



## **CASE STUDY: Medair Somalia/ Somaliland Beneficiary Accountability Update for 2009**

### ***Introduction***

In 2008, Medair launched a new programme in Somalia/ Somaliland to provide life-saving emergency relief, especially for mothers and children. The region has known years of insecurity and drought, but in 2008, the situation worsened. The number of people urgently needing emergency aid across Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland rose from 1.83 million to 3.25 million, more than 40% of the entire population.

Medair first set up a base in Cadale District in Somalia's Middle Shabelle Region, one of the most affected regions due to drought, escalating food prices, and increasing insecurity. The insecurity forced Medair to rethink its strategy of delivering aid in Cadale, and it began using a local partner, and throughout 2009 operated the programme mainly through remote management.

In order to ensure that the programme was delivered in accordance with Medair's core principles, including accountability, beneficiary accountability (BA) training was conducted in December 2008 for Somalia project staff and the local partner. Aid in Conflict/ Do No Harm sessions were included in this training, and the Good Enough Guide was provided to field staff for reference. Sector leaders (Health, WASH, Nutrition) then developed BA plans for the following 3 months, which were reviewed during the March 2009 planning workshop. Leaflets and feedback questionnaires in the local language were developed and distributed.

### ***Beneficiary Accountability Principles Adopted in Cadale***

- 1. Community Participation in programme design**
- 2. Communication with local community**
- 3. Complaints procedure**
- 4. Getting all types of feedback**

#### **1. Community participation in Programme Design**

Implementing NGO staff involved the local people in making decisions about their activities by:

1. Requesting programme acceptance from the community
2. Offering to locate a health facility such as a Health Post (HP) in the local community
3. Selecting Outpatient Therapeutic Programme/ Supplementary Feeding Programme (OTP/ SFP) sites
4. Working with the traditional leaders of the 11 main villages

#### **2. Communication with local community**

Implementing NGO staff provided information publicly by:

1. Using loud speakers in community gatherings such as Cadale Town Public Park
2. Distributing leaflets issued in local language in three successive quarters
3. Announcements at site gatherings – OTP/ SFP sites, HPs etc.
4. Holding community meetings and demonstrations
5. Local staff distributed leaflets prepared by MEDAIR as an explanation of the ongoing projects and as part of BA. The leaflets also explained the referral card and its admission criteria (by reading the leaflet aloud and by responding to their questions in meetings/ public gatherings)

#### **3. Complaints procedure**

Contact information, including: the office address, the name and contact details of the programme managers and other relevant individuals, included in communication with beneficiaries (leaflets etc).



#### **4. Getting all types of feedback**

To get beneficiary feedback tools were issued including suggestion boxes, BA forms, and 'smiley' surveys.



Suggestion box



Distributing leaflets



Getting feedback



Making announcements

#### **Beneficiary accountability in Burao, 2009**

In November 2008, the Medair team opened a second programme in Burao, Somaliland, where security conditions were better, but the humanitarian situation was still very difficult. Thousands of drought- and conflict-affected people had fled to Burao, straining the resources of the existing population.

As Medair is the only INGO with a permanent presence in Burao, many representatives of the different clans residing in and around Burao visit the Medair office often to discuss programming issues. Regular meetings with clan elders are being conducted to solicit their input in the planning of activities, with the main aim being for clans to take ownership of projects as well as to ensure impartiality in the delivery of aid to the different clans. These meetings have proven to be of vital importance for the proper implementation of projects. The clan representatives are very pro-active in bringing up issues for discussion. Medair was pleased to see their active participation and a genuine willingness to cooperate with Medair at different levels.

Medair is keeping an interactive relationship with the local authorities in the Togdheer region, by sending them monthly summary reports of all current activities and inviting them to a quarterly meeting in the Medair office in Burao to discuss the projects. Besides the quarterly meetings, regular impromptu meetings are held with representatives of the different ministries during all phases of the projects.

Medair has contracted a local NGO to liaise between Medair and the local communities it is serving. This local NGO holds regular meetings with village committees and actively involves them in the implementation of projects. The advantage of having a local NGO as a third party is that impartiality can be promoted and sensitivity to local norms is more likely.

Communities have been giving feedback by letter, which are then recorded as having been received by Medair administration staff. Letters are given to the manager responsible, who then deals with them. In addition, community members visit the Medair office when they have complaints, which are then thoroughly investigated and appropriate action taken. In one case, irregularities in a food distribution were identified and addressed as a result of complaints received.

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