

UNICEF Somalia Monthly Review

April 2006



Drought...

Insecurity and limited access continue to hamper the field presence of humanitarian organizations involved in drought relief efforts in Central/Southern Somalia. Children are the most vulnerable especially the malnourished and their mothers. The main cause of malnutrition is poor health care, lack of food and sanitation. With the onset of the rains, weakened and vulnerable children and women are susceptible to malaria, acute respiratory infections and diarrhoeal diseases, including cholera.

Between January and March water was supplied to people in Bakool, Bay, Gedo and Middle Juba benefiting an estimated 258,000 people or 34% of the target population of 762,000 in these four regions. Even as rains replenish water reservoirs in some areas, additional funding is urgently needed to ensure supplies for the next few months. UNICEF has to-date completed rehabilitation of 24 boreholes; repair and maintenance of 35 others; deepening of 240 shallow wells and water trucking in 40 locations in Central/Southern Somalia. Drought relief was also provided to communities to the south of Hargeisa, Northwest Somalia ('Somaliland'), through provision of clean drinking water and pumps. In Puntland, water trucking took place in Bari, Karkaar and Nugaal.

In the Nutrition sector, UNICEF is collaborating with 20 local and

international organizations to curb malnutrition. UNICEF is supporting 16 feeding centres in Central/Southern Somalia in collaboration with the World Food Programme and NGOs. Feeding centres to cater for severely malnourished children have been established in Wajid in collaboration with NGOs.



A choir performs during Africa Malaria Day celebrations in Central Somalia. **Credit: UNICEF Somalia.**

In the Health sector, UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and NGO partners are working to prevent disease outbreaks. The measles campaign which targets 2.45m children countrywide is targeting 765,000 in the worst drought affected areas. About 406,000 have been vaccinated against measles in the South. For malaria prevention, UNICEF has been working with the Global Fund Against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to distribute supplies and training health workers on effective distribution of anti-malarial drugs, rapid diagnostic kits and insecticide treated nets for 360,000 people in most

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endemic areas. To stop the spread of polio, immunization campaigns are underway, with nearly 1.5 million children already reached. The next round of immunizations will take place in May.

The drought continues to negatively affect pupils' attendance in schools. On average, 64% of the schools have been closed since September 2005 in Bay, Bakool, Middle and Lower Juba. UNICEF and NGO partners are providing school tents, teacher' incentives and school feeding for children. To ensure protection of children, community mobilization is being undertaken with teachers to ensure they provide necessary care, counseling and support to unaccompanied and separated children.

Security developments...

Tension continued in Mogadishu between the Union of Islamic courts and the new Alliance for Peace and the Fight Against International Terrorism. Local populations in Mogadishu held demonstrations calling for an end to the conflict. Reconciliation efforts are going on and involve clan elders, intellectuals, women's groups, youth, education and human rights organizations.

Two children aged 13 and 14 years were kidnapped while going to school by gunmen in Heliwa and Bondere districts of Mogadishu respectively. They were later freed.

Dispute solved: Community elders resolved a dispute that occurred in March resulting in armed confrontation between members of the Northeast Somalia ('Puntland') Police Force and militia of the Mijiyahan community. The confrontation occurred over the exploration of mineral resources in the area.

Special events...

Malaria: A new effective treatment has been introduced in Somalia to curb the incidence of malaria which is one of the leading killers of children and women, UNICEF Somalia Representative, Christian Balslev-Olesen announced on 25 April, the occasion of Africa Malaria Day. An estimated one million children below five years die of malaria annually in Africa.

In central and Southern Somalia, malaria is estimated to account for approximately 8% of all illnesses among children under-five years of age. The burden is highest along the rivers and settlements with artificial water reservoirs where there is year-round transmission.

In Somaliland, Puntland and Central/Southern Somalia, the Day was marked with local leaders and other senior representatives of the local administration and UN/international organizations present. Sports, music and drama shows highlighted the issues related to malaria in the celebrations. In Puntland, President

UNICEF Operational Areas...

Northwest Zone – Hargeisa Office

Awdal
West Galbeed
Togdheer
Sahil
Sool
Sanaag

Northeast Zone – Bossaso Office

Bari
Nugal
Mudug

Central and Southern Zone – Baidoa, Jowhar and Mogadishu

Galgaduud
Hiran
Middle Shabelle
Lower Shabelle
Benadir
Lower Juba
Middle Juba
Gedo
Bay
Bakool

Mohamoud Muse Hirsi, distributed insecticide treated nets and observed testing of blood samples for malaria using the rapid diagnostic test kits.

Health update...

Measles: A measles outbreak occurred in Hadaftimo in Baran district of Sanaag region with 260 children affected and six deaths reported. The local administration received drugs to deal with the outbreak. In Central/Southern Somalia, measles immunization campaigns continued. On 23 April 2006, The TFG Minister of Health launched a measles immunization campaign in Baidoa town.

Safe Motherhood: Training of 90 traditional birth attendants was concluded in Puntland. An initiative to reduce maternal mortality rate commenced in Bossaso drawing its inspiration from a Somali saying. It is called, 'Close the Grave Initiative.' A workshop was held for 40 participants from rural communities to sensitize them on ways to prevent maternal deaths and promote safe motherhood.

Nutrition update...

Training: Through collaboration with the Somaliland Ministry of Health and Labour 12 health workers were trained in management and treatment protocols for severely malnourished children.

Twelve other staff of Maternal and Child Health (MCH) centres were trained in supplementary feeding processes. The knowledge will help them provide services to help curb malnutrition in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in Burao town of Somaliland. Thirty community health workers were trained in Erigavo. The training focused on the prevention and treatment of micronutrient deficiencies like anaemia and Vitamin A.

Deworming of school children started in various locations in Hargeisa and Togdheer regions of Somaliland. Deworming improves the nutritional status of children. The latest initiative in Somaliland aims to deworm about 10,000 primary school children.

Education update...

Advocacy: Puntland constituted a committee chaired by the President to boost education opportunities.

Supplies: School furniture for 32 classrooms was distributed to IDP communities in Puntland. Nearly 3,000 children attend the centres that got the furniture.

Other beneficiaries were another 34 schools with 12 of them getting school tents in Middle Shabelle region, Central Somalia.

Political developments

President Abdullahi Yusuf of the Transitional Federal Government, Prime Minister Ali Ghedi, Speaker of Parliament Sharif Hassan, ministers and MPs met with elders from Bay and Bakool regions to discuss restoration of peace following incidents of insecurity. On 22 April, the Transitional Federal Parliament which has been sitting in Baidoa voted to have Baidoa as the temporary seat of the administration until peace is restored in Mogadishu.

Puntland, a semi-autonomous state within Somalia swore in new Minister for Planning and International Cooperation Abdi Salad Ali.

The Vice President of Somaliland opened an alternative energy fair in Hargeisa on 14 April. He appealed for conservation of forests and for more use of alternative energy sources like solar and wind.

Three IDP camps in Wajid received supplies. Construction of floors and foundation for school tents serving the IDP camps in Wajid as well as in another 15 sites for tent schools were completed in Bay region, Central Somalia. Ten school tents and education supplies were distributed in Jamame area.

Meetings: UNICEF staff met those of the Norwegian Refugee Council, World Bank, Puntland Ministry of Education and the Vice-President and President of Puntland to discuss issues related to education.

Survey: Data collection for the 2005/6 Annual Primary School Survey took place in Somaliland and Puntland and in 10 regions of Central/Southern Somalia.

School construction: Construction of classrooms, sanitation facilities and fencing for 14 schools has been completed in Somaliland.



Increasingly children like these are getting an education due to efforts of the UN and Somali communities.

Credit: UNICEF Somalia.

The new schools also received 1,110 sets of benches and desks. The schools currently accommodate 7,440 students of whom 40% are girls. Construction of three other schools is taking place in collaboration with the United Nations Office of Project Services (UNOPS).

HIV/AIDS...

Advocacy: Editing and production of HIV awareness materials for Somaliland was completed. HIV sensitization workshops were held in El-Ahmed, El-Adow and El-Jalle areas which were all affected by the Tsunami of December 2004. Several publications on HIV were distributed to the South/Central AIDS Commission and different organizations working in the field of HIV/AIDS.

Counselling: More people continue visiting voluntary counseling and testing centres. The Hayat Hospital in Mogadishu is one such facility. A counselor at the hospital suggested that more awareness be made on the availability of the services.

Youth development update...

Leadership training: 426 youth leaders from Somaliland and Puntland were trained in leadership and organizational development. Mentoring of youth groups continues alongside such initiatives.

Water and Environmental Sanitation

Construction and rehabilitation works for various water projects continued in various locations.

The Hafun Water Supply System is almost complete. Hafun was the worst-hit location by the Tsunami of 2004.

Training: 36 people from the Somaliland administration and local NGOs were trained in hygiene and environmental sanitation. Chlorination training was provided to partner organizations in Belet Weyne, Central Somalia. Community hygiene training was provided to people in six villages affected by drought.

Sports: Construction of a playground in Gebiley town started on a cost-sharing basis. The local municipality is contributing 45% of the cost. Rehabilitation and expansion of Hargeisa Youth Multipurpose Centre is continuing as well as construction of basketball pitches in five IDP camps and other locations.

Website: A youth website was set up and is currently running at: www.hellosomaliyouth.net. Training of youth to manage website content has started in different locations of the country.

Employment: Two youth organizations in Merka, Southern Somalia are implementing income generation projects funded by the European Union. The organizations offer art, craft, electricity and literacy classes to young people. One of them, SYDP, has completed the rehabilitation of a fish market.

Child protection update...

Discussions: Members of the Child Protection Working Group comprising representatives of UN agencies and NGOs held discussions in Hargeisa on the protection of children in vulnerable communities including those in internally displaced persons' camps. Discussions were held with the Somaliland Parliamentary Social Committee on the finalization of the Juvenile Justice Bill. A workshop on

the Bill was held on 26 March. It was organized by the Somaliland Lawyers Association and drew participants from the UN, the local administration, MPs and women's organizations.

Training: Child protection advocates, staff of local administrations and NGOs were trained in prevention of gender-based violence in Somaliland. It took place in Hargeisa. About 60 participants attended from Central/Southern Somalia as well as Somaliland. Peaceline, an NGO, trained about 150 members of youth groups, health workers and civil society organizations in child protection issues. The trainings were conducted in Jowhar, Belet Weyne and Dhusamareb in Central/Southern Somalia.

Advocacy: TASS, a local NGO in Puntland undertook sensitization on issues related to child protection among eight communities in Puntland.

Clinic: A clinic to offer psychological care and social support to children and mothers opened in Hargeisa. Among others, it will care for children victims of violence.

Communication for development...

Law enforcement: UNICEF staff met the head of the Somaliland Police Force to discuss ways of activating children's and women's desks at police stations.

Development meetings: UNICEF facilitated meetings between local communities from lasadacawo and Mandheera and the local district authorities in Berbera town to discuss issues related to development and the roles of the community and the local administration. This was part of the participatory integrated community development (PICD). The PICD process seeks to empower communities to discuss and identify development priorities.

Youth media: UNICEF held discussions with members of youth groups on how to enhance collaboration. UNICEF has supported the groups through training and equipment to produce audio and video programmes as part of the Youth Broadcasting Initiative. A digital camera was donated to *KOOR*, a youth magazine that is produced in Somaliland with UNICEF support. The donation will be used by the Benadir Youth Network of Central/Southern Somalia. *KOOR* means camel bell in Somalia and focuses on issues of relevance to youth such as HIV/AIDS.

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Credit for majority of content in this report goes to UNICEF staff in Somalia.