

Training of health workers in the Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response System in South Central Somalia

March 2010

Background: Recurrent conflict and natural disasters in Somalia in the past two decades have hampered the ability of the health system to respond to health emergencies. Insecurity due to ongoing conflicts continue to displace populations and disrupt the social and economic infrastructures.

The fragmentation of the health system limits its capacity to collect meaningful health information. Where elements of the health information system still exist, coverage remains low and is mainly determined by access. This means that the information collected may under represents the actual disease caseload. Furthermore the level of health knowledge varies between health facilities. In light of this situation, and coupled with a lack of or limited diagnostic facilities, the standardized clinical case definition approach for the classification of health events has been adopted by health partners in Somalia to determine patient health status.

As part of the ongoing efforts by health partners to monitor the trends of epidemic-prone diseases, early detection of outbreaks, appropriate case management and response, WHO and Merlin trained health workers across key locations of South Central Somalia on disease surveillance and reporting.



Photo: WHO

The high levels of displacement in Somalia lead to a significant risk of outbreaks of communicable disease. To be able to detect and respond to outbreaks when they occur, health workers must be able report the number of cases of disease that they treat in an accurate and timely manner



Photo: WHO

In January and February 2010, WHO and Merlin trained 116 health workers in disease reporting as part of plans to roll out the IDSR system and ensure coverage of disease surveillance for vulnerable communities

Aim of the IDSR training

The aim of the training was to improve build the response capacity of health workers in early detection of epidemic-prone disease, case definitions, reporting, and appropriate case management in order to prevent avoidable death and disability related to targeted diseases.

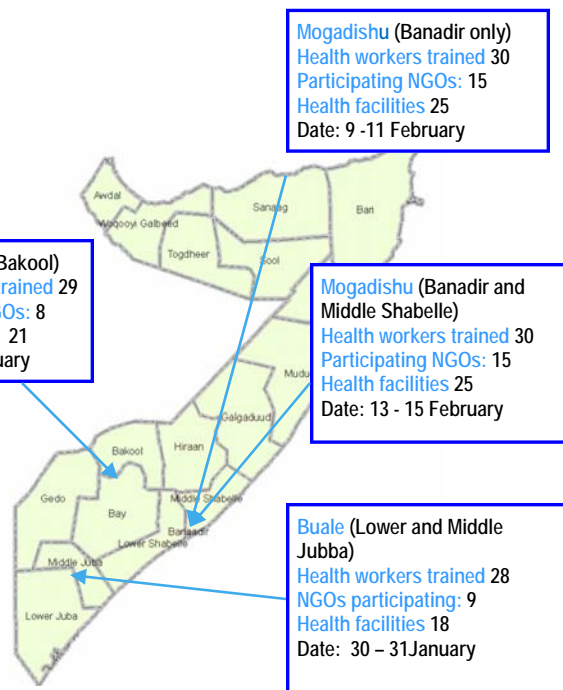
Training content

Topics covered within the training include definition for IDSR and surveillance of communicable diseases, case definitions of diseases under the planned surveillance system, and related approaches to management and response. In addition, participants were also trained on data collection procedures and tools, and reporting.

Training outcomes

During January and February 2010, over 116 health workers from 6 regions, comprising mainly of community health workers and nurses, from 81 health facilities were trained. 25 participants came from 13 hospitals, with the remaining from primary health care facilities.

Participants came from across South Central Somalia including Banadir, Middle Shabelle, Bay, Bakool, and Lower and Middle Jubba regions representing over 20 NGOs. The participants are expected to cascade information to their colleagues in the field and to share weekly morbidity and mortality data with WHO in order to monitor disease trends, detect outbreaks earlier and respond in a timely and effective manner.



Location of IDSR training in January and February 2010

Participating agencies in training

World Vision, GTZ, Somali Red Crescent Society, Intersos, DMO, BMO, Salama, COOPI, Muslim Aid UK, Mercy USA, African Rescue Committee, Somali Relief and Development, Somali Red Crescent Society, Relief and Health Organization, Swedish African Welfare Alliance, Unicef, Al-Dacwa, Hamarweyn CBO, Zamzam Foundation, Hamarjabjab CBO, Hayat Group, Arafat Hospital Aden Cadde Hospital, SOS, RAHO, ICRC, Afmadow Hospital Community, SORDES, SAWA, SSRDA, SHARDO, SORDO

Next steps

The completed training makes a significant contribution to the establishment of the system in South Central Somalia which will improve outbreak detection and response and extend coverage of the disease surveillance system for populations of humanitarian concern.

WHO and Merlin are currently seeking additional financial resources for further roll-out of the surveillance system, strengthening the existing network in place and improving preparedness and response to disease outbreaks with a focus on vulnerable populations in South Central Somalia and Puntland.

For more information on detecting and managing outbreaks, including to download technical guidelines, please visit www.who.int/hac/techguidance/pht/comdisease/en/index1.html



For more information, please visit <http://www.emro.who.int/somalia/healthcluster.htm> and www.merlin.org.uk