alone can not abandon this practice without risking rejection or loss of marriage opportunities. What we usually see is one entire village deciding to abandon this practice. That village then reaches out to neighboring villages where they have relatives to share the lessons they have learned.

How do neighboring villages respond? Do they resist this challenge to their cherished traditions? Attacking traditions does not work. It is disrespectful and, generally speaking, ineffective. If villagers wish to take up this issue and discuss it with their relatives, it is most effectively discussed in the framework of a positive movement of health and well-being rather than an attack on tradition. This way of approaching FGC, or any traditional practice that has harmful consequences, can produce very good results.

Molly, how did you get involved with community development work? I came to Senegal 34 years ago to study at the University of Dakar. I was interested in working with children. I noticed that they were not using their traditions or own language. Learning was dull and seemed separate from their lives. I started a children’s centre, using African stories. This learning approach was successful so I took this out to rural communities. My experiences in rural communities helped me to develop the methodology used by Tostan.

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Traditional leaders resolved a case involving violence between youth...

Police officer speaks on her role protecting children and women in Hargeisa

Amal (pictured right) is a 29 year old woman who works in the women and children's desk at Central Police Station in Hargeisa. She spoke to UNICEF about her work.

When did you join the police force and why did you choose to work at the women and children's desk at the Central Police Station in Hargeisa?

I joined the police force in 2000. I chose to work in the women and children's desk because I had come into contact with many children and women who had been victimized by violence and abuse. I wanted to help.

Do you have any specific training on justice for children?

Yes. I was trained by UNICEF at the police academy in Mandhera in 2006. We learned about child rights and the importance of listening to the opinions of the children.

Do you see many cases of violence against women and children?

Unfortunately, yes.

What kinds of cases are the most common?

Rape is by far the most common crime that we see committed against women and children in Somaliland.

How do you assist women and children affected by rape?

I take a detailed report, which will be used in legal proceedings. I also try to be supportive of

these women and children and try to help them not to lose hope. In our culture, there is a lot of stigma attached to this issue. Many women and children fear rejection by their communities. I also refer them to medical and psychosocial services in the community, including HIV testing.

Why are there so many incidents of rape?

Many of these cases are linked to substance use. Perpetrators are often intoxicated on khat (a narcotic leaf), alcohol or hashish at the time of the incident. High unemployment and displacement due to the conflict in Somalia also play a role.

What other issues do you deal with?

There is a growing problem of street children in Hargeisa. Street children can be both victims and perpetrators of crimes. Some street children chew khat, drink alcohol and sniff glue. When they are under the influence of substances they may initiate violence and they can become easy prey to violators. They are also hit by cars while in this state. There are cases of these children that have been raped by older men at night.

Why are these children on the streets?

Some are on the streets because they are orphans or have their parents separated and have no-one to care for them. Others talk of abuse at home, or say that they prefer to live "free" on the streets.



Amal at work at her desk in Hargeisa. © UNICEF Somalia/2008

Regardless of their reasons for ending up on the streets of Hargeisa, all of these children are vulnerable, especially to substance use and sexual exploitation and abuse.

Are there many female police officers?

No. We are only six in this office.

Why?

There is a perception that policing is a male role. This results in fewer women having the opportunity to enter the police force. This is slowly changing, as women are seen by fellow police and community members performing well on the job.

I am sure you are an inspiration to girls considering a career in the police force.

I certainly hope so.

A former child soldier tells his story

From Page 1

he freed himself from his dependencies to glue and khat. Omar, now 14 years old, is one of the lucky ones. An estimated 200,000 children have been associated with an armed group in Somalia since the 1991 collapse of central government. Recruitment into armed groups has exposed them to significant risks of long-term injuries and disabilities, death, family separation, lost education and psychological distress.

Use of children as soldiers is in direct contradiction of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Geneva Protocols, and other international human rights laws. It is also in contradiction to the Paris Commitments to protect children from unlawful recruitment, signed by 59 states, including Somalia, in Paris in 2007.



Child soldier in Somalia in early 90s. © UNICEF HQ96-1518

UNICEF and partners are working with community, religious, military and government leaders to campaign for the protection of children from participation in armed conflict.

Strengthening communities

From Page 3

What are some of the challenges in your work? Sometimes people don't understand our approach. They do not realize that a good longer term education programme is essential if one is to have sustainable development. However, once people begin to participate in the process, they can see the value of the community empowerment approach. They see how it can change lives for the better.

What motivates you to continue with this work? I love working with people who are excited to learn, grow and evolve. For the first time, people find they have choices. They know their human rights. Tostan means "breakthrough" in the West African language of Wolof. Being a part of these breakthroughs is the greatest reward I could hope for.

For more information on Tostan, visit www.tostan.org

Advocacy initiatives against corporal punishment in Puntland

“Children need to be beaten to learn.”
 “Corporal punishment prevents misbehaviour.”
 “Teachers have the right to hit children to protect themselves.”
 “Children who misbehave deserve to be hit.”
 “If corporal punishment was banned, the school would be in chaos.”

The above are some of the misconceptions used to defend corporal punishment. However, the reality is that corporal punishment - defined as “the intentional infliction of pain or discomfort and/or use of physical force upon a student in order to stop or change behavior” - hurts children. It increases learning problems and decreases children’s ability to concentrate and remember. In severe cases, students subjected to corporal punishment exhibit symptoms of psychological distress and develop a fear of going to school. Exposure to violence in schools teaches children to be violent themselves. Schools have an important role in defending the right of children to be protected from violence.

In Somalia, corporal punishment is commonplace and is considered by many an acceptable means of disciplining children. Students have complained of being beaten with sticks or electric wires, leaving bruises on their bodies, and punitive physical exercise for several hours under the hot sun. Teachers – many of whom were themselves disciplined through corporal punishment as children - claim that children learn more effectively when they fear physical punishment.

However, attitudes are starting to change thanks to advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns. UNICEF works with the Puntland Ministry of Education and local advocacy partner, KAALO Relief and Development, in Puntland to address the issue of corporal punishment. UNICEF’s approach is to change attitudes through information and discussion, targeting one teacher at a time. Teachers are sensitized on child psychology, human rights law, and linkages between Islam and child protection. They come to understand the negative effects of corporal punishment on children and develop a stronger sense of their crucial role in protecting children. Since the beginning of the advocacy initiative in 2006, more than 2,500 teachers, school principals, parents and community education committees have been targeted with workshops, discussion fora and media campaigns. The campaign has been successful in changing attitudes towards corporal punishment by promoting the right of children to be protected from violence and to support alternative, non-violent means of discipline.

As a result of this advocacy initiative, the Puntland Ministry of Education issued a decree abolishing corporal punishment and more than 42 schools in Puntland declared that they have abandoned this practice. In these schools, drop-out rates diminished, enrolment rates increased and students described an environment that was more conducive to learning. “Alternatives to Corporal Punishment” guidelines were developed by the Puntland Ministry of Education in collaboration with KAALO, to ensure teachers have tools to provide a safe and structured environment for children. During one of the sessions, Mr. Ali, a primary school teacher said “For many years I used corporal punishment as the only means of discipline for my pupils; I recall many children used to skip my classes and some of them dropped out of school as a result of corporal punishment. However, since it was banned in our school, I feel the relationship between children and teachers has improved and students are more passionate about their studies.”

*Alternatives to corporal punishment: 10 principles for ‘discipline with care’

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| <p>1. Communicate with children to develop a trusting relationship. This includes listening. Let them know that you care. This can frequently improve behavior.</p> | <p>5. Use negative reinforcement for misbehavior by temporarily taking away something enjoyable (e.g. not allowing the child to go out to play on one occasion).</p> | <p>nones rules (e.g. by hitting another child), he/she should go to the time-out space for five minutes. After the child returns, reinforce positive behavior by acknowledging that he/she is now behaving well and respecting his/her classmates.</p> |
| <p>2. Establish clear rules. Try to state them positively (e.g. instead of “don’t slam the door, say “close the door quietly”). Provide positive reinforcement to children who follow the rules.</p> | <p>6. Provide consequences for breaking rules. These should be appropriate and aimed at teaching the child responsibility rather than humiliating him/her (e.g. if a child throws rubbish on the floor, he/she should clean the floor).</p> | <p>9. Learn about referral resources in your community (e.g. counseling, medical care, etc.). You will be prepared to refer children if needed.</p> |
| <p>3. All attention is a reward. Try to only reward positive behavior with your attention.</p> | <p>7. Promote “extinction” of poor behavior by ignoring it (as long as the behavior is not hurting anyone or causing a disruption).</p> | <p>10. Be a good role model!</p> |
| <p>4. Provide positive reinforcement by rewarding good behavior (e.g. with a smile or a compliment).</p> | <p>8. Create a “time-out” space in the side or back of the classroom. If a child ig-</p> | <p><i>*Adopted from ‘Discipline with Care Alternatives to Corporal Punishment Part 2, A Guide for Principals, Teachers, Learners, Parents and Communities, the Ministry of Education and Culture, Republic of Namibia.’</i></p> |



Participants at a past workshop on child protection organized by a UNICEF partner ngo, KAALO.
 © UNICEF Somalia-Kaalo/2006

The Puntland Ministry of Education has abolished corporal punishment...

Speaking out against the 'painful journey' of female genital mutilation/cutting

As the world reads about problems of conflict and violence in Somalia, a remarkable woman, Shamis, who will be 70 next year, is working to spread peace through education.

In her village of Arabsiyo, Somaliland, Shamis is well-known. She is described by community members as dynamic, humble, open, and always available to help others. She became involved in community education while working as a birthing attendant.

She witnessed the extraordinary pain experienced by women who had undergone female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) while giving birth. She decided to take a stand against FGM/C and started raising awareness of the risks and dangers of the practice.

Shamis urged women to remember "the painful journey you've had in your life," speaking of FGM/C and the resulting pain during childbirth, and to "keep these pains from your daughters". Using her own financial means, she organized women and funded activities for the promotion of the abandonment of FGM/C and child/forced marriage.

Shamis welcomed the UNICEF/Tostan Community Empowerment programme to the village of Arabsiyo with open arms.

She saw it as an opportunity to collaborate and further spread information about women's and children's rights. She was chosen as the Coordinator of the Arabsiyo Community Management Committee (CMC), a committee established in each village to oversee the community empowerment process and to coordinate community activities linked to information learned in class sessions.

Shamis quickly proved to be one of the most active and effective CMC leaders in Somaliland.

Under her leadership and after learning about human rights and the risks involved in undergoing FGM/C, 40 participants from the Arabsiyo class visited eight neighbouring communities to exchange and discuss what they'd learned about FGM/C.

Shamis also participated in an inter-village meeting to promote FGM/C abandonment in surrounding communities. She spoke publicly of men's responsibilities to help end FGM/C on June 25 2008, at an event in the town of Mohamed Mogge.

She told the large crowd that by refusing to marry women who have not been cut, men play a strong role in the perpetuation of FGM/C as a social convention.

She reached out to men in the audience to show their respect for human dignity and women's rights by standing up as fathers, husbands, and brothers and refusing to accept the practice. Her speech was met with enthusiastic applause from men and women alike.

Another example of initiatives taken under Shamis's leadership can be seen in four women who are candidates in the upcoming election for seats in the National Assembly. Previously, women did not realize they had the right to run for office.

They credit the Community Empowerment Programme sessions for making them aware of their right to vote and be elected, and explain that if they weren't running for office, they

would be neglecting their responsibility to put into action what they've learned.



Shamis speaks to participants at an advocacy forum against FGM/C in Arabsiyo. © 12-08/Tostan

"If we don't actually dare to run for office, we will not be applying this important information from our new education sessions on democracy." Shamis was the first to encourage them to run on a platform promoting the improvement of community health and education in Arabsiyo.

Shamis also encourages the younger participants to be proactive and share their new information with others.

One young man says that before the Community Empowerment Programme, he had never learned about democracy and human rights, but now he believes that awareness of human rights can lead to an end to violence and contribute to building peace. He therefore plans on starting a Community Empowerment class for other students at his high school with support from Shamis.

Shamis's motivation is contagious.

With the help of Tostan, UNICEF, and the Government of Somaliland, she has succeeded in mobilizing hundreds of people for the campaign to raise awareness of human rights, but she knows there is still much work to be done.

Her aspirations for the years to come are to reduce the illiteracy rate in her community, to continue to encourage women to participate actively in decision-making processes, to improve women and children's health and to promote sustainable development.

With her courage and boundless energy, Shamis is an inspiration to girls and women throughout the world who seek to make a difference.

Shamis has mobilized hundreds of people to raise awareness of human rights...

Talking to children about landmines saves lives

Two children, Issa and Faduma, escaped from the fighting in their home city, Mogadishu. They came with their families to Raage camp for internally displaced persons, along the Afgooye corridor, outside of Mogadishu. They joined the 400,000 other people displaced by armed conflict in Mogadishu, dependent on humanitarian aid for survival.

Both children remember the day they were playing in Mogadishu and accidentally triggered a landmine. Issa seriously injured his hand. Faduma lost her eye.

Unlike other weapons of war, landmines and UXOs are unique in that their power to injure and kill is indiscriminate, and long outlasts the duration of the conflict in which they were used. They continue to pose dangers for generations of civilians, especially children. Landmines remain hidden in fields, by roads, behind schools and in the desert, until someone accidentally detonates a deadly explosion, or a child finds and plays with an unexploded mortar.

Faisa is one of many UNICEF-supported child protection advocates who visit communities, sensitizes them on children's rights and assists them to identify strategies for making their communities safer for children. She is careful, during her work, to listen to communities to identify those issues that they feel are priorities. During the course of her work along the Afgooye corridor, she met Issa and Faduma as well as other members of the displaced community. Acknowledging the high levels of mine/UXO contamination in the area, the displaced community decided that this issue needed to be addressed.

Trained in child protection, Faisa was able to bring together children and adults in the community to inform them. She used pictures and other materials supplied by UNDP Mine Action to demonstrate how to spots signs of landmines and UXOs. She

explained to them what they should do if they see a suspicious object and how to avoid triggering a potentially lethal explosion. Given the specific vulnerability of children to mines and UXOs, who are often tempted to play with shiny metal objects, she made a specific effort to target children with life-saving information by organizing discussion groups in temporary schools for displaced children.

Landmines and UXOs violate nearly all the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC): a child's right to life, to a safe environment in which to play, to health, clean water, sanitary conditions and adequate education. By mobilizing around this issue, communities in the Afgooye corridor played a key role in protecting and promoting the rights of children.

Following Faisa's departure from this community, displaced families continued to discuss what they had learned. Indeed, the most critical element of communication for behavior change is that which happens among community members themselves. So, throughout the days and weeks that followed they continued to discuss landmines and UXOs - while preparing meals, washing clothes, walking to school. These discussions will go a long way to help protect children in this displaced community from suffering the ordeal faced by Issa and Faduma.

Definitions

A **land mine** is an **explosive** device designed to be placed on or in the ground to explode when triggered by an operator or by a passing vehicle, person, or animal.

Unexploded ordnance (UXO) are explosive **weapons** that did not **explode** when they were employed and still pose a risk of **detonation**, potentially many decades after they were used or discarded.



Unexploded ordinance recovered in Gedo, Somalia (left) and a stockpile of mines and UXOs in Hiraan, Somalia © UNDP /SRSA

Names of children used in this bulletin have been changed to protect them.

For more information on our programming or to learn how you can help, please contact us at:

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