

Carruurteenna "our children"

UNICEF Somalia Newsletter

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UNICEF working with Somalis to provide safe water

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UNICEF's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programme works with Somali people and emerging local authorities to increase access to safe water and sanitation. As the stories in this edition of "Carruurteenna" show, there have been considerable successes in the development and governance of water systems through Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) as well as rehabilitation of key water supplies in the most vulnerable villages and towns in the country. Since 2008 UNICEF has helped provide water to more than 1.6M people in Somalia. This makes huge differences to the lives of women and children in Somalia. Better access to water, sanitation and hygiene can change lives and provide opportunities because the reduced burden of fetching water means girls are free to attend school. It can raise families out of poverty through better health and productivity for women in the family and most of all it can save lives through reduced diarrhoeal disease.

Despite the continuous challenges of insecurity and risk in Central South So-

malia the resilience of communities has enabled UNICEF to find partners to work with and complete projects such as the Merka Water Supply. Ongoing emergency water and sanitation interventions for displaced populations in the Afgooye Corridor to the west of Mogadishu and elsewhere in the country ensure basic services for these vulnerable groups. Prepositioning of emergency supplies and training of technical teams mean that a quick response can be provided in case of new emergencies.

However, Somalia is one of the most technically challenging countries to provide water and sanitation services due to diminishing water resources and recurrent drought. In rural areas depletion of resources and conflict restrict access to water for livestock and hence erode the quality of livelihoods and coping strategies. Ground water levels are dropping making it difficult to find adequate water sources for expanding urban populations. At the same time maintaining pumped water schemes with the limited supply of spare parts and fuel is a challenge even for the private sector partners that UNICEF is working with. This has led UNICEF to pilot innovative technologies that

are more environmentally appropriate such as solar and wind power with a grant from European Union to construct 15 new water supplies in Northwest Somalia ("Somaliland") and Northeast Somalia ("Puntland"). UNICEF is also partnering with Somalia Water and Land Information Management (SWALIM) unit to improve monitoring of water sources and mapping of water resources to provide information for strategic planning of water development.

In the new 2010-2013 programme UNICEF will increase integration of WASH interventions with health and nutrition activities to produce more consolidated results for women and children.

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Visiting Somalia, UNICEF Regional Director notes progress made on safe water

Bossaso, a busy port town on the northern coast of Somalia, is an economic hub in the semi-autonomous Northeast Somalia ("Puntland") region. Tens of thousands of Somalia's estimated 1.5 million internally displaced people live here, shielded from the intense heat only by cardboard and bits of rags.

Despite the poor living conditions, newly-displaced people continue to arrive every day, fleeing the conflict in central and southern parts of Somalia. Here in Bossaso, they find relative peace and occasional job opportunities. While their hardships were once compounded by a widespread lack of safe drinking water, a water extension project – supported by UNICEF and the European Union (EU) – is now helping the camps' residents access safe water more easily. During a visit to Bossaso earlier this year, UNICEF Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa Elhadj As Sy inaugurated the new water supply system, which was initiated in 2008 at the onset of the UNICEF/EU project. "Water is the main source of life, but it can also be a source of disease," said Mr. As Sy.

"So it is vitally important that families have access to safe water." On a nearby hillside stood a brand new 1,000 cubic metre water tank, along with part of a seven km pipeline. The extension to the town's water system connects an additional 87,000 people, or 65 percent of the town's population, to a safe drinking water supply. The water system is maintained through an innovative partnership, in which local authorities, the community and the private sector all work together. A water board provides management of the water system. It also establishes affordable water rates, adds household connections, and ensures that water collection points are operated and maintained efficiently. Water is free to public institutions such as schools, hospitals and mosques. [Contd on Page 2](#)



From left, UNICEF Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa, Elhadj As Sy, UNICEF Representative in Somalia, Rozanne Chorlton, and the President of Somalia's Puntland region, H.E. Dr. Abdirahman Mohamed Farole, inaugurate a new water system in Bossaso. © UNICEF/2010/Li

The new Bossaso project connects an additional 87,000 people with safe water...

Implementation of Merka water project provides valuable insights

The Merka Water Project which was commissioned in March 2010 is providing safe water to an additional 31,500 people in the town of 60,000 people.

Merka, the regional capital of Lower Shabelle, is situated 90 km south of Mogadishu along the Indian Ocean coastline. Prior to implementation of the Merka Water Project, the town was served by shallow wells and there was a perennial water shortage in the town. This was compounded by surface contamination from seepages through the highly porous sand formations resulting in chronic outbreaks of diarrhoea and cholera. Given the dire situation, members of the local community in Merka as well as the local authorities asked UNICEF to assist them in the construction of an alternative water supply to alleviate shortages and provide safe drinking water.

Following an assessment in 2002, UNICEF recommended the drilling of boreholes and then piping the water to the town and providing it through water kiosks. The project needed a lot of funds and could not be carried out in one phase since the funding available then was only enough to drill two boreholes, a pipeline and pumping house.

Additionally, Lower Shabelle and Merka town are in a part of Somalia frequently engulfed in intermittent conflict and could only be accessible to UNICEF staff for short periods. Owing to the conflict in Lower Shabelle, Merka was not accessible from 2005 until late 2006 and it was not possible to proceed to implement further construction works as well as build local capacity for the project's management. The displacement following the conflict in Mogadishu between the then Islamic Courts Union (ICU) and Transition Federal Government (TFG) troops in 2006 resulted in an influx of internally displaced people into Merka. Central Southern Somalia however experienced a period of relative calm in the second half of 2006 which provided UNICEF with a window to respond to the influx into Merka.

This was done through rehabilitating wells, carrying out social mobilization for hygiene promotion and chlorination of water

sources amongst other activities. The increased population worsened the shortage of water and UNICEF re-negotiated with the new local administration to support implementation of the Merka Water Project. There was need to establish a management board to negotiate with different groups to ensure acceptance of the service. Members of the board had earlier been identified and trained in an earlier phase of the project. A Public Private Partnership was suggested as the best management option to bring together communities, businesses, local authorities and other stakeholders.

UNICEF then worked with all the stakeholders to ensure that the number and membership was adjusted in line with Public Private Partnership practice. This provided representation from all communities and groups in Merka and Lower Shabelle Region bringing a sense of ownership and the resolve to support and protect the process from external interference. The reconstituted Merka Water Board was subsequently given the mandate to oversee the implementation of the water project.

In 2008, a new administration took control in Merka and Lower Shabelle and, due to insecurity, all UNICEF local staff were relocated. This curtailed the direct technical support provided by the staff on the ground. Despite this, the Public Private Partnership was able to mobilise continued support for the project and ensure its completion. The importance of community buy-in to the project was clearly demonstrated and proved to be one of the key lessons learned. Widely accepted partners are able to negotiate for access and support of the project as well as resolve problems that arise. Involving local stakeholders brings a sense of ownership and high degree of participation by the communities. Another lesson learned during the Merka Water Project was the importance of meeting the information needs of the community. Doing so helped to ensure their support and contributed to the success of the project. The role of the Merka Water Board in monitoring and reporting the progress of the project was also crucial in this regard. By explaining each phase of the three phases of project implementation to local administration officials, the Board reduced the likelihood of conflict or misunderstanding.

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"It is encouraging to see that when government leadership, community engagement, and support from the international community come together, we can ensure access to social services even under very difficult circumstances," said Mr. As Sy. "The water project is just one example of what we can achieve together."

During his visit, Mr. As Sy met with children, families and representatives of some institutions benefitting from the water project. At one primary school, Mr. As Sy heard children's poems on the role of mothers in development, and their call for support for women and girls.

With current school enrolment at less than 40 per cent, most children in Puntland – especially girls – are at risk of growing up illiterate. UNICEF supports hundreds of primary schools across the region in an effort to ensure that all children receive a basic education. The Regional Director also toured an outpatient therapeutic centre, located in a displaced persons camp known as '100 Bush,'. To address the most critical needs here, UNICEF launched a community-based project in 2008 to care for children suffering from severe acute malnutrition – particularly

those in the camps.

Today the project works to refer malnourished children to either outpatient therapeutic care programmes or the stabilization centre in Bossaso hospital. Ready-to-use food such as Plumpy'nut, a nutrient-rich peanut paste, has been given to thousands of children. Thanks to these combined interventions, malnutrition rates for children in Bossaso's displacement camps have decreased significantly.

Mr. As Sy noted that, in the face of these and many other challenges, the Somali people continue to press on. "It has been a humbling experience to see how resilient people can be in such a difficult environment," he said and appreciated "How mothers always try to find the best possible way to feed their children, take care of them, and send them to school." "Despite these successes, however, we are faced with great challenges when it comes to providing basic infrastructure to the growing number of displaced people," Mr. As Sy said. "All of this calls for us to influence policies, to create an enabling and peaceful environment...to care for the most vulnerable women and children in Somalia."

The setting up of the Merka Water Board was crucial to the project's success...

“Once the water system became operational again, I went back to school”

“UNICEF has made me realize my dream of going back to school by helping to restore the water supply in our village,” says 13-year-old Asha, who lives in Qunujeed, Northwest Somalia (“Somaliland”).

Qunujeed is a small village located in the Awdal region about 60 km west of Borama town, close to the border with Ethiopia. It is inhabited by about 300 agro-pastoralist families.

In previous times, Qunujeed was one of the few villages that had its own mini water system comprising a bore-hole, a water storage tank, a pipeline and tap outlets for water supply. This system was constructed in 1996 by an international aid agency with contributions from the local communities. However, in 2006, the system broke down and could no longer provide safe water to the families of the village. The failure of the water system was a great setback and significantly affected the community in many respects, even causing almost one third of the families in the village (those who could afford it) to move away to other villages and towns, seeking better access to clean water.

As a result of the bad water supply situation, the community’s elders appealed to UNICEF to support the rehabilitation of their water system. In 2008, UNICEF in collaboration with the Somaliland Ministry of Water and Mineral Resources, provided a new pump and other supplies for the rehabilitation of the water system. The new submersible pump is easier to maintain than the previous one (called a “mono-lift” pump), which required a lot of spare parts, many of which were not available locally.

The rehabilitated source has had a profound effect with people now able to access a reliable source of clean water and the near-abandoned village is being repopulated.

UNICEF staff members who recently visited Qunujeed to evaluate the project, received plenty of positive feedback during discussions and interviews with various community groups including children, women and workers involved in management the water supply system.

Villagers Hassan Jama and Mohamed Haddi recounted the difficulties the community experienced as a result of the water shortages before the system was rehabilitated. Said Hassan, “We used to fetch water from the shallow wells at Aw Buube. We would start the walk with our donkeys at about 5 am just after morning prayers and we would cover a distance of about 10 kms to Aw Buube. On getting there, we encountered difficulties in drawing the water and it was a struggle to fill our jerry cans using buckets and ropes. The shortest time it would take for a journey to and from drawing water would be about four hours, but for most people, it took much longer”.

Added Mohamed: “Water from Aw Buube was of poor quality and was contaminated, it smelt bad, it was discol-

oured and it caused endless diarrhoea to our children. There was never enough water in any household and we always had a domestic water crisis”.

Asha also shared her story of the profound difference the



A water connection serving a beneficiary in Northwest Somalia. The lives of villagers in Qunujeed have taken a turn for the better after UNICEF revived their water system. © UNICEF/2010/Imrooka

new water system made in her life. As the eldest of four children Asha told how she had to drop out of her second year of school in order to help at home as her mother fetched water when the old water system failed. “I would have been in class four by now if our water supply system hadn’t broken down but I am a class two student now.” Asha explained that since her father had died, her mother had to provide for four children and did so by running a tea shop. When the water system first broke down, her mother closed the tea shop for three days hoping that it would soon be repaired. However, when it remained out of operation she had to find a way to earn money and look after her children.

One night, as the family prepared for bed, she summoned Asha and told her that she was planning to re-open the tea shop and that each morning she would join other villagers and make the long trek to fetch water. Asha then learned that as a result she would have to leave school to help her mother in the tea shop and look after her siblings. Asha said she cried on hearing the news even though her mother assured her she could return to school if the water problem was ever solved.

Asha said she prayed every morning and evening for the water system to be fixed. Two years later her prayers were answered. Asha described the day the system became operational again as the happiest in her life. Her mother kept her promise and Asha is now back in school to continue her learning. The rehabilitated water system means life has changed for the better for the entire community in Qunujeed village and long journeys to fetch safe water are now a thing of the past.

Solar-powered water supply to the rescue

A solar-based water supply system is giving Haraf village residents a reason for joy having previously depended on a hand-dug well for their needs.

Haraf is located six kilometers west of Hargeisa city and has an approximate population of 3,000 people. Members of the community are small-scale agriculturalists with most families having small irrigated holdings in which they grow cash crops that they sell to the markets in Hargeisa town as their main source of livelihood. Hargeisa is the capital of Northwest Somalia ("Somaliland").



Members of the community in Haraf drawing water from one of the waterpoints supplied through the solar-powered system. © UNICEF/2010/NWZOffice

During the visit by UNICEF staff, they encountered some members of women's groups cleaning the area around some water kiosks serving the system. They too expressed appreciation for the new system with one who gave her name as Fatima saying it had played a great role in improving their lives. Hygiene promotion, social mobilization and community awareness raising interventions supported by UNICEF were undertaken during and after the construction of the water system.

The community in Haraf has always depended on water from what was initially a hand-dug well. The well was initially equipped with a hand-pump that was installed through funding and supplies from UNICEF in 1983 and for many years, this remained the only clean and reliable source of water for the village. Over the years UNICEF rehabilitated and equipped the well with a new hand pump by

However, as the village population increased and the water table decreased (with the well drying up on occasion) the well was not able to supply enough water to meet the needs of the population. In response, UNICEF facilitated the digging of a deeper well equipped with a solar-powered pump. The UN agency also supported the construction of a 25 cubic metres water tank; a 1.5 km pipeline and two water kiosks. The water system was also extended to a nearby primary school, providing safe water to schoolchildren.

Almost three years since the completion of the water, sanitation and hygiene project in Haraf, UNICEF staff who included the UNICEF Somalia Representative, Rozanne Chorlton, paid a visit to the village and had a chance to review its progress.

Expressing the community's appreciation, one of its elders identified as Essa who was also the caretaker of the previous hand-pump water supply system said though it had taken many years for the community to have adequate water supplies, they were ultimately grateful for UNICEF's support. He said the fact that the solar-system did not require the community to incur any operational costs was a major blessing.

"We had many problems with the hand-pump system. It had been affected by wear and tear and we had to repair it every so often. In addition there was the difficulty of getting spare parts for it. Now the situation is better," Mr Essa said, adding that women and children are happy with the system which is providing them with enough water closer to their homes through the piped water network."

Another elder in the community, Abdi Khayre, who is a member of the village committee said he was proud of the fact that the panels for the solar pump had been erected on his farm. "It gives me the opportunity to contribute to the well-being of my community as well as to support the existence of the solar system. I take great interest in the system which is efficient and requires little effort to maintain. I am very proud to have donated my piece of land to the system. I am the one who safeguards it. I am like the watchman".

"I am happy and proud of the system and that is why I am committed to keeping the environment around the kiosks clean. My children are no longer sickly from diarrhoea and other ailments which was common previously and for which I would spend a lot of money to get them treated," says Fatima.

Another woman who gave her name as Nimco said the new water system offered more advantages than the older hand-pump in drawing water. "The water supply is many times closer to my house than before and I don't spend much time getting it. I have a lot more time on my hands now and the opportunity to participate in other social issues."

However, a younger woman from the area served by the solar water supply expressed a light-hearted view about the old hand-pump. "Though it is easier to draw water from kiosk outlets, we should not forget the service provided by the hand-pump. It provided some physical exercise as we 'danced' (rocked to and fro) to pump water," she said. Actually the hand-pump is known as *Dabalula* in Somali, literally translated to 'back-rock' or 'rock and roll'.

As part of the hand-washing, school sanitation and hygiene package of the project, three twin latrines with hand-washing and water storage facilities were constructed. Hygiene promotion training was undertaken in collaboration with the Somaliland Ministry of Health and Labour as well as HEAL, a local NGO. This has directly benefited 54 school children, five teachers and seven community education committee members in Haraf School.

The hygiene promotion activities have had a ripple effect resulting in the dissemination of key hygiene messages to all Haraf village households through the school and its management. UNICEF has constructed 13 similar systems in Somaliland (funded by the Government of Denmark and Japan) and plans on constructing more between 2010-2012 (funded by the Government of Finland).

Additionally, UNICEF will install wind-powered pumps on boreholes (funded by the Government of Finland) in 2010-2012 and is committed to supporting the introduction of more environmentally sustainable water systems in Somaliland.

Hygiene promotion has been undertaken as part of the water project initiative...

In Somalia, a Public-Private partnership provides safe water to thousands

Residents of Boroma town in northwest Somalia don't take access to safe water for granted. In recent years, depletion of the wells connected to Boroma's urban water system caused a significant reduction in the town's water supply. To cope with this shortage, the private company operating and maintaining the system decided to stop providing new household connections. The company also enforced a water rationing policy, limiting water supply to only twice a week for each location within the town. In 2009, however, UNICEF supported the drilling of a new borehole connected to the town's water system, leading to a drastic increase in water production. Boroma town now enjoys an uninterrupted supply of water.

"Although I desperately wanted to have a water tap in my house because of the inconvenience of having to buy water for the entire family every few days, I was told that



© UNICEF Somalia/2010/Morooka
Five-year-old Nura fills a cup from the water tap recently installed at her home in Boroma town, north-west Somalia.

there wasn't enough water in our town to reach our house," said Habiba Mohamed, a mother of five who lives at the northern edge of Boroma town.

But three months ago, the newly drilled borehole finally allowed Ms. Mohamed's family to have a water connection. "I had saved up some money, so I requested to have the connection as soon as the water problem was solved," she said, standing by the tap installed in her yard.

With contributions from the European Union, the Swiss National Committee for UNICEF and the Government of Denmark, UNICEF supported the drilling of the new bore-

hole and its connection to the Boroma water supply system, a project which has benefited the estimated 80,000 people living in the town.

Abderahman Mohamoud, a board member of Shaba Water Company, the private company operating and maintaining the system, said that after the extension of the water system, the supply of water increased by 30 per cent. "Existing wells that had stopped generating water because of depletion regained their water level that had gone down during the past three years," added Mr. Mohamoud. "Water levels in the depleted wells increased by nine metres after this project."

The water supply in Boroma is managed through an innovative Public-Private Partnership approach introduced by UNICEF in the country. Through the partnership, the different and complementary roles of government and private sector are strengthened, with UNICEF acting as facilitator to the process.

Today more than 90 per cent of water distribution is done through household connections in Boroma, and an additional 785 connections have been installed since the water system's extension. Fatuma Osman, a mother of five, said that her family's life has changed since installing the new water connection earlier this year.

"Before this, we used to wait for the donkey cart to come and supply us with water every few days," she said. "Sometimes, because of the water shortage, even the seller didn't have water. Now we have water in our house every day, all the time. It is clean. I feel safe because I can save it in my own containers ... we spend much less on water than before."



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Fatuma Osman, a mother of five, fills a container from the tap installed three months ago in her yard in Boroma town, north-west Somalia.

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

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