

SOMALIA SUPPORT CENTRE DECEMBER 2007 NEWSLETTER

UNICEF in Somalia contributes to meeting Millennium Development Goals by increasing access to basic services for accelerated child survival and development.

A Word from the UNICEF Representative, Christian Balslev



A year that began with violence and displacement has ended with violence and displacement. **And yet there is still hope.** This month, UNICEF and its partners stepped up our efforts to ensure that those recently displaced both in the north and south of the country have their basic needs met.

This has not been easy and the road ahead seems more challenging than a year ago, but I would like to share with you some of the results we have achieved this year – in collaboration with our civil society and UN partners:

- An estimated 1.6 million children under-five vaccinated against polio - no case of the wild polio virus reported since April 2007
- Over 450,000 children aged nine months to 15 years vaccinated against measles
- 250 mother and child clinics supported with essential drugs, vaccines, injection safety materials and basic equipment.

- Over 200,000 flood victims and 30,000 suspected cholera cases provided with increased access to safe drinking water
- Major outbreak of cholera contained – through distribution of 35 cholera kits and 1.5 million sachets of ORS; over 1,000 wells treated in Mogadishu, Baidoa, riverine communities and other rural areas
- Over 64,000 malnourished children successfully rehabilitated through UNICEF-supported selective feeding programmes in the centre-south
- 181 schools re-opened eight weeks after the floods early in 2007, allowing 26,000 displaced children in five regions of the centre-south to continue their education
- Over 300 children with protection problems referred to services provided by regional hospitals, rehabilitation centres, and psychosocial care providers
- 228 children reunited with their families; an additional 315 in protective interim care
- Non food items provided to over 300,000 households

As we begin 2008, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our partners for their steadfast support

to the children of Somalia, our donors for their generous and continued financial backing and the media for their courageous commitment to continue to highlight the challenges and success we all face in making Somalia a better place for children.

Christian

In this issue:

***Responding to Emergencies ...
Page 2***

UNICEF Launches Child Survival Campaign ... page 2

Puntland Girls Education Forum ... page 3

Successful Peace Building Initiative ... page 3

Meeting on Violence in Schools ... page 3

Commemoration of World AIDS Day ... page 3

***Women Helping Women to Prevent the Spread of HIV ...
page 3***

Helping Communities ... page 3

Responding to Emergencies

Rapid Relief for the Displaced

To respond to the increase in the number of IDPs fleeing Mogadishu this month, UNICEF accelerated its emergency response through its partners along the Mogadishu-Afgoye Road to ensure that half a million litres of clean water were being trucked in every day (1/3 of the total water going into Afgoye), 18 water bladders and other storage containers were distributed and 400 latrines constructed. In addition, UNICEF partners in Mogadishu and Beletweyne were provided with 11 drums of chlorine to prevent and control any outbreaks of acute watery diarrhoea in the Mogadishu and Hiran region. UNICEF also helped immunise children and provided 30 tented schools along with learning and teaching materials to some 7,477 (over the 6,000 children originally planned) children.

Accelerating Child Survival

95% of children under one in Somalia have not received the full recommended course of vaccinations. One in eight children dies before his/her fifth birthday. Somalia has one the highest maternal mortality rates in the world.

UNICEF and WHO work with government and NGO partners to improve young child survival by increasing access to and the quality of health centres through vaccination, nutrition and malaria prevention programmes.

UNICEF Launches Child Survival Campaign along the Afgoye Road

On December 2, 2007, some 47,600 children under five and 11,200 pregnant women were targeted for a package of critical life saving interventions: children under five received measles, polio, diphtheria, tetanus and tuberculosis vaccines along with a capsule of vitamin A to boost their immunity, while pregnant women received iron supplementation and tetanus toxoid immunization. Due to these efforts, measles cases have plummeted from 3,836 during the first half of 2006 to 564 cases during the same period in 2007, with only seven deaths reported for the first half of 2007 (WHO).

The Go to School Programme

Only 30% of children in Somalia attend primary school. UNICEF collaborates with government and civil society organizations to increase access to and the quality of primary education.

We train teachers, provide incentives and ensure the provision of adequate learning spaces and school supplies.

Puntland Girls Education Forum



Young girls attending a meeting of Girls Education Forum

On November 11-12th, 21 civil society organizations from different regions of Puntland participated in a meeting to strengthen coordination for girls' education. Results of this two-day meeting include a better understanding of the challenges facing girl's education, a clear map of who does what and a joint future action plan.

Successful Peace Building Initiative

In December 2007, the construction of the "Galkayo Peace School," a joint initiative by officials and elders of the previously war-torn North and South Galkayo communities, was completed. Communities have contributed funds and labour towards the building of this school, as well as donated land and resources. This will be the first time in 17 years that children from the two communities will meet and interact with each other. The school doors are expected to open to students in the beginning of 2008. UNICEF is also supporting increased access to safe water and sanitation for 25,000 vulnerable people in South Galkayo, as well as better access to health care through Maternal and Child Health facilities in proximity to the school.



Galkayo Peace School

Meeting on Violence in Schools

240 teachers gathered in Hargeisa, Borama and Gebiley in Somaliland in December to attend workshops organized by the Ministry of

Education and UNICEF on child protection. Teachers attending these workshops will now be able to deal with issues of violence and other forms of corporal punishment in schools. Although no official data exists on the extent of corporal punishment in Somalia, it is believed to be pervasive.

The Communication, HIV/AIDS, Empowerment and Protection Programme

Children in Somalia live in one of the most vulnerable environments in the world. UNICEF protects children, empowers communities, advocates for social and behavioural change and reduces HIV risks. We also work with decision-makers to promote policy and institutional change for a more protective environment for children,

Commemoration of World AIDS Day

On December 1, 2007, Somaliland marked World AIDS Day in a grand manner, organizing numerous activities, including an official opening ceremony attended by the



Vice President to mark the opening of four sites providing services to prevent the transmission of HIV from mother-to-child.

In Somaliland, data from the latest HIV survey shows that 14 in a thousand people are HIV positive. The Somaliland National AIDS Commission, various miniseries and civil society organisations have taken bold steps to ensure that people in the area know how to protect themselves and where to go for help.

These four sites, two of which are already operational, will promote access to HIV prevention, treatment and care services for women and children. The results of this effort thus far, have been more than 500 pregnant women who have been counselled and tested for HIV – five of whom have tested positive and are now receiving treatment and care services.

Women Helping Women to Prevent the Spread of HIV

This month in Hargeisa, 300 girls and women graduated as peer educators, after having attended 20 peer education sessions of two hours each for 10 weeks as well as attended 30 HIV forums that reached 900 other women. UNICEF hopes that these efforts will curtail the spread of HIV infections as well as reduce stigma and discrimination.

Helping Communities Help Themselves

UNICEF helps build the capacity of communities to develop and implement their own development plans. We often ask community members to keep a diary of how their lives have changed. This is the story of Sheikh Abdaal village in Berbera District, Sahil Region, narrated by Sahra Abdi Ismail, a member of the community.

“Our village used to be one large garbage dump. Nobody listened to

one another and we threw our garbage wherever we wanted to. We never had any village meetings or even thought about getting together to do something like collective farming.

Then UNICEF and its partners started organizing meetings on integrated community development – about talking to each other, about coming together as a community to talk about our problems. Now our village meets three times a month to talk about solutions.

The women have helped clean up the village; the men have helped to dig a big waste pit for garbage and six garbage dumps. Everyday we collect the garbage from our lanes and put it in the dump or pits.

We have also dug shallow wells to get clean water and learned through UNICEF about the importance of hygiene. It’s amazing how everyone here now boils their water before drinking it. It’s amazing what we are starting together as a community to make our village a better place for our children.”

Contact Us

If you would like to learn more about our programmes or where your support would make a difference, please contact:

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