

# SAA CID



## **Final Report**

### **Warsheikh District Tsunami Project, Middle Shabelle Region**

#### **Summary Information**

Donor: Mennonite Central Committee (America)

Sector: Economic Recovery

Start Date: June 2005

End Date: September 2005

#### **Background**

Historically, Warsheikh is one of the oldest coastal towns in Somalia. It is situated on the Indian Ocean, about 60 kilometres north of Mogadishu, the capital city of the country. This small town has an estimated population of 1,200 families (each family has 7 members according to UN estimations) – 8,400 people.

Most of the inhabitants are engaged in fishing, while some of them are pastoralists, keeping animals such as goats, sheep and donkeys for their consumption and transportation. The small seacoast town also has a long history of religious devotion and respect for peaceful cohabitation amongst its settlers. The town has no armed militias engaging in clan hostilities.

About 20 small villages are administratively attached to the town. Some of these villages lay along the road between Mogadishu and Adale Town; and others inland. Huge sand dunes cover most of the housing of the town.

#### **Project Problem**

In December 2004 a significant tsunami event occurred that had lasting economic consequences for the town. Luckily, no one was drowned, but there was a significant loss of boats and fishing equipment.

## **Project Objective**

The main objective of this economic recovery project was to provide fishing equipment and 60 wooden boats to the 60 most affected families - including direct women recipients, who are seen as the most vulnerable people in the district. The elders and the district authority were responsible for identifying the recipient families. In addition, the elders and the district authority played a great role in the distribution activities.

## **Implementation**

The project activities began with the construction of wooden boats and the purchase of other fishing gear essential for fishing operations. SAACID, as the implementing organisation, assumed responsibility for boat construction. SAACID selected - through a tendering procedure - DURDUR Marine Resource Cooperative Production (DMRCP); a local company which operates in Mogadishu. , DURDUR constructed the boats on location in Warsheikh and supplied all the fish and shark nets. The other tools and accessories were purchased through CIGO Marine Resources Company, through the same tendering procedure.

The community elders and local authority then selected the recipients of the fishing equipment and accessories. It was very clear at the beginning that the people who were entitled to receive the boat donation and fishing equipment donation were genuinely vulnerable and the most affected by the tsunami. The selection process was all-inclusive and very transparent; and SAACID can confirm that all stakeholders to the process with the selection process.

SAACID monitored the building and distribution process; along with the presence of the entire community - including the elders, the district authority, a women's group and all respected people in the community. Before the distribution took place, a list of the recipients was created by the elders and the district authority, and this was closely followed in the distribution process. The distribution took place on Tuesday, 13 September 2005.

According to a rough UN estimation, each Somali family in the town is comprised of 7 persons, including two parents. Thus, some 420 people directly benefited from the project.

The families that received the boats have already resumed fishing with enthusiasm, in the hope to reviving their livelihoods through the provided boats and auxiliary fishing gear.

## **Capacity Building**

One of the activities of the project included pre-distribution meetings for all the project stakeholders to discuss expectations and the sustainability of the Warsheikh fishing industry and market. Rather than simply handing out relief supplies, SAACID wanted to encourage the community to think of long-term development goals and how to fully utilize the fishing equipment to build their capacity toward becoming a wealthier and more sustainable community. Another purpose was to plan the monitoring of the project results and future needs, to better analyse the impact after the distribution of the boats and the fishing equipment took place. Three different workshops were conducted for the 60 participants of the project. The workshop series was held on the following dates in Warsheikh:

- 4-16 June 2005
- 18-20 August 2005
- 13 September 2005

### **Workshop Targeted Objectives**

- Assess the previous lifestyle and fish catch of the beneficiaries before the occurrence of the tsunami event
- A detailed assessment of the impact of the tsunami event had on the community; and the subsequent difficulties encountered after the loss of most of the fishing equipment and attached fishing gear
- Measurement of qualitative improvement indicators that the boat and fishing gear grant had on the livelihoods of the beneficiaries
- Establishment of fishing cooperatives in order to coordinate fishing catches and distribution after the receipt of the boat and fishing gear grants
- Creation of a local fish market, where the beneficiaries could sell directly to clients in search of fish without middlemen intervening
- Ensuring the sustainability of the reactivated fishing activities by the beneficiaries and the culmination of approaches that can lead them towards a better life through highly improved fishing businesses
- A pre-distribution workshop and those we expect to hold in future monitoring of the project impact, builds the capacity of the Warsheikh community by strongly encouraging them to organize themselves and make long-term plans to maximize their fishing activities and income.
- SAACID's capacity was increased through the implementation process by giving us further experience, particularly in the fishing sector, and reiterates the trust we already have in the community by having facilitated another successful project. In addition, SAACID gains great satisfaction in being a part of the renewed happiness and hope that the Warsheikh community is now experiencing.

### **Partnership**

This project further deepens SAACID's long-term partnership with MCC

### **Resources**

MCC provided US \$66,570 for the development of 60 wooden fishing boats distributed along with other fishing gear, including: shark nets, fishing / lobster nets, a set of ropes, a set of hooks, a set of floats and anchors.

The distribution took place in the middle of September and the beneficiaries have already resumed their fishing activities. SAACID will continue to monitor the Warsheikh fishing industry for lasting impact.

### **Human Interest Stories**

#### **Story 1**

My name is Mohamed Abukar Addawi. I was born in Warsheikh in 1972. I finished my secondary education in Mogadishu. Unfortunately, I did not attend any university because of

the civil war and the collapse of the country. I was forced to reside in Warsheikh with my family, comprised of 11 persons, including my two parents, the wife of a newly married brother, and the husband of a sister. My occupation is fishing, which I began when I failed to find any other employment opportunity. The whole currently family survives on fishing.

Our fish catch was excellent before the tsunami and could cover all our needs. However, the process of surviving is complex and has been developed over a long period of time. For instance, seasonal changes tempt the fishermen to look for different fish species like sharks, tuna and lobster – an expensive endeavour. These diverse fish species require different nets. According to Somali social behaviour, a fishing boat owner has to be trusted and maintains close agreements with different merchants. These merchants provide food to the fishermen on credit, as well as pay money in advance when the fish catch decreases. The fishermen, depending on the fish catch, usually promises to repay the credit when he catches enough fish. This really gives the fishermen in the village the possibility of survival until the next fishing season.

Unfortunately, the terrible tsunami waves that hit the area on 25 December swept our only wooden boat and destabilized our livelihood – wit the merchants really making our lives difficult. We could not find sufficient income to cover our food needs. The fact is, the boat donations, along with the auxiliary gear, provided to us by MCC through SAACID truly revived our lives. This will allow a complete change to our lives to resume living happily.



*Mohamed Abukar (left) standing in his boat with fishing gear.*

Although the tsunami disaster is over, its impact on the sea and the fish continues. The places where the fish went into hiding during windy seasons were filled with sand by the tsunami waves. In addition, many fish species are decreasing because they were either driven out by the gigantic waves or have permanently migrated to other places. I really doubt if our fish catch can ever fully reach the previous record because of the changed sea conditions, unless the climate of the area again changes.

Having been included in the list of the beneficiaries of the MCC and SAACID tsunami economic recovery project, I along with other fishermen initiated a fishing cooperative called “Kulmis”. Nine persons are already registered in the new cooperative, and we hope to persuade others from the 60 families receiving the boats to join with us. We plan to improve

our fish activities with the help of SAACID and intend to develop a sustainable marketing system for our future fishing transactions.

We thank both MCC and SAACID for reviving our hopes and reactivating our fishing occupation. We promise to keep in our hearts all those assisted us and we are grateful about the conditions of the donations.

## Story 2

My name is Mohammed Ali Ahmed (Khawaji). I was born in Warsheikh in 1963. I live in Warsheikh at present and practice fishing as my income generating occupation. I am married with two wives and have 11 children (4 from one wife and 7 from the other). I owned a wooden fishing boat that was swept away by the disastrous tsunami waves striking the coast in December last year. Before that my income was sufficient for keeping my family in good living conditions. Unfortunately the tsunami altered the prospects of our lives because we do not have other off-fishing jobs available in order to obtain income for our livelihood. The only occupation we had has been crippled.



*Mohamed Ali (centre) during pre-distribution discussion on expectations and sustainability*

Subject to the norms of the fishing community here, families not having cash money to purchase food items receive credit from the merchants of the town. The fishermen have to repay the loans whenever they obtain sufficient fish. The news that MCC and SAACID are engaged in providing the fishermen of the district affected by the tsunami with fishing boats appealed to the merchants. We have resumed receiving food items on credit, which is crucial for our survival.

The tsunami decreased the fish supply living in the area. Even the diverse species of fish we usually caught are not available at present. Previously one had to settle for small shark fish when other fish were not obtainable, lobster or any other type of fish that can easily be hunted. However, many fish species have decreased or are totally missing from the zone subsequent to the tsunami waves. All the hiding and resting places of the fish and lobster were filled with sand brought along by the heavy seaquake waves.

Although the fishing equipment offered to us by MCC is cost-effective and advantageous, the absence of the fish subject to the changes might jeopardize our fish catch. Diverse fish species need different fishing nets. Here the nets offered to us do not meet all needs. For instance, we usually cut worn out fishing nets into small nets stitched together for catching lobster. Habitually lobster come to coral reefs at night for grazing. We put these ragged fishnets at the base of the coral reefs.

We have already established some cooperatives in advance, which was encouraged to us by SAACID. We have not finished the foundation of the cooperative yet, but we hope to complete the process soon. We hope also that our livelihood will change for the better. We thank MCC and SAACID both for the benevolence they have shown in our respect.

### Story 3

My name is Abdia Rasey Mohamed. I was born in Warsheikh in 1959. I live in Warsheikh at present and run my small restaurant, along with fishing to generate income. I am married and live with my husband. I am the breadwinner for 9 people including my 3 children and 3 grandchildren. My family had a wooden fishing boat that has been destroyed by the devastating tsunami tides hitting the coast last year. The income from my small restaurant alone could not cover the needs of my household after the occurrence of the tsunami tragedy. Unfortunately, the prospects of our lives are endangered subject to the after-effects of the incidence of the tsunami waves. We do not have other jobs to practice in order to obtain income for our livelihood. The only occupation we had has been crippled. I was the breadwinner before and continue to be the one responsible for the family. I attained primary education earlier. This gift from the Mennonites will change our life, because if we can start fishing again we will be able to cover all our basic needs. I hope it might help us to get additional income. I would like to thank the Mennonites and SAACID.

We are grateful for the contribution given to our community. However, even with all that, we still have additional issues that remain unsolved. We have no good market for selling the fish even if we catch them. The market of the town was built in 1964 and is not functioning because of sustained damage and the absence of any rehabilitation during this long period. Subsequently, we are forced to sell our fish out in the open. The sun burns us and the fish decays quickly because we do not have refrigerators or cool areas to keep the fish. We also lack a place to wash and clean the fish. The possibility of transporting our fish is very low, because of the lack of reliable infrastructure. Since we do not possess any means to take our fish to the Mogadishu markets, we would need some refrigeration mechanism to preserve them until they can be transported and sold. Before the tsunami we had established a cooperative. Now that we have these new boats we would like to form new cooperatives or recreate the ones we had, in order to combine our catches, preserve more fish, lobster, and other seafood, and arrange joint transport to Mogadishu and export them to foreign countries.



*Above: Abdia taking tea after the boat and gear distribution*

*Below: some women recipients during pre-distribution discussion. Abdia is second from the left. Batulo (story 4) is fourth from left*



The tsunami had a severe impact on our lives in many ways, directly and indirectly. Not only did we lose our income from fishing, but the tsunami decreased the supply of fish in our town, hindering the sales at my restaurant as well. It also started a population decrease in our area due those who fled the disaster area. In addition, after the tsunami, people experienced itchy skin and swollen rashes.

I have to thank the MCC for offering this golden gift. With the provision of the wooden boat, I am sure I can elevate my standard of living and can reactivate my fishing occupation. This will assist us with sustainable income side by side with the restaurant that usually cooks seafood.

#### **Story 4**

My name is Batulo Mohamed Abdulle Bariise. I was born in 1964 in Warsheikh. I am living with my new husband with my children from the previous marriage. Our family consists of 8 persons, including my 3 children, 4 grandchildren, my husband and myself. I graduated from secondary school. Now I'm a schoolteacher. My family had one boat, which was on the beach on the night of the tsunami event, and it was swept away by the gigantic waves. I am very happy that I now have a new boat with all the fishing gear I need to work with. Now I hope that I can catch many fish and return to the market and sell everything.

First I'd like to tell you the impact of the tsunami on our town and family. Before the tsunami we used to get many fish when we went to sea. Now we are not even catching half of what we used to. There is no market here; the economy is bad, because there are no fish sales. Since the tsunami, there is now a skin disease among the people and livestock has become ill and died. After receiving these new boats, we would like to receive business training, like marketing techniques, in order to have a more successful fishing economy.

We would like to request assistance to open a laboratory and hospital because when people become sick we have to go all the way to Mogadishu for treatment. We would like to rebuild our fish and meat and milk markets as well.



**Letter from the Governor of Middle Shabelle (translation)**

Somali Republic  
Warsheikh District

Ref. GMD.W/M/34/05  
To: The Mennonite Mission  
Cc: SAACID  
Cc: Governor of Middle Shabelle  
Date: 13 September 2005

Subject: Message of Gratitude

Speaking on behalf of the Warsheikh district authority, the traditional leaders, religious leaders, women's groups youth organizations and mine, I would like to send my heartily felt gratitude to the above mentioned humanitarian organizations that has unreservedly came to the rescue our community that has been affected by the disastrous seaquake. The said organizations succeeded in providing the people with tangible donations comprising of wooden boats and other attached fishing gear.

Hence, we would like to request from the organization addressed in this letter to double its efforts in helping the people affected by the tsunami. Furthermore, we appeal to those organizations to help us in the education sector which is very fundamental for the community development in Warsheikh.