

# Community Care Program Progress Report

Duration: Jan,2022- December 2023



## Overview:

Community care project is a community initiative attitude change that is significantly aimed at changing negative community attitudes toward bad social norms and transforming community's better lives by Building Healthy, Safe, and Peaceful Communities through community dialogues.

WAAPO is committed to implementing the Communities Care program in the Erigavo and Lasanood districts within the Sanaag and Sool regions of Somaliland. The primary aim of this initiative is to foster healthier, safer, and more peaceful communities, particularly for women and girls. We achieve this by collaborating with local communities to enhance access to care and support for survivors of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). Moreover, we strive to transform the harmful social norms that perpetuate VAWG into norms that promote dignity, equality, and nonviolence.

The community care program, implemented by WAAPO and supported by UNICEF, has been instrumental in providing training and support to the community members. The program has empowered individuals and equipped them with the knowledge and skills needed to take action against harmful practices and address violations within their community. The enthusiastic response and dedication from all groups reflect their appreciation for the program's impact.

Their collective efforts have not only contributed to creating a safer and more inclusive environment but have also inspired them to advocate for the extension of the program to other districts within the region. The request to expand the program is proof to the positive change it has brought about and the value it holds for the community members

## Core activities:

- Identify and train community structures (Community-Discussion Leaders (CDLs- 8 person per community) on the toolkit.
- Conduct community dialogue session to 448 community members (13-Weeks).
- Identify community group members – “champions for change.” to publicly promote positive norms and condemn harmful practices” public declaration.”
- Support Community Discussion Leaders develop “Community Action Plans.”
- Implement community action plans to protect “through awareness raising, and mass media.
- Facilitate referrals for medical, legal, Safehouse, psychosocial support for FGM, CEFM & GBV cases.
- Support impact evaluation process of the social norms through baseline and end line surveys

## Process of the Implementation:

**Community Mobilization and CDL Selection:** Before commencing the project, we dedicated time to mobilizing community support, engaging local government officials, and collaborating with the Ministry of Social Affairs in the target regions, alongside other key stakeholders. The selection of Community Discussion Leaders (CDLs) was a pivotal step. These leaders were selected jointly by the Lasanod and Erigavo Local Governments, MESAF, and the WAAPO Project Manager. The selection process emphasized finding individuals deeply embedded in their communities and experienced in community interactions.

**CDL Training:** After the CDLs were identified we conducted a comprehensive 14-day training program covering various aspects of the community care project. The objectives included equipping participants with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement the project.

**Baseline Survey and Pretest:** Prior to launching the dialogue sessions, we conducted a baseline survey and pretest to gauge the prevailing harmful social norms within the community, involving CDLs, dialogue session participants, and households. In total, 104 dialogue participants (including CDLs) and 120 randomly selected household community members participated in this survey.



## Dialogue Sessions:

Community care dialogue sessions in aim to create a platform for open dialogue and discussion on various community issues. As part of this program, a series of community dialogue sessions were organized, which saw the active participation of 96 individuals, including 52 females and 44 males.

To facilitate these discussions, eight highly respected individuals were selected as Community Discussion Leaders (CDLs). Each CDL was responsible for conducting two dialogue sessions every week. These sessions covered a wide range of topics and issues that are important to the community.

Over the course of the program, most of the dialogue sessions have been completed. The community dialogue sessions were the Elders and Traditional group, Youth group, TBA's group, Women's group, Service Providers group, Education group, and Community Committee group actively participated in mobilizing against harmful social norms, violations, and abuses is truly commendable.



It highlights their commitment to promoting a culture of respect, equality, and well-being for all. The ongoing collaboration between the community, WAAPO, and UNICEF demonstrates the importance of fostering strong partnerships for sustainable development. The success of the community care program in the project target location serves as a strong foundation for its potential expansion, benefiting even more communities in the region. The appreciation and support from all groups are invaluable in driving positive change and reinforcing the significance of creating a community where harmful social norms, violations, and abuses can be challenged and overcome.

The sessions encouraged discussions on gender equality, women's rights, and ways to promote women's participation in decision-making processes. Overall, the community dialogue sessions within the community care program in the Erigavo district have been instrumental in fostering a sense of togetherness and promoting community development. The diverse perspectives, ideas, and contributions of the participants have enriched the discussions, leading to innovative solutions and a collective effort toward positive change.

The impact of these dialogue sessions on the community has been significant. By coming together, individuals from different clans set aside their differences and collaborated on addressing violations against vulnerable persons. The dialogue sessions fostered a sense of unity and integration within the community, facilitating discussions on protection issues that affect everyone.

Moreover, these sessions have played a crucial role in breaking down barriers and promoting inclusivity. Through open and honest conversations, the community members became one team, working towards the betterment of their community. By recognizing and addressing issues collectively, they are now able to develop strategies and implement measures that ensure the safety and well-being of all community members. The community dialogue sessions have truly brought about positive change in project target location. They have not only strengthened relationships and fostered unity but also empowered individuals to take action and contribute to the development and protection of their community.



By bringing together individuals from various clans in the Elders' group, the community care program has helped them recognize and appreciate their common interests and shared responsibility towards their community. This realization has paved the way for improved relationships and cooperation, transcending clan divisions. When conflicts arise in the community, the unity forged through the dialogue sessions has allowed the community to come together as one team. By actively participating in finding solutions and supporting the government, the community members have demonstrated their commitment to maintaining peace and stability within their community.

The collective efforts of the community, with support from the dialogue sessions of the community care program, have helped strengthen community bonds, encourage problem-solving, and promote a peaceful and inclusive environment for everyone in Erigavo and Lasanod.

The transformation from seeing each other as members of different clans to recognizing one another as teammates and friends reflects the power of dialogue, understanding, and shared goals. It is evidence of the success of the community care program and the tremendous impact it has had on Erigavo and Lasanod.

## Declaration event

WAAPO successfully organized a Community Declaration Event at the Community Care Program and attended 550 people, including regional officials (such as the Mayor, Governor, and a MESAF representative), local government officials, Community Discussion Leaders (CDLs), dialogue participants, and other community members.

Presenting WAAPO's community care program successes in the project target location were the main goal of the event. Other goals included telling the community about the programs we are implementing, sharing our observations and conversations during the dialogue sessions—each CDL conducted twenty-five dialogue sessions in thirteen weeks, with two sessions per week—and making a declaration in front of the attendees to end all violations of women and girls. During the event, participants were also asked to pledge to mobilize their communities to end violations of women and girls.

WAAPO program manager project target location member shared with the participants a comprehensive overview of its work and also the program of community care and its objectives and goals, also provided a briefing about the dialogue sessions in which the CDLs were organized and conducted and the cases they referred to the service providers including WAAPO and the nature of the cases, some of the dialogue session participants were presented the event for songs, dramas and poets which talks to the violations against women and girls and also factors contributing any violations against the vulnerable community including women, girls, boys, disable groups and minority groups, WAAPO team informed for the events participants that that program was leading by eight different groups who are from the different who come from various groups within the community, such as the security and police group, women's group, education group, TBAs group, youth group, traditional elder group, and women's group.

UNICEF and WAAPO team attended this historic event declaration. She thanked the attendees and the WAAPO team for organizing and preparing this event to announce the end of all violence against women and girls, and she promised that the project would not end there but would continue and be expanded to other areas of the Sanaag and Sool region.

All of the government officials including Regional Officials and Local Government Representatives: Esteemed regional officials, the Mayor, the Governor, and MESAF officials, along with local government officials who were invited and attended the declaration event appreciated and thanked the WAAPO organization for the good work they had done, and praised the way the

WAAPO organization's leaders and workers had always kept them updated on the progress of the work. "We are very happy tonight to come declaration event and participate in the announcement ceremony of the achievements and impact of the community care program that WAAPO implements." Said one of the district authorities.

## Action plan implementation

After a long discussion of the community care program in thirteen weeks the dialogue session participants and the community discussion leaders prepared and developed their action plans, during this each CDL and his participants implemented their action plan for instance.

The community care program has been brought to the community and has benefited greatly. They found out that female genital mutilation had a devastating effect on girls, they also found out about the effects of GBV on women and children, and the participants of the discussions agreed to educate the rest of their communities about the dangers of sexual violence and female genital mutilation.

- A group of men were promoted nonviolent and respectful behaviors towards women and girls.
- They speak out and made advocacy when they see other men behaving violently or disrespectfully towards a women or girl in their neighborhood.
- The traditional elders and the sheikhs reported any act of violence against women and girls also they share the local leaders and the authorities who can take actions to the perpetrator.
- They also start conversations about the other men in their families and social networks who express opinions that foster sexual violence
- They conduct campaigns to the community to educate other men about the benefits nonviolent and respectful relations ships between men and women and the importance of the human dignity.

They groups conducted door to door awareness raising for their community and talk to the harmful social norms and they reach a significant progress during this, because they community were understanding the consequence of the violations against women and girls

- Go to schools, youth groups and sports teams to talk with and mentor young men about non-violent and respectful relationships with women.
- Have a public art competition inviting men to submit art that shows non-violent ways of being a man.
- Encourage religious leaders to make proclamations linking gender equality and respect for women and girls to religious values and to condemn discriminatory practices in their sermons.



Some of the CDLs and their participants were presented their messages talking form harmful social norms and the violations against women and girls in sports for playing football since the group is the youth group in Borama they made action plan to conduct a sport event they conducted

They visited MCH and the IDPs also host communities and share what the topics they discussed and the main point they agreed and advocating to change for their attitudes and their believing of harmful social norms and any violations against women and girls.

Conducted awareness raising sessions for general communities; sharing good messages about harmful social norms encourage not to shay and talk about the any sexual violations against

Activities	# Woman Beneficiaries reached	# Men Beneficiaries reached	# Girls Beneficiaries reached	# Boys Beneficiaries reached	Total Beneficiary reached
Meeting with local authorities	5	15	2	1	23
Meeting with Youths	0	0	78	157	235
Meeting with TBAs	26	0	5	0	31
Mosque preaching	22	67	14	43	146
Door to Door awareness by elders & women CD members	69	34	38	23	164
Awareness Sessions in IDP camps by women & men elders CD groups	134	76	45	33	288
Media coverage - talks and airing events	236	207	55	78	576
<b>Total</b>	492	399	237	335	1463

#### C-Care Program Progress in 2022-2023:

- **4-Communities scaled-up C-care program** ( Borama, Gabilay, Las,Anod and Ceerigabo district) and reached 32 CDLs( 8-CDL in 4 communities)
- A total of 7488 persons (2497M 4992F) reached and attended community discussion session (13-Weeks) to improve **access and support for SGBV survivors and harmful social** and traditional norms.
- In total 110 survivors of GBV have been **referred by the trained CDL** to WAAPO and other service providers to get access support and assistance.
- 12101 individuals (7620 F 4481M) reached **through prevention massages on key GBV and CP information & risks, social norms**, harmful practices, MRE and mitigation measures.
- A total of 10210 individuals received quality service through **case management service incl. PSS and referrals.**

## Challenges:

Since the project has targeted a rural area (hard-to-reach locations)– where the **culture was very rigid**, we have learned that the rooted negative social norms and attitudes towards change were very difficult to transform. The C-care CDLs and C-care facilitators, faced resistance from traditional elders and religious leaders during the program period.

The project program design was more on the prevention component, and it was very **limited to the response component**, and we faced limited resources to conduct referrals, emergency cash support, transport assistance for the survivors, NFIs, medical-legal direct support, and other women in need priorities.

The **C-care project staff was very limited** as well as the **incentive for the CDL and supervision, follow-ups, and monitoring activities** due to the resource constraint.

**Women's participation in community activities** was very limited, as they faced challenges from their male leaders- they were not allowed women's representation in the decision-making arena such as community meetings.

**Access constraints for the community affected by Conflict** in the Sool region (Las, Anood), the project staff faced the challenge of mobilizing community dialogues and conducting declaration events during the conflicts.

## Specific Challenges and obstacles:

- High expectations of the community
- The locations of the sessions are very far away
- Most of the community was not aware of the violence against women and girls and they challenged you and always complained that is the project of the agencies that violence did not exist in our country and it's difficult to understand that the violence occurred in our community
- Most of the participants are illiterate and it takes more time to understand some topics of the sessions that need more explanations of the topic

## Opportunities:

We have **empowered elders (CDLs) as agents of change to weigh the influences of change for their communities** – targeting the community elite incl. CDLs are always an opportunity to tackle social norms.

The **trained CDL influences** - 14 Days CDL workshop (their mindset has changed) was also **an opportunity to sustain the prevention of GBV/CP beyond the lifetime project** and to address rooted negative social norms and attitudes toward change.

**Integrated other clusters' service deliveries** was also an opportunity – during the project period, we mainstreamed C-care activities for the emergence program activities such as wash, and SBC CP/GBV in emergence.

The existing community structure we have engaged and training incl. **CBCP and the women's coalition were also opportunities for this C-care initiative** to further scale plans and sustainability for the C-care model.

The trained CDL has **taken part in other community-structure committees such as relief committees and conflict resolution/** active participation in community activities such as referral, and case management activities will have the potential to gain support from other NGOs & Gov, and be ready to absorb scale-up plans, and recognition as well for their respective communities

## Recommendations: Based on our experiences and observations, we propose the following recommendations for the project's future:

- Incorporate livelihood supports to address economic challenges communities face due to drought and conflicts, thereby enhancing community living conditions and reinforcing the project's impact.
- Continue targeted interventions to address Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), involving elders, youth, and schools in primary prevention efforts.
- Explore the expansion of the Communities Care initiative into other districts of the Sool and Sanaag regions, as well as M-jeh and Awdal, to maximize its positive impact.
- To extend the community care program into the whole country
- To increase the support of survivors such as medical referral support, legal support, and education and lively hood support

- In order to reach a greater number of community awareness raising and community mobilization it's important to increase the number of community discussions and also the number of the participants because when we increase the number of discussions and the number of the participants we conduct easily more community declarations and more awareness raising
- To open centers of learning literacy and numeracy in the areas of the community care program implemented

**Conclusion:**

The Communities Care project has made significant progress in fostering healthier, safer, and more peaceful communities in the Erigavo and Lasanood districts. Through community mobilization, CDL training, baseline surveys, and dialogue sessions, WAAPO has engaged community members in transforming harmful social norms and promoting positive values. The project's focus on supporting survivors of VAWG and enhancing access to care and support has contributed to the overall goal of creating communities that prioritize dignity, equality, and nonviolence

**Case Stories**

Sahra\*, a member of dialogue session participants in the security group, stated, "When a girl who was her aunt was pulled over by a car, she used to limp and we used to call her a cripple." She used to get very upset when she was called crippled, but now after participating in dialogue sessions in the community care I know that nickname bothers the little girl, and we stopped calling her that.

Khadija\*, a TBA Group member, stated, "I used to circumcise young girls, but now I don't." When I discovered that it is forbidden in Islam and heard it from scholars, I offered families a sheep animal or money equivalent to \$20 when I circumcised a girl. Now that I know about it, I will work with you to prevent girls from being circumcised. I didn't know about it before, but awareness like this that I participated in made me stop circumcising, and now I will take part in struggles for "Daryeel Bulsho" to prevent girls from being circumcised.

Deqa\* (not her real name) is a 26-year-old WAAPO Shelter resident. Her ethnicity is Somali. She has two children, ages six and eight months. Her mother died when she was a child, and her father died recently. Deqa has been married for six years, and her husband was arrested during her first pregnancy. After being released after 5 years, he began beating and assaulting Deqa, and she became pregnant with her second child. Deqa was evicted from her home and had nowhere to live with her children after her husband failed to provide her with the necessary financial support. Following that, MESAF referred her to the WAAPO shelter. When she arrived at the shelter, she was given counseling to help her mentally and emotionally, as well as accommodation, three meals a day, hygiene supplies, and safe transportation to other services. Deqa and her two children received winter clothes, diapers, and baby formula (milk), as well as recreational activities in the center

and access to the internet and television. With the assistance of MESAF and the Ministry of Justice, Deqa is reopening her court case for family maintenance and child support. She will also participate in the Life Skills Program. She is satisfied with the services provided by WAAPO organizations.











