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FEED THE CHILDREN

FINAL REPORT

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PROJECT OFFICE: OFDA/DRD

Submitted by:

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Narrative Component of Report

1.0 Introduction

The Feed The Children Child Care center in Mogadishu North has been supported by USAID during the period of June 1 through December 31, 1993. The grant has primarily covered the operating cost of the center.

This narrative report will focus primarily on those activities which have been directly funded by USAID, but will also address related activities and the context of the center in Mogadishu North in order to provide a broader picture of the work which has been accomplished.

In summary, the center has been an exceptional success in the midst of an otherwise very difficult and often tragic situation. It has become a compulsory stop on four visits by officials of the United States government and armed forces, the Canadian and Italian governments and the United Nations. It has been featured in numerous media stories.

At the time of the writing of this report the center is providing food, health care, pre and primary school education, and occasional clothing and foot wear to 1800 of the poorest children in Mogadishu. It is the only program of its kind in Mogadishu North, an area of approximately 350,000 people.

While assistance has been provided by several countries - notably the U.S., Canada and Italy - and by several NGOs in addition to Feed The Children - the due credit for the success of this program must be given to the group of Somali women who call themselves the Somali Relief and Development Organization. It is their dedication, sacrifice and hard work which have carried this project from its start during the civil war to its current level of operation.

2.0 Operation

In the spring and summer of 1991, a group of professional Somali women organized themselves into the Somali Relief and Development Organization (SRDO) and began to provide emergency medical care for children who were injured during the civil war. They set up several first aid posts in Mogadishu, and raised funds locally for their program. By early 1992 all sources of support within Mogadishu had dried up as those with any wealth or mobility fled the city. The needs also shifted from emergency medical assistance to food aid as the famine set in.

The SRDO initiated contact with the international aid community. In September 1992 their representative met with Feed The Children International. This meeting resulted in FTC's sending an initial shipment of about 40 MT of food, medical supplies and other relief goods. In February 1993 a partnership agreement was signed between FTC and the SRDO. The SRDO agreed to serve as the indigenous implementing partner of FTC in Somalia. The Projects Director of the SRDO also agreed to serve as the Country Director of FTC in Somalia. FTC agreed to provide financial support and relief commodity aid sufficient to maintain the program at a level of 500 children and to seek additional funding to permit the expansion of the program.

In January 1993 the SRDO/FTC had moved its operations into the building which used to house the Italian Catholic School, adjacent to the cathedral at "Kilometre 2" in Mogadishu North. This building had been shelled heavily and completely trashed and looted during the war. But the basic cement structure was sound and it provided reasonable protection for the children. Initially the center served the needs of 150 children. It expanded quickly to 450-500.

In February and March 1993 the U.S. Marines stationed in Mogadishu "adopted" the center and began to devote many man-hours of volunteer time during their off-duty shifts to cleaning, repairing and painting the center and to playing with the kids. Those in charge of the U.S. Marines contingent also agreed to provide thousands of dollars worth of surplus food, medicine, building materials and equipment. Generous support was also provided by the Canadian and Italian forces.

The U.S. Marines also christened the center "The Restore Hope Orphanage" and left murals and signage to this effect. It has become locally known by this name. While the resulting visibility has been very helpful in many ways, the close association with the U.S. forces has created difficulties for the staff on occasion. Also, the center is not an "orphanage" but an integrated childcare program.

The grant of \$100,000 from USAID came into effect on June 1, 1993 and provided financial support for many of the operating cost, primarily salaries. These funds, combined with the allocation of food from the WFP and continued support from FTC and other NGOs, were critical in permitting the center to stabilize its operations and to grow steadily until reaching its present level.

3.0 Programs Supported by the USAID Grant

3.1 Identification and Selection of Vulnerable Children

Presently there are 1,800 children enrolled in the center. According to the daily register about 1,500 attend every day, seven days a week (on Friday the center operates only in the morning). The primary cause of absenteeism is illness.

Approximately one-third of the children are "orphans" - i.e. neither their immediate mother nor father can be found. Virtually all of the rest are from single mother families.

Initially it was planned that the center's staff would move throughout the neighborhoods identifying the poorest children. However, as the reputation of the center grew, there appeared an endless line up of children and mothers requesting admittance. The criteria established were: 1. Age - 3 - 12 years; 2. Vulnerability - Priority to orphans and children from single mother families; 3. Poverty - those with some means to look after their own children unassisted were refused; 4. Non-discrimination - Children from all Somali clans are included as well as some Somalians of south Asian descent.

All of the children are registered and rudimentary records are kept on them. If and when some sort of child welfare service or family-child reunification program comes into being, this information will assist in an effective response to these children.

USAID has covered salaries of the teachers/child care workers and administrators who have undertaken these tasks.

3.2 Feeding

Every day each child receives a rice porridge breakfast with milk and sugar upon arrival between 8:00 - 8:30 a.m. When supplies permit, a high nutrition snack such as a granola bar or oxfam biscuit is given mid-morning. During the early afternoon, every child receives a hot meal of rice or pasta supplemented with beans, cheese, tomatoes and/or meat.

The food has been supplied by the WFP and Feed The Children, as well as occasional shipments from other NGOs. Cooking equipment and utensils were purchased with funds from Feed The Children. The kitchen and stoves were repaired and made functional by U.S. Marines. The wages of the cooks are covered by the grant from USAID.

3.3 Health Care

Infant and child mortality and morbidity were at record levels during the civil war and famine. It is estimated that over 25% of Somalian children under age 5 died during that period. The incidence of TB, diarrhea, eye, throat and ear infections, skin disorders and bronchitis is still exceptionally high. These are the major ailments to which the Feed The Children health care program must respond.

During its initial period of operation the center was greatly helped by regular visits by a medical team from the Swedish hospital. With the rotating out of the Swedish UN contingent this service ceased. However, the USAID grant has made possible

the hiring of one doctor and two nurses who work full-time at the center.

A member of this medical team makes regular visits to the classrooms. Children either self-identify as needing treatment, or are identified by the teachers, or by a member of the medical team. Children are taken to the health post, examined and treated. Those in need of further attention are taken to the nearby Italian forces clinic.

A few months ago a team from UNICEF visited the clinic and vaccinated all of the children. With the increase in numbers and the turnover of children, there is a need for a supplemental vaccination program. However, UNICEF is no longer operational in Mogadishu North and an alternative needs to be arranged.

Potable water is not available on-site. It is purchased by the tank load but still boiled before being mixed with powdered skim milk.

The old latrine units from the original school building have been cleaned up, made functional and disinfected. While they are not ideal and in need of further repair, they are sanitary and preferred to ventilated pit latrines.

A program of maternal health and training mothers in pre/post natal and child health is just getting started.

3.4 Education

All of the children participate in a full preschool or primary school program. There are 15 classes, each with an average of 100 - 125 children each. Three levels, roughly equivalent to preschool, first grade and second grade are taught. As virtually all of the children in the country did not attend school for the past 3-5 years, the only difference in ability was between these basic levels, regardless of age.

Subjects taught include, Somali, English, Arabic (primarily for religious reasons as this is a Moslem country), math and basic science. The medical team assists in providing health education.

There are currently 16 teachers and a school director. In addition, there are six teacher aides who are paid through food-for-work.

All of the teachers held teaching certificates and had practiced prior to the war.

School furnishings - desks, benches - were built with wood and labor provided by the U.S. and Canadian armed forces. The Italian unit conducted the disinfecting and antimalaria spraying of the school facilities.

The staff and the children have identified the need to introduce play, recreation and sports. Efforts are being made to do this soon.

Exercise books and some basic literacy workbooks were supplied by UNICEF. There is a need for additional materials as well as more benches, desks and office furniture. A UNESCO program which offers textbooks is being applied for.

Funds for USAID have paid for the salaries of the teachers, the school director and the office staff.

3.5 Security

Mogadishu remains a very dangerous city. The general population is extensively armed. With the withdrawal of many of the UN troops from street-level patrol, and the lack of a civil police force, the use of private guards is the only way to ensure adequate security.

FTC employs 21 guards who, on rotation, provide round-the-clock protection to the center. An additional three guard the storehouse a couple of blocks away. Two others provide armed escort for the FTC vehicle whenever it goes out. Guards also help with repair and construction activities when guarding demands are tight. The guards salaries are paid out of the USAID grant.

3.6 Administration

The center employs a Director, a Vice-director, a clerk/secretary and an accountant to manage administrative activities.

There are also 11 cleaning staff employed who maintain the site, assist in kitchen clean-up and laundry and other custodial tasks. Three others help out and are paid with food-for-work.

The administrative and maintenance staff salaries are paid out of the USAID grant.

3.7 Operating Expenses

In addition to salaries, USAID funds have also covered the costs of running a pick-up truck. This indispensable vehicle is leased with a driver and a guard for \$50.00 a day.

A second vehicle had been available to the program but it was disabled by the Rangers during one of their failed attempts to find General Aidid. It was parked close to an area where Aidid was thought to be hiding and a bullet was shot into the manifold to prevent its being used as a getaway vehicle.

3.8 Shipping Logistics

Feed The Children supplies a minimum of one 20' container of food, medicine and relief supplies each month to the program. Getting these supplies through the port of Mombasa, transhipped to Mogadishu and through the port there requires an extensive commitment of time, filling out of forms, sorting through bureaucracy and monitoring to avoid losses. Feed The Children employs a logistics person both in Mogadishu and in Nairobi to look after these functions.

4.0 Personnel

The project personnel and their respective salaries are as follows. (Salary expense in excess of what has been recorded in the financial report has been covered by funds from Feed The Children.)

1	Project Director	\$1000./month
1	Vice-Director	500./month
1	School Director	350./month
1	Accountant	350./month
1	Clerk/Secretary	200./month
1	Doctor	350./month
2	Nurses	150./month
11	Teachers/Childcare workers	150.-250./month (depending on level of certification)
6	Assistant teachers	Paid in FFW
4	Cooks	100./month
11	Cleaning/maintenance staff	100./month
3	Maintenance assistants	Paid in FFW
21	Security guards at center	75.-150./month (depending on experience and seniority)
3	Security guards at warehouse	100./month
2	Security guards/vehicle escort	150./month
2	Drivers	300./month
2	Logistics Officers	366./month (Nairobi) 250./month (Mogadishu) Est.

5.0 Problems Encountered

With regard to implementing the grant from USAID, there have been exceptionally few problems. All of the staff positions have been filled and paid exactly in keeping with the proposed budget. The only exception was the logistics office in Nairobi. This position began 2 months late.

Given the chaos and political upheaval which have been present in Mogadishu, the program has been exceptionally fortunate in being free of problems. Not a single day's operation has been missed. As a result of its being situated north of the "green line" in the clan territory Ali Madu, rather than in Mogadishu South, General Aidis's zone, it has been spared the violence and military activity which have affected many other NGO operations and forced many of them to restrict or close their operations.

A further advantage comes from the using an entirely Somali staff. There are no foreigners present. The Director is an American citizen who had emigrated from Somalia to the U.S. 12 years ago. All others are Somali citizens.

The program has also maintained a strictly nonpolitical stance and has refused to become aligned with any movement or faction. There has been intense pressure, at times, on the Director to do so, and her steadfast refusal has led to a constant series of threats, accusations and allegations. Some of these were even carried to the U.S. Military Command. Any serious allegations were investigated by Feed The Children offices and found to be totally groundless.

By providing a constant program of feeding, school, health care and other benefits to a large number of children, the center has developed an intense level of support from the families and the community it serves.

The logistical problems faced from time to time by the program have included, not having adequate roof protection during the rainy season (this is being address now, supported by a grant from CIDA), shortages of some types of foods and medicines, and cost and unreliability of vehicles and vehicle repair.

6.0 Plans for 1994

Feed The Children will be requesting a grant from USAID for the continuation of this program. Once the new roof is completed it will be possible to expand the program to 2500 - 3000 children, as long as food supplies from the WFP continue. The initial estimate is that the expanded program will cost about \$20,000 a month to operate, or approximately \$250,000 during 1994. A detailed proposal is being prepared for submission.

Programs related to vocational training and income generations for the mother of the children and community health are also either getting started or planned and will add to the overall integrated relief and development program which the center provides.

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