

UNICEF Somalia Monthly Review

November/December 2003



Drought interventions ongoing in Northern Somalia

Since early 2002, humanitarian agencies have been highlighting the serious and growing food insecurity in the Sool Plateau and surrounding areas of Sanaag, Bari and Sool regions. A succession of failed rains over the past four years has resulted in increased food insecurity among pastoral populations. In early October 2003, UNICEF participated in an inter-agency assessment mission that found the pastoralist population hard hit by loss of livestock and purchasing power due to severely depleted reservoirs and pasture/grazing land. Though no disease outbreaks were reported and malnutrition was not yet widespread,

In response, UNICEF and other UN agencies initiated a variety of interventions targeting a population of about 90,000. Interventions included child immunization, vitamin supplementation, nutritional screening and the provision of food rations for the most hard-hit families and improved access to safe water. A significant acceleration of these humanitarian interventions began in late November and has been ongoing since that time.

In December, teams comprising UNICEF and WHO personnel treated about 660 patients suffering from acute respiratory infections, diarrhoea, malaria, anaemia and skin diseases.

Creating concern among humanitarian agencies, however, is the growing tension between the local administrations in Northwest Somalia ('Somaliland') and Northeast Somalia ('Puntland'), both of whom claim the drought-affected areas as their territory. Ongoing interventions could be jeopardized or even halted if the situation escalates into violent conflict.

Security throughout Somalia

Intermittent fighting between rival militia continued in Central and Southern Somalia during November. The fighting was particularly severe in areas of Lower Shabelle and villages in the Galgadud region. At least 18 people were killed and 29 wounded during the conflicts. In the same month, two passengers were killed and four others wounded in an attack on a truck in Gelgub village in Adale.

In December, another 48 people were killed in fighting in Xerale village of Dusamareb district of Galgadud. Hundreds of families fled their homes in the latest round of fighting and efforts by traditional leaders to mediate between the warring parties have been unsuccessful. About 300 people are believed to have died in the Galgadud conflicts during 2003.

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In Mogadishu, at least 20 people were reportedly killed in various incidents of clan and political conflict and banditry during December.

In Merka, Lower Shabelle region, fighting was reported between rival clans in mid-November following a dispute over tax collection by militia of the Transitional National Government (TNG). At least 10 people were killed and 20 wounded.

The ceasefire between rival Rahanweyne Resistance Army (RRA) militia, feuding for the control of the central Somalia town of Baidoa, held for most of November. A peace rally was held earlier in the month in an effort to resolve the conflict. Later in the month, however, one person was killed at a checkpoint on the road to Mogadishu following fighting between two militia groups. Although local leaders defused the tension following this incident, fresh feuding in December resulted in at least five people killed and 10 injured. The fighting led to the suspension of a reconciliation meeting planned in Wajid.

An increase in militia checkpoints was reported on the road between Kismayo, Lower Juba region, and Mogadishu during the reporting period. The increase follows conflict in the Lower Shabelle Region. Traffic along the road

had earlier been interrupted by conflict between the Juba Valley Alliance (JVA) that controls Kismayo, the main port-town in southern Somalia, and militia inhabiting the villages between Jilib and Brava districts. In December, four people were killed and two others wounded when a group of heavily armed militia attacked and looted in Hargeysa Yarey, Gelib district.

In Hargeisa, Somaliland, the traffic police commander was killed on 9 December in front of his house. A suspect was identified but has not yet been arrested.

In Puntland, fighting between rival clans in the southern part of Galkayo, the capital of Mudug region, resulted in eight people being killed and 15 others injured. The fighting later stopped and displaced families were able to return to their homes.

Political developments

Peace talks at Mbagathi, Kenya: The peace process, ongoing throughout the year in Mbagathi (Nairobi) did not make any significant gains by year-end. It is hoped that the presence of President Museveni of Uganda in early January 2004 may have a positive impact on the progress of the talks.

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, Mogadishu and Kismayo Offices

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

In Mogadishu, divisions have been reported between leaders of the Transitional National Government following the expiry of their terms in office in August. Most of the MPs elected at the Arta conference in Djibouti three years ago, which ushered in the Transitional National Government (TNG), have abandoned their seats for various reasons.

TNG President Abdiqasim Salad Hassan has appointed a new assembly speaker and Prime Minister to the TNG to replace the outgoing officers. However, the former speaker and premier have disputed the legitimacy of the appointments.

Health programme highlights

Malaria: In November, UNICEF and WHO responded to malaria outbreaks in Baki, Balligubadle and Hargeisa districts of Somaliland by distributing some 400 insecticide treated nets in addition to providing treatment to the sick.

Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI): During the reporting period, UNICEF trained staff of health facilities in Somaliland in record keeping. The training took place in Hargeisa, Burao and Berbera towns of Galbeed and Togdheer and Sahil regions respectively. In addition, some 1250 children were immunized.

UNICEF in collaboration with the Puntland administration immunized children in Bossaso, Puntland,

between 10-16 December. Prior to the exercise, local radio stations aired messages to raise awareness among the population on the importance of immunization and other health and nutrition issues. Religious leaders also played a key role in mobilizing people to take their children for immunization. Prior to the immunization, UNICEF staff met religious leaders and paediatricians in Bossaso to share information and to dispel misconceptions and myths about EPI.

UNICEF-supported immunization activities were also carried out in Kandala, Allula and Bargal districts.

In Mogadishu, some 5709 children in Madina and Abdulaziz districts were immunized. Of these, 1814 were less than one year old. In Afmadow, southern Somalia, UNICEF and the Economic Independence Relief Group (EIRG) vaccinated some 1569 children, of whom 557 were under one year old.

Training: UNICEF and the Puntland administration organized vaccine storage training for 29 people including managers of vaccine storage facilities, local health authorities and personnel from the Somali Red Crescent Society (SRCS), Africa Action Hilfe (AAH) and Care International.

Polio: Registration of children who have not received the oral polio vaccine or have received less than the required dosage was undertaken in Bossaso and Qardho districts of Puntland.

Trade fair held in Mogadishu...

A trade fair and exhibition was held at the Somali Institute of Management and Administration (SIMAD) in Mogadishu.

The fair, held from 23-26 December, aimed to promote local products. It had 45 exhibitors including commercial enterprises, relief agencies and small-scale industries from Mogadishu.

The exhibition was the first of its kind to be held in Mogadishu in about 13 years. It drew more than 5000 visitors who took advantage of the reduced prices of products.

Relief agencies used the occasion to provide information on their activities.

Some 12 out of 15 districts have finalized these activities.

Cholera: UNICEF participated in a preparatory meeting to coordinate activities for the prevention and control of diarrhoea. Cholera is endemic Somalia with outbreaks occurring between December and May. More than 5000 patients were admitted to cholera treatment centres in Mogadishu between December 2002 and May 2003.

Nutrition programme highlights

In Puntland, micronutrient supplements were provided at various health facilities. Iron-cum-folic acid for the treatment and prevention of anaemia in pregnant women were distributed during immunization activities in Bari, Puntland.

UNICEF staff visited various districts in Central and Southern Somalia to assess the nutrition situation. Among the locations visited were IDP camps. During the visits, equipment for use in the nutrition programme was checked to ensure it was in working order. The staff also initiated cookery demonstration sessions and held meetings with parents to sensitize them on the importance of exclusive breastfeeding and appropriate, highly nutritious food that is available locally.

UNICEF distributed Supermix, a supplementary feeding gruel, in IDP camps in Walak and Bilale villages in

Wajid district. The distribution was done in collaboration with WFP, Action Contre la Faim and World Vision International (WVI). Some 590 children aged less than five years benefited from the supplies while 1081 families received food rations and other relief items.

In Bay, Bakool and Hiran regions 1492 people, including malnourished children, benefited from supplementary feeding activities.

Water and Environmental Sanitation highlights

Water management: The Awdal Utility Company, created to run the Boroma Water Supply System in Somaliland, began operations in November. Seven new water kiosks and 10 household connections were made to the town supply system and the company is already providing water connections to private residences in Boroma. In November, UNICEF provided 2.2 km of pipes for the water supply system.

Geed Ballaadh Project: In Somaliland, construction work for the Geed Ballaadh Water Project continued. Installation of a generator and pump took place. The system must now be connected to tanks and water kiosks remains and some kiosks need rehabilitation.

In Puntland, construction of various water projects continued including the Garowe and Gardo urban projects. In

Bossaso, UNICEF is assisting the Golden Utilities Management Company, a private firm that manages the Bossaso Water Project, in drilling a new borewell to provide water for the town. The Bossaso Water Project was completed in 2000 and designed to serve a population of 60,000 which has since increased. The Garowe project will serve some 45,000 beneficiaries.

Projects for the supply of water to rural communities are at various stages of construction or rehabilitation. The rehabilitation of the Godob Jiran mini-water system and installation of equipment for the Libaxo borewell, both in Puntland, were completed.

UNICEF sponsored the local water authorities from Somaliland in attending the Pan-African Conference on Water in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 8-13 December. During the conference key challenges faced in rural water supply, environmental sanitation and hygiene were discussed.

Sanitation: Construction of sanitation facilities for Waberi School in Garowe was completed. Sanitation facilities will soon be constructed for Najah Bossaso, Hubabays, Ambar, Qalwo, Karimo, Sayn and El-buh Primary Schools, all in Puntland.

In Central and Southern Somalia, UNICEF trained 270 members of community education committees, students and teachers from eight schools in Jowhar and seven schools in Bakool, in sanitation and hygiene.

UNICEF also trained about 80 women from high risk areas of Bay Region on cholera prevention and control. Another 60 people, including 10 women, were provided with refresher training in sanitation and hygiene.

Education programme highlights

Supplies: UNICEF distributed supplies and equipment through NGO World Vision International to 14 schools in Middle Shabelle and 20 schools in Bay, Bakool and Middle Juba regions during the reporting period.

Teachers Day: National Teachers Day was celebrated in Jowhar, central Somalia, on 21 November. UNICEF staff, pupils, teachers and community representatives participated in activities to mark the Day.

Training: The second phase of training for 95 primary school Community Education Committees (CEC) was held between mid-November and end-December in both Somaliland and Puntland. The aim of the training was to help the CECs to take a more active part in the management and financing of schools.

School Improvement: UNICEF organized a school improvement workshop for teachers in Somaliland. The workshop participants were trained in improvement of classroom interiors, verandahs, and school compounds; construction of low cost, locally

produced teaching aids; arts and crafts projects; and games and recreational activities for the schools. The trained teachers are expected to organize school-based workshops on school improvement.

School mentoring: Mentoring activities were carried out in 52 primary schools in Somaliland and a similar number in Puntland during November and December. The mentors are expected to visit schools at least once every two months and work with teachers in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in the schools. They also monitor the utilization of school records and assist teachers in organizing the distribution of learning materials.

In central Somalia, a teacher-mentoring workshop was held in early November for 32 participants. Among the topics covered were teaching of the new curriculum for Grades 1-4 and familiarization of roles of administrators in the education sector.

Rehabilitation of schools: Rehabilitation of four classrooms, a basketball court and latrines for the Sheikh Ali Ibrahim Primary School, one of the largest schools in Hargeisa, continued in December. The school has more than 2000 children who learn in morning and afternoon shifts with about 60 students per class.

In Dami Primary School, construction of a fence and latrine facilities for girls has started. Dami is one of the poorest settlements in Hargeisa. In Lafa Rug,

about 100 km northeast of Hargeisa, rehabilitation of two classrooms, latrine facilities and a playground was completed. The rehabilitation of one office and a storeroom is nearing completion.

In Puntland, UNICEF completed construction of three primary schools: El-Las, Taagee and Saymo, all in Allula district. Allula district covers some areas close to the exact tip of the Horn of Africa. Construction of Harago Primary School started in December. In Central and Southern Somalia, rehabilitation of Sakow Primary School was completed while that of Salagle and Jamame primary schools is continuing.

Computer training: UNICEF is sponsoring training in computer literacy for all six regional education officers in Somaliland, their assistants, and two key local education authorities. The skills are meant to enhance their capacity in data entry, analysis and record keeping and to make it easier for them to use the Education Management Information System (EMIS). The EMIS is software that UNICEF developed to ensure easy retrieval and efficient utilization of data on primary education by local communities, education authorities and international partners. In 1998 UNICEF developed EMIS tools (class register, school register and pupil cards). Currently data is analyzed in Nairobi, Kenya. In Puntland, UNICEF launched a preliminary assessment of EMIS tools in 12 primary schools in

Gardo and Bossaso districts. The findings of the assessment will be used to review various EMIS tools.

Youth participation highlights

UNICEF, in collaboration with two youth organizations in Somaliland, held a two-day meeting to discuss ways in which youth groups and other community-based organizations could be better supported. Another meeting organized in collaboration with the Puntland administration was held for 52 youth organizations. The meeting reviewed their plans and activities and shared experiences. The youth formed the 'Puntland Youth Coordination Committee' to steer their activities and agreed to strengthen collaboration, linkages and information sharing among groups in Puntland. UNICEF also trained and mentored youth from 20 organizations in Bossaso and Galkayo towns. In Central and Southern Somalia, a two-day coordination and networking meeting for youth was held in Belet Weyne town, Hiran region. UNICEF donated library books to three resource centres in Benadir and Lower Shabelle regions.

Sports: UNICEF completed construction of the Gardo football playground and Dangorjao basketball playgrounds in Puntland and started rehabilitation of sports grounds in Balad and Tiye glow.

In Mogadishu, UNICEF trained 20 coaches and referees and distributed assorted sports supplies to 24 youth groups in Lower Shabelle and Benadir regions. An inter-district sports tournament for Hiran region was conducted in Belet Weyne town, Central Somalia. Six football teams participated with a team from Buloburte winning the competition.

Youth broadcasting: The Somaliland-based Horn of Africa Voluntary Youth Organization Committee (HAVOYOCO) produced two radio programmes during the reporting period. Some seven other youth groups from Somaliland are in the process of finalizing their programmes. The scripts are shared with UNICEF for quality assurance. Radio Hargeisa produced an introductory programme for the youth broadcasting initiative and interviewed members from Somaliland Culture and Sports Association (SOCSA) and HAVOYOCO groups.

In Puntland, three youth groups that are involved in the Youth Broadcasting Project started broadcasting programmes through local radio. The programmes, aired throughout Somalia, covered HIV/AIDS, FGM, girls education, hygiene and sanitation, community education, health, street children, small arms and youth leadership issues.

UNICEF helped nine youth groups in Central and Southern Somalia to produce six video programmes and three radio programmes. Through the Youth Broadcasting Project, the programmes produced by the youth are broadcast through local radio and TV stations and also disseminated through video parlours. Mogadishu-based media establishments, HornAfrik and Shabelle, are collaborating with the youth groups.

Leadership: Translation of materials for Leadership for Organizational Development (LOD) into Somali was completed. The materials will be used to train members of youth organizations in Central and Southern Somalia. Non-Formal Education learning materials developed by UNICEF and its partners were distributed to youth organizations in Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, Hiran and Galgadud.

Mentoring: The second round of mentoring for youth and other organizations continued in December in Hargeisa, Berbera and Borama in Somaliland. The mentors sensitized the youth on the harmful effects of chewing *khat* (an amphetamine leaf akin to the coca leaf of South America). The mentoring occurred in Gebiley, Borama, Burao, Las Anod and Hargeisa.

Festival: Youth Culture Week activities were held in Merka, Lower Shabelle region from 17-24 December. Activities undertaken included drama performances, sports tournaments and discussions on leadership for youth. At least 250 youth participated in the five-

day festival. Among issues discussed during the workshop were peace building, conflict management, and the findings of the UNICEF Child Protection Study carried in 2003.

HIV/AIDS prevention and control highlights

UNICEF, in collaboration with local administrations and partners, organized activities to raise HIV/AIDS awareness on World AIDS Day in various locations throughout Somalia. The theme for this year's activities was "Live and Let Live" - with focus on fighting stigma and discrimination. Unlike previous years when commemorative activities were limited to major towns, this year's activities were more widespread and took place outside the main urban centres and regional capitals. The activities highlighted the important role that families, communities and individuals could take in the prevention and control of the epidemic and the requirements of support and care for people living with AIDS. The activities included sports competitions.

UNICEF supported the commemoration of the day through the provision of publicity and information materials such as T-shirts and caps with messages in Somali on HIV/AIDS. Copies of audio cassettes containing songs specially composed for HIV/AIDS communication were distributed. The activities in Garowe, Puntland, were attended by UNICEF Somalia Representative, Jesper Morch..

Training: UNICEF organized a life skills training for 50 youth peer counsellors from Northwest, Northeast, Central and Southern Somalia and Djibouti. Training for 20 participants, including religious and community leaders in community-based counselling was also carried out.

HIV KABP study: Field work for a Knowledge Attitude Behaviour and Practices (KABP) study in Northeast and Central and Southern Somalia was completed during the reporting period. Work on the study in the Northwest should be complete in January 2004.

Child Protection highlights

Handbook: Translation into Somali of a handbook for community mobilization for child protection was completed. Already, efforts to raise awareness of child protection issues have been initiated and integrated into programmes for mentoring youth. In Mogadishu, the Somali Network for Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse (SONPPCAN) organized a meeting to discuss advocacy initiatives for child protection. Participants were drawn from community-based organizations and civil society. Another meeting was held in Merka to sensitize civil society participants on key issues related to child protection and on the findings of the Child Protection Study.

Workshops: UNICEF conducted a two-day co-ordination and networking meeting in Belet Weyne town for organizations involved in child protection

activities in Hiran region. Another co-ordination and networking meeting on child protection was held in Kanava Youth Centre, Mogadishu and another organized by an Italian NGO, COSV, in Merka. Benadir Youth Council (BYC) which organized the Mogadishu meeting resolved that December 24 should be marked as Somali Children's Day. This was the day on which some school children were brutally killed in Mogadishu in 2002.

Mine education: UNICEF Somalia staff participated in the Regional Mine Action Meeting and Training Seminar in Nairobi. The meeting discussed mine risk education, advocacy and assistance to victims. Other staff participated in the training on human rights organized by Novib (Oxfam Netherlands).

The findings of the Child Protection Study were disseminated to religious and community leaders participating in the community-based counselling training on HIV/AIDS in Bossaso, Puntland. The participants pledged to help in the protection of children against sexual abuse in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps and female genital mutilation. Child protection advocates were trained in ways to mobilize communities and introduced to local leaders in Puntland.

UNICEF later participated in activities in Mogadishu and Merka to mark Somali Children's Day. Activities in the week prior to the event included an awareness raising campaign,

community mobilization on issues of child protection, local radio broadcast programmes on child protection and discussions on issues related to child protection. Sports, youth and women's processions and drama shows were other activities that marked the Day.

UNICEF staff made a presentation on child protection issues to 30 journalists from Central and Southern Somalia who attended a workshop organized by the Somali Journalists Network (SOJON). The journalists were given an overview of the five UNICEF priorities for children; international legal instruments that protect and safeguard children and the findings of the Child Protection Study.

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