



# Newsletter

Issue #14

June- July2020 review

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## Plus ...

- Challenges and setbacks that we stumbled upon
- Effects of retrogressive cultural practices

# editorial

Welcome to the 14<sup>th</sup> edition of the COHF newsletter. In this edition, we focus on significant stories of change that have characterized COHF activities in the month June and July 2020. We have highlighted stories of successful partnerships, progressive support from Kenya's and Somaliland's relevant authorities as well as ties with various partners with both countries' technical groups that have supported COHF in our resolve to impact the lives of the vulnerable members of the community.

Also highlighted is the first ever youth dialogue organized to discuss the main challenges and opportunities brought about by the increased migration of Somali youth to Europe and America.

Enjoy reading!

**Nimo Ali**

Director, Candle of Hope Foundation

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“ Effectively, change is almost impossible without industry-wide collaboration, cooperation and consensus.”

— Simon Mainwaring

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## Case of a young girl raped in an orphanage in Hargeysa, Somaliland

We have been following up on a case of Fardosa\* (not her real name), a 13 year old girl who is 5 months pregnant after allegedly being raped by multiple aggressors at an orphanage. Fardosa\* and her other two siblings were placed in the orphanage a few years ago following an application

by her father who had lost his sight, sought to give up their custody in court after their mother developed some kind of mental illness and therefore could not fend for them.

We are working in partnership with *Save the Children Somalia*, *VO SOMO (Voice of Somaliland Minority Women Organization)* and other relevant agencies on a case to sue the criminals for rape and the orphanage for negligence, obstruction of justice and child sexual exploitation by trying to marry off the victim to one of the

perpetrators as per Somali customary laws. Currently only five out of the eight perpetrators have been arrested. The members of the orphanage management are still at large.

Customary law is frequently applied in rape cases because it is seen as an issue better handled quietly between the elders of the victim and the elders of the perpetrators. This act of impunity is the major contributing factor to the prevalence of sexual violence in Somaliland

## Awareness campaigns & advocacy in Somaliland

Capacity building and sensitization sessions have assisted in promoting a culture of change in societal attitudes towards exploitation, violence and discrimination towards children and women.

Ensure more people are in a better position to protect their children against sexual exploitation



During one of the awareness campaign sessions conducted in Berbera, Somaliland

The objective of the sessions was to ensure the lay people are able to identify victims of domestic violence and sexual exploitation. During the month of June, We successfully conducted 4 sessions of tailored and non-sensationalist awareness campaigns against violence of children and women in Hargeysa, Berbera and Burao in Somaliland. These sessions are aimed at fighting gender stereotypes, and

sexual exploitation.

We have produced and distributed a number of IEC materials whereby our target is to ensure that the people are able to understand the signs that indicate that a child is being sexually exploited, their responsibility to ensure a child is appropriately safeguarded, understanding the vulnerabilities that may keep a child being exploited and also know that safeguarding is everyone's task

## Case follow-up

### Updates on the repatriation process of a young girl from Uganda

We are still pursuing a case of Aisha\* a 12 year old girl who was trafficked to Kenya from Uganda and sexually assaulted by her father who has been in custody until recently when he was granted bail by court.

Before being transported to Kenya, Aisha\* had been living with her grandmother since her mother died. She was eager to reunite with her father who later turned out to be her tormentor.

Currently there is a process facilitated through *Dwelling places* (our partners in Uganda) is underway to repatriate Aisha\* to Uganda, before an effort of tracing her relatives begins.



## Victim-Centered Advocacy Webinars

Our organization participated in 12 webinars in the months of June and July to learn some expert advice and guidance on applying trauma-informed principles and scenario-based approach while working with victims of human trafficking.

These webinars were facilitated by regional anti-human trafficking networks involving inter-agency discussions where panelists are asked queries that form basis of scenarios while they provide insights and suggestions in legitimate contexts.

## Youth dialogue with diaspora returnees on opportunities and challenges presented by irregular migration

Poverty and other circumstances have been instrumental on the rising number of youth migrating from Somalia to developed countries, in the search of better opportunities. According to sources, most of the youth migrating end up in forced labour and sexual slavery. It is against this background, the July 2020 Somaliland youth Dialogue for Migration- COHF's flagship initiative for youth dialogue was initiated to engage and empower the youth on causes and challenges of migration. A meeting was organized & held in Hargeysa on 30<sup>th</sup> July where some 8 participants attended, representing diaspora returnees, youth reps and COHF's staff.

We believe such dialogues will provide an analysis of challenges and opportunities presented by migration. Furthermore, they offer an exhaustive collection of lessons learned and recommendations.

Youth dialogue with diaspora returnees and COHF staff in Hargeysa



## HOPE FOR THE HORN- Capacity building session to Prevent Irregular Migration



During one of the HOPE FOR THE HORN sessions conducted Hargeysa, Somaliland

Two capacity building sessions were conducted in Hargeysa on 24<sup>th</sup> June, where 18 participants were in attendance. This is part of the ongoing *Hope for the horn* initiative, started over a year ago. The session's objective is to provide would-be migrants with efficient information of current migratory trends, advice on the challenges that lie ahead, as well as referral to the correct linkages of migration services.

Consequently, these trainings will help prevent irregular migration and optimizing the use of legal avenues for migrating. In addition to providing referral services, the project focuses on empowering the youth by working in tandem with local training institutions to adopt individual skills development in view of improving employment potential both locally and overseas.

## New Findings

- ▲ We have come across various complications ranging from noted movement of perpetrators in the guise of providers of essential services during the COVID-19 period.
- ▲ There are retrogressive cultural practices rooted among the family and peer environment that have influenced the societal attitude towards children and women and therefore making their protective environment very weak

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