

SHO SOMALI HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATION

CHILD PROTECTION REPORT- 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Somalia, contextual circumstances affect both barriers to and opportunities for children's protection, rights, and development. The country context of Somalia is summarized in this section of the report. The following are some of the study's key findings: The current situation in Somalia makes the protection and progress of children's well-being extremely difficult. In addition, some of the contextual factors that function as constraints are amenable to change, though those changes will take time. Efforts by Somali civic and political leaders, heads of households, and international development agencies to improve the lives of children work on multiple levels in a relatively non-permissive environment. Regional and local context variations are significant, creating pockets of fresh chances for better child well-being in different sections of the country.

Since the civil war and state's fall in 1991, some areas of Somali society and culture have experienced significant and complex changes, while others have remained relatively intact. For Somalis and outsiders alike, the social context's mixing of continuity and change is a challenge. First, despite being historically seen as a highly equitable society, economic and power disparities have widened considerably both before and after the state's fall in 1991. This has significant ramifications for the well-being of children. Relatively fortunate families, such as those who get regular remittances from relatives abroad, are far better equipped to meet their children's fundamental nutritional, health, safety, and educational needs. Second, in the face of long-term governmental failure, clan and ethnic identification have become even more important as determinants of rights, protection, and resources.

Children have a fundamental right to protection, yet their demands in times of crisis are often unmet. In 2018, about 50 million youngsters were in need of humanitarian assistance. When a humanitarian response is mobilized, however, child protection is not routinely prioritized, and it remains underfunded and untimely² when children's lives are at risk. Children are among the most vulnerable during a crisis, facing life-threatening dangers, excessive violence, abuse, physical and sexual exploitation, kidnapping, and military recruiting. Child protection programs are critical for preventing child abuse, promoting family tracing and reunion, and ensuring correct and timely referrals of children in need of healthcare, food, education, shelter, and psychosocial support.



CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

Children's contributions to their families' financial well-being are expected, and in many situations, essential. Although child labor is a concern from the standpoint of 'abuse' and denial of children's right to school, the causes are acknowledged to be difficult to remedy. "Children from low-income families are frequently missing from school. They collect and sell firewood for very little or no money.

We recognize their predicament and do not punish them." "I notice that some students are unable to complete their homework because they must assist their parents," says one of the Parents. When there is a dearth of water or an epidemic disease, absenteeism rises throughout harvest and planting season." (One of the teachers) Seasonal mobility and circumstances such as drought have an impact on children's participation in work and, as a result, their attendance at school.

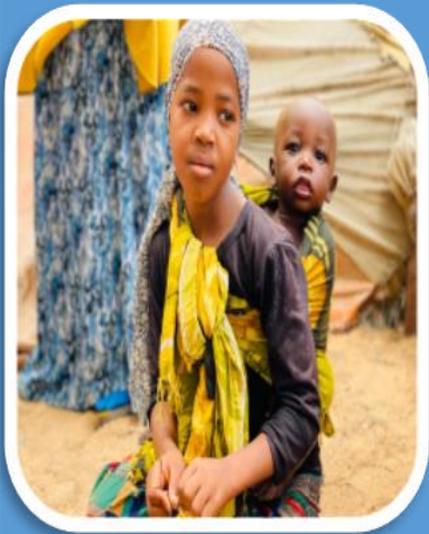
When neighboring water wells run dry, participants reported how children must travel large distances to get water and transport cattle to drinking areas. Drought leads children to spend a lot of time hunting for pasture and drives families to relocate, resulting in school dropouts or disruptions. "We believe that forcing children to get water from far locations is child abuse, but we have no choice." (Community member) When asked why there are less girls than boys in their school, girls from center in a pastoralist village in Somalia with 40 boys and just 10 girls in the second grade explained: "Girls have to pick grass and firewood and undertake household activities early in the morning." Girls who get married stop with school and girls who are promised to a man don't see the need to go to school"

Objectives of the assessment:

- To assess the national standard that guarantees that girls and boys have adequate access to child protection services, are safeguarded from violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation at home and in the community, and that impacted children receive appropriate support through the case management process.
- To utilize the systematic methods to guarantee that family separation is avoided and reacted to, and that unattended and separated children are cared for and safeguarded in accordance with their unique needs and in accordance with the Best Interests of the Child principle.
- To establish well-coordinated, predictable, and comprehensive standards that guide the support and assistance provided by child protection case workers and other stakeholders in order to run a more efficient and effective case management service that captures the diverse needs of children as soon as possible.

- To build and improve coordination mechanisms at the national, regional, district, and community levels, as well as to establish agreed-upon roles and duties for all parties involved.
- To establish a consistent strategy for dealing with situations of children who have been hurt or are at risk of being harmed, while following to the guiding principles and protocols in order to ensure quality, consistency, and coordination of services.
- To identify mechanisms to improve the quality and security of child protection data gathering, as well as to promote the principles of confidentiality, informed consent, and best practices among child protection case workers.
- To determine the role of communities in protecting children and assisting national structures in detecting, referring, and reacting to children's needs.

Situational analysis



According to the Alliance for Child Protection in Human Action, CP financing has increased over the last decade, but it remains small in comparison to total humanitarian funding and funding for other sectors, accounting for only 0.5 percent of total humanitarian money on average from 2010 to 2018. Despite the fact that child protection is a life-saving field, it is not often recognized as such. CP is becoming a more prominent topic in Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNOs), but it still has a low priority in Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs). Because it is well documented that children experience heightened risks and vulnerabilities during a crisis and that prompt CP interventions can save lives, CP should be handled consistently in both HNOs and HRPs, according to identified needs. Furthermore, as the CPWG points out, "although mainstreaming protection is important, the reality is that children have unique protection needs that are not met by other sectors."

This necessitates a customized answer." To put it another way, stand-alone CP interventions are critical in an emergency. In 2018, our research found significant underfunding of CP in a lot of humanitarian response plans. When we look beyond the disparity between available and required cash, however, the underfunding is even more troubling. Many funding requests are written to cover the needs of only a small percentage of children in need (children in need vs. children targeted), leaving many children unmet. There are evidence that financing requirements may not represent actual needs, and that there is frequently an asymmetry between funding requirements and the financial resources that would be required to successfully safeguard all children in

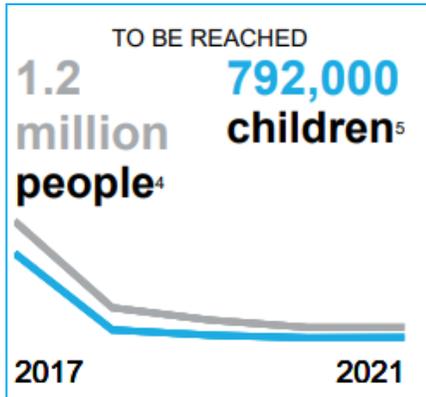


humanitarian situations. This is known as 'under-asking' by some CP practitioners. Our research indicated that the gap between real needs and available cost estimates for child protection initiatives is even greater and more disturbing than previously anticipated. In general, children's emergency protection needs are not being met, which is unacceptable. Every child, regardless of where they reside, has the right to be safe from violence, abuse, and neglect.

Somalia is still dealing with the world's most complex and long-running humanitarian crises, and it has been ranked one of the world's 10 poorest countries with the least child-friendly surroundings. In 2019, the population is expected to reach around 15 million people, with women accounting for 50.14 percent of the population, children accounting for 44 percent of the population under the age of 15, and 43 percent of the population living in extreme poverty. According to the UNHCR, the country has 2.6 million internally displaced persons, while the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) anticipates that 5.2 million people are in desperate need of humanitarian aid and will require life-saving assistance.

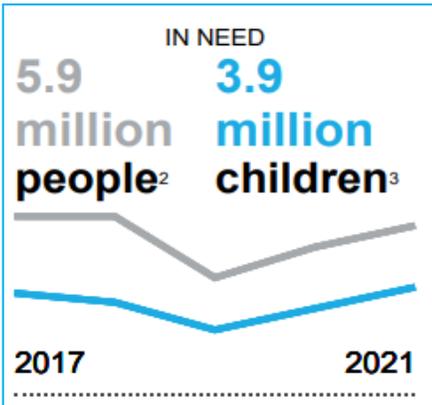
Somalia is hosting 24,073 refugees and asylum seekers as of November 2020, with 13,115 of them being minors. The majority of refugees and asylum seekers are hosted in Somaliland (55%), followed by Puntland (37%) and South and Central regions (8%). UNHCR projects the total number of refugees and asylum seekers in 2021 to stand at 28,002. Further, UNHCR projects the total number of assisted refugee returnees in the country in 2021 to stand at 109,989 individuals, including 18,050 that are expected to be assisted with return in the course of 2021.

Humanitarian Action for Children



According to UNHCR estimates, children make up 57 percent of the total refugee returnee population (27 percent are girls and 30 percent are boys). The current situation has major ramifications for children's safety, putting them at risk of abuse, violence, neglect, and exploitation. Family separation and child recruitment are major concerns for children, as are arbitrary arrests, increased exposure to GBV, such as early marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting, trafficking, emotional distress, and hazardous child work.

Due to the severe effects of flooding, desert locusts, and the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic in Somalia, 5.9 million people, including 3.9 million children, would require humanitarian aid in 2021. Children's lives are also being disrupted by conflict, making them more vulnerable to human rights crimes.



UNICEF's focus in Somalia in 2021 will be on expanding community participation for social and behavioral change, as well as strengthening accountability to affected populations. With humanitarian aid, UNICEF hopes to reach 1.2 million people, including 792,000 children. The reaction will be targeted at the most vulnerable groups, such as survivors of gender-based violence and disabled children.

Source: UNICEF, 2021 (provisional and subject to change upon finalization of the inter-agency planning documents)

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is asking US\$129.8 million to offer humanitarian aid and support to Somalia's children. UNICEF will be able to provide treatment for severe acute malnutrition (SAM) to 121,500 children, over 1 million individuals with health services, and 850,000 people with emergency water services using these funds.



Source: UNICEF, 2021 (provisional and subject to change upon finalization of the inter-agency planning documents)

Impact of child protection issues on children's education

In the Somali Region, significant progress has been made in enhancing access to education in recent years, with gross enrolment rates rising from 33% in 2007/08 to 64% in 2009/10. However, a considerable number of youngsters remain out of school, and the Somali Region, after some Somali regions, has the country's lowest enrolment rates. In terms of the influence of the various child protection issues discussed above on children's education, the study discovered that 'child labor' has the greatest impact on children's school enrolment, attendance, dropout, and academic achievement. The most common argument given was that children must assist their parents by providing labor or revenue. This was soon followed by the explanation that parents are unaware of the importance of education, and that, in particular, girls drop out or do not attend because they have been promised for marriage and early marriage. This contributes to the belief that girls do not need to be educated.

Conclusion

Activities labeled as 'protection' with no more specifics were not taken into account in the protection sector. Naturally, some of them may have devoted child protection operations, but we eliminated them from the dataset because we had no information on the specifics of the programs. As protection outcomes are linked across many sectors, some funds recorded on the FTS under the health or education sectors may have included support CP operations.

Children in the Somali Region have little access to confidential, child-friendly and nearby reporting mechanisms, and often only have the option to discuss child abuse issues with family members, teachers or other community members. Regular formal law enforcement bodies receive relatively few reports of child abuse and deal with few child protection cases (mainly involving rape). Sharia courts reportedly mainly deal with neglect, child custody, child support and forced marriage. Women's Affairs Offices and women associations receive some reports of FGM, early and forced marriage and rape and mediate and/or refer cases to the police or the Sharia court. Elders reportedly deal with a limited number of cases related to verbal, physical and sexual abuse.

Recommendations

The findings of the study lead to the following recommendations for future projects that aim to develop child protection mechanisms in schools and communities in the Somali Region:

- At least at first, link child protection to broader development difficulties. Education is an excellent place to start when it comes to building trust and dealing with child protection issues. Respondents frequently stated that kid protection is not one of their top priorities, particularly in drought-stricken areas.
- Implementing a program featuring serious talks over a long length of time in a small number of places is recommended to have a high impact. Despite the fact that many of the study participants appear to have

been exposed to awareness-raising activities, behavioral change is often still lacking. Use a dialogue center approach involving all stakeholders, including elders, religious leaders, women, children and local government representatives. Enable ongoing discussions, information exchange, analysis of different views, and critical reflection and decision-making by the community about what is in the best interests of their children. Allow the process to be just as important as the activities to be carried out.

- Collaborate with stakeholders to identify solutions for resolving child safety challenges in their community and assist in their implementation.
- Build on Somali culture's and Islam's existing child-protection ideals. For example, the Islamic religion prohibits infibulation, forced marriage, corporal punishment, and discrimination, and physical, emotional, and sexual abuse are all considered crimes under Somali law.
- To address child protection issues, build on and expand current programs and procedures of government organizations, NGOs, religious leaders, women's organizations, and others.
- Arrange for important stakeholders from places where social transformation has already occurred to share their experiences with others from similar places that are in the process of transforming.