

Newsletter

Issue #15

August- September 2020 *review*

In this issue

1. Public Education & Capacity Building in Somaliland
2. Sexual exploitation Survivors' empowerment
3. Eastleigh community against human trafficking
4. Hope for the horn initiative
5. Regional partnerships

Plus...

- Human trafficking survivor's story
- Ongoing risky migration and trafficking routes data collection

editorial

Welcome to the 15th edition of COHF newsletter where we hope to share with you the latest progresses at COFH and our partners.

August and September were significant months for the organization. It has been 2 months of huge progress at COHF and I am pleased to say that we have now reached a remarkable milestone despite the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. We saw a range of new initiatives and up-close conversations with survivors of human trafficking.

We are proud of what the organization has achieved over the last 4 years and are ambitious for the future

Please Enjoy Reading our Newsletter!

Nimo Ali

Director, Candle of Hope Foundation

PUBLIC EDUCATION & CAPACITY BUILDING

Perpetrators **take advantage** of young people, **enticing** them by **promising** mouth-watering salaries in foreign countries

Human trafficking has been on the rise in Somaliland for a long time, especially in the refugee camps around Hargeysa and Berbera. There are many reasons for this: high illiteracy, high unemployment, early marriages... just to mention a few

Most young people within the camps are forced to find alternative ways to improve their livelihoods and in that case many are forced to trek long distances into Ethiopia and Kenya through its porous borders. People take advantage of these young people, enticing them by promising mouth-watering salaries in these countries. Some become domestic house helpers or grounds men but the saddest story is when they are turned into commercial sex workers against

their wish. They end up abused in many different ways, not least sexually and psychologically. We are trying to avert these by sensitizing communities on the evils of human trafficking, trying to reach many people as possible.

Generally we approach community and explain the causes and effects of human trafficking. In some cases, those who have experienced human trafficking tell their ordeals. We have heard sad testimonies.



A COHF project officer in Berbera, Somaliland) describes how partnerships within the community strengthen the efforts to prevent the trafficking of young people.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION SURVIVORS' EMPOWERMENT

Empowering **survivors** of past **sexual exploitation** will help exploited persons, break out of the vicious cycle of **re-exploitation**

We work closely with communities to shun discrimination, bias or stigma associated with sexual exploitation survivors. For example, we have included the parent of *Fardosa (not her real name) into our livelihoods project that we are implementing in Berbera, Somaliland in partnership with Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAOso). Fardosa was a victim of sexual exploitation whose case was highlighted in the

previous issue of our newsletter. Empowering survivors or guardians of past sexual exploitation will help exploited persons, majority of them being women, break out of the vicious cycle of re-exploitation. We understand the significance of creating a supportive community environment, where the exploitation survivors or their guardians are incorporated to economic activities to foster better coping strategies. A

Post-exploitation situation involves many different dimensions of reintegration into society; besides the question of attention to physical health, emotional trauma, security and immediate financial support for food and accommodations. We believe that livelihoods need to be revived and community ties need to be re-established for sexually exploitation survivors to heal successfully and reintegrate into the society.

EASTLEIGH COMMUNITY AGAINST TRAFFICKING

The crowded streets of Eastleigh make it easy for one to remain anonymous and unnoticed

Eastleigh, a vibrant business and residential suburb of Nairobi is an area liked by traffickers. The dense population of mostly Somali speaking community has made it easy for perpetrators to traffic their victims from Somalia without encountering problems. The crowded streets also make the victims remain anonymous and unnoticed. In recent years, more trafficking crimes have been reported

in the area. For example, we recently helped the police intercept a vehicle trafficking girls aged between 8 to 17 from Somalia via Manderla to Eastleigh. We have had numerous successes by reaching community who are joining our movement to help unearth information about how trafficking rings operate. We then pass information about what is happening in the local community to the authorities who will act on anything

suspicious. Our efforts have raised the consciousness of people that modern slavery can be happening very close by and is easily hidden. A flyer campaign 'Detect the Signs' outlining signs to look for on potential human trafficking around you is very effective. COHF wants to create more local campaigns particularly in areas inhabited by Somali speaking communities in Nairobi.

Hope for the horn initiative in Hargeysa

Our representatives sensitizing elders on human trafficking, and the negative outcomes of irregular migration

We conducted 6 trainings on trafficking, smuggling and human rights for migrants to 20 elders from Hargeysa in August 2020. The trainings were aimed at sensitizing the elders on human trafficking and the dangers of irregular migration. There has been an upsurge of irregular migration from Somaliland in the recent past, putting many migrants at risk of life-threatening hazards. Many illegal migrants have

for instance lost their lives in the sea while attempting to reach the gulf countries and Europe in search of jobs opportunities. The elders are influential in guiding the youth on aspects of life and through their resourcefulness; we believe the elders will inform the youth on risks involved and the exploitation of migrants. Many migrants who leave Somaliland in search of a better life undergo severe exploitation before they reach their destinations.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

During the months of August and September, COHF participated in various expert webinars on Action against Human Trafficking. All of the seminars were organized by regional coalition coordinators and attended by governmental representatives responsible for combating trafficking in persons as well as representatives of national and international civil society organizations.

The aims of the sessions were to provide technical assistance on matters concerning trafficking of human beings. The sessions were devoted to specific aspects, including the necessity to adopt a multidisciplinary approach in preventing trafficking, civil society's action to prevent trafficking and the identification of victims of trafficking. Participants exchanged experiences as well as a review of the monitoring of victims support and protection.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING SURVIVOR'S STORY

When Abdia was 17, she and her 15-year-old sister were trafficked from their small village in Garissa to Eastleigh in Nairobi.

Like any parent would be, their mother was desperate to find her daughters. She traveled to Eastleigh and with the help of a relative went to seek assistance from the police to investigate leads. The pursuit continued for a while but was very overwhelming by the fact that Eastleigh is a densely populated area.

Miraculously, one day the trafficker sent Abdia out to run an errand. It also happened to be one of the days that her mother was out on shopping too; Abdia spotted her mother inside a cloth shop. They emotionally embraced and rushed to the police station where she led police back to the flat to arrest the trafficker and rescue her little sister, who was found attending to household tasks.

That divine moment of rescue was five years ago. But as Abdia told us, getting justice took a long time.

Trafficking cases in the Kenya take an average of four or six years to complete, even with a competent LSK lawyer.

Abdia and her little sister decided to participate in the trials against the trafficker. She explains why it was an exceptionally brave decision: "At first it was so difficult for me and also to my sister because we were nervous. What if they will find us and kill us or any of our family members..." "However, my mother convinced me to gather the courage; she made me strong and always supported me," Abdia added.

Abdia and her sister are not alone. Children are exploited for commercial sex trade every time. Although sex trafficking persists in the Kenya, the will to stop it is rising.

Ongoing risky migration and trafficking routes data collection

We participated in the ongoing risky migration and trafficking routes data collection. The exercise is a joint initiative between **Freedom Collaborative** (an online service platform that facilitate anti-human trafficking information sharing globally) and **STTK-Stop the Traffik-Kenya** (Kenya's coalition coordinator of Anti-human trafficking societies). The aim of the exercise is to map routes (origin, transit and destination) commonly used by perpetrators of human trafficking to transport their victims for illicit human trade such as Commercial Sexual Exploitation, domestic servitude, among other forms of exploitations.

UPCOMING EVENTS

11th October 2020

- International Day for the Girl Child

20th November 2020

- Universal Children's Day

25th November 2020

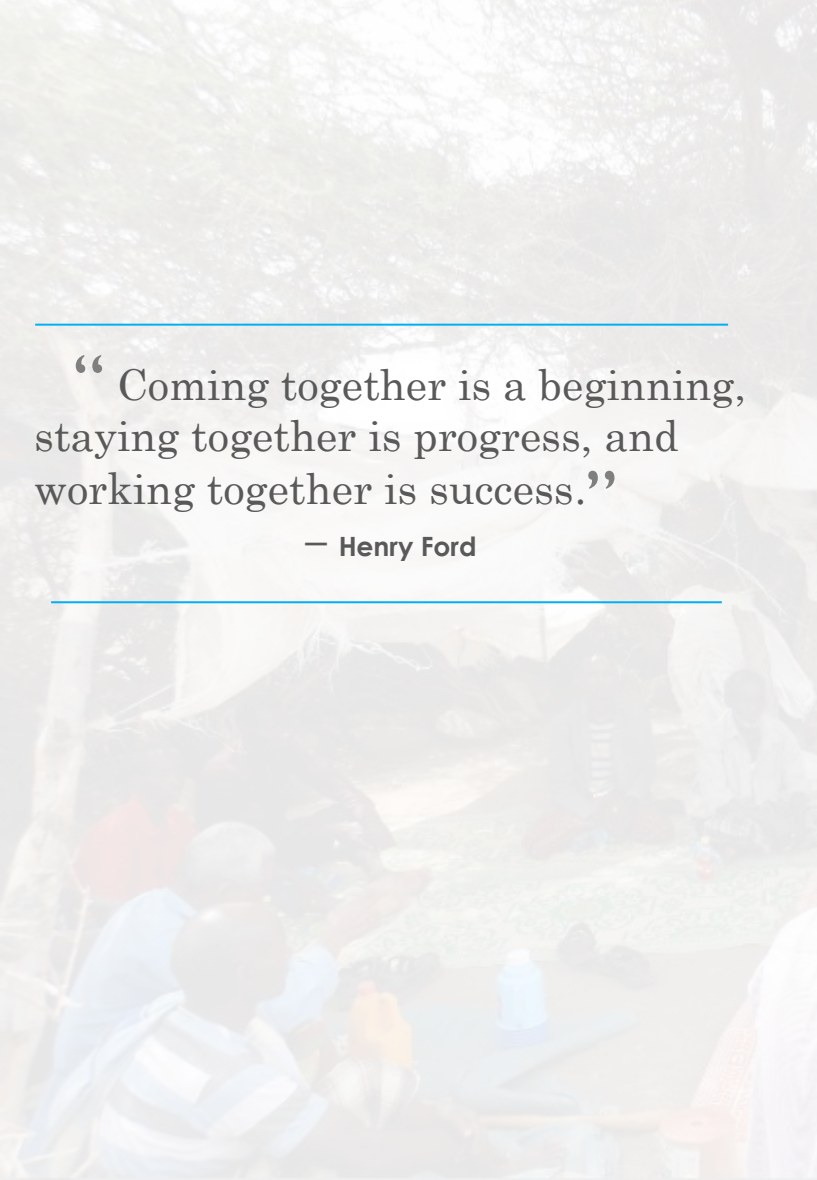
- International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

2nd December 2020

- International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

“ Coming together is a beginning,
staying together is progress, and
working together is success.”

— Henry Ford



Thanks

for reading this issue of our newsletter

Partners



Directorate of
Criminal Investigations

STOP THE TRAFFIK
PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BE BOUGHT & SOLD



Republic of Somaliland
Ministry of Employment
Social Affairs and Family

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