

## A REPORT OF THE ASSESSMENT MISSION TO

BARI, NUGAAL AND MUDUG REGIONS OF SOMALIA FROM SEPTEMBER 17TH TO SEPTEMBER 30TH

To THE INTER-NGO COMMITTEE FOR SOMALIA (UK)

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### 3.9 EDUCATION

1 No government schools were working in any of the regions vatted. In Garowe, there were two private language schools and in Dangoray there is an Islamic school providing classes in arabic and mathematics. EDGS in Garowe are training twenty women in English and book keeping. In all villages, however, Koranic schools exist.

2. Most children have missed at least one year of schooling, and in some places several years. It is likely that many of the displaced children coming from urban centres have received more education than those who were resident in the north, where many schools, especially in the more isolated places, have not functioned for several years. Prior to the war Somalia had, according to UNICEF (1990, State of the World's Children), one of the lowest literacy rates (18% male/ 6% female in 1985) of any developing country. Given the already critical low levels of literacy in Somalia, the implications of long term lack of Qducation is of concern.

3. The majority of school buildings seen were largely intact, showing signs of long term neglect rather than deliberate damage or looting. The exceptions were in Galkaiyo and Galdogob. The rehabilitation of infrastructure would therefore require little effort. The loss of furnishing was more of a problem. Most school buildings are now occupied by displaced families. The re-opening of schools would require assistance with the re-location and provision of shelter for these people.

4. Although teachers were reported to still be resident in several places visited, the lack of salary means they are not working. Prior to the war, salaries were so low as to make them worthless (2,000/- p.m. basic for a primary school teacher). Estimates for an "acceptable salary" that would get teachers back to work, ranged from 10,000/- to 50,000/- per month). Clearly this is beyond the capacity of the local administrations to support. The presence of private schools in Garowe and community support for Koranic schools, however, suggests that some parents may be willing to pay school fees. School fees could be used to pay teacher salaries e.g. 50 pupils paying 1,000/- per month could provide an "acceptable salary" for one teacher

5. While the resumption of education services was considered important, it was not perceived by those we met as the highest priority. Food, health services, water supplies, veterinary services were more immediate needs and formal schooling was perceived as a state service, which requires a government to support it. However, substantial levels of attendance at Koranic schools

(averaging classes of 40 - 50 pupils) reported in all places does indicate a concern that children should receive some basic education. The CEASA in Garowe were planning to hold a meeting with teachers in to discuss ways of starting some educational activities. The local newspaper "Himilo", was seen as one way of extending basic educational messages.

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6. While education cannot be an immediate priority for foreign assistance, the long term implications of increased illiteracy will have implications on the future development of these region. In the near future the re-establishment of schools will depend on local Initiative and interest, and support by NGOS should be the basis of supporting local initiatives.

#### RECOKMENDATIONS:

1. Assistance is needed for the resumption of education activities. However, assistance should be based on supporting local voluntary initiatives.
2. Given the critically low rates of literacy recorded in Somali prior to the war there is a need to address the problem of illiteracy. A literacy campaign would require resources beyond the present capacity of the authorities in the region However, aid agencies could consider incorporating functional literacy as a component in any sector they are working in such as agriculture, water, health, veterinary care. Trainers can be found among professionals who have moved into the area
3. Given that Koranic schools are running in most places, NGOS should be ready to discuss with parents and teachers the provision of appropriate support to the Koranic schools. Possibilities to incorporate basic literacy and numeracy in the Koranic school system could be investigated
4. Although many teachers can be found in the area, local refresher training courses will be needed. Such courses could provide an incentive for communities to open their schools Technical assistance agencies such as CIIR with local teachers could provide such a service. Such a programme could start in the main towns (Garowe, Gardo, Bosasso, Burtinle). Former training manuals created for Somalia (e.g by the International Extension College and IITT), should be reproduced and made available.
5. Support should be given to local newspapers such as Himilo the extension of educational messages (e.g. in health, sanitation etc.)
6. The lack of looting in some areas means that some resource materials such as books should be available The SSDF should identify and secure these resources. In the short term provision of stationery, pens etc. not available in-country should be considered by NGOs to support and encourage voluntary educational initiatives. The provision of equipment and furnishings (blackboards, desks, chairs) should be on local production.

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### 3.10 VULNERABLE GROUPS

1. The SSDF emphasised to the mission that just because there was no battle damage in the north east (except in Mudug) outside observers should not simply conclude that all was well. The point they made is that almost all the displaced people in the north east have either had their assets in the south destroyed or looted, or if not, they simply have no access to them.

2 While accepting that the majority of the displaced have had their asset stolen or destroyed not all can be considered as vulnerable. Some still have assets in Bari and some are being cared for by kin with assets. At the same time there are large numbers of displaced people who are not only without their assets, but are being supported by their kinfolk, who were already poor, and becoming more so. International organizations will need to find additional means of identifying the vulnerable.

3 Health status is one means of identifying the most vulnerable. The major constraint is the fact that few health services are operating and that little health data is available. Initial nutritional data identified one group of displaced in Gardo as being particularly vulnerable. A more extensive nutritional survey, as recommended above (section 3.8), would reveal the extent of the problem among displaced in other areas. The most commonly reported cause of death in the north east was malaria, and chloroquine resistance was widely reported. Prevalence of malaria could be used identify particularly vulnerable areas of the regions and sections of the population.

4. In many of the areas visited maternal mortality was frequently reported as a major health problem. This was undoubtedly linked to reports of widespread anaemia- Under conditions of nutritional stress pregnant women must be regarded as a vulnerable group, even more so than in pre-civil war times when Somalials maternal mortality rate was amongst the highest in the world

5. A number of reports were received of men being killed while travelling with their families on trucks coming from southern Somalia, through Ethiopia, to the north east- Accounts were also given of children dying in transit on these journeys, especially from Liboi, with overcrowding and lack of sufficient food being compounding factors.

**RECOMMENDATION:** International agencies working either in Liboi or in the Ogaden should investigate the conditions under which displaced people are being moved to the north, and the feasibility of providing rations at staging points to reduce the stress of the journey on children. Increased availability of food at different locations could also facilitate changes in routes through safer areas.