

UNMAS increases efforts to reduce landmine accidents among children in Somalia



New Community based Liaison Officers receiving training on how to deliver risk education before deployment to the field. (UNMAS Photo)

Somalia has a residual threat from unexploded and abandoned ordnance following decades of armed conflict. The explosive hazard contamination negatively impacts the socioeconomic opportunities of the communities, security and ultimately the peace and recovery of Somalia. Since 2019 about 22 ERW/landmine accidents have killed and injured 43 victims, and more than 80% of them are amongst the children. Children should be the priority for risk education.

UNMAS coordinates risk education (RE) activities to raise awareness of these hazards. To increase awareness of the dangers of explosive hazards, UNMAS provided training to five Somali youth to work as community based liaison officers (CLOs) as part of a project **funded by the government of Japan**. CLOs will be tasked to deliver explosive risk education messages to affected communities that are living in proximity to contaminated areas. They will deploy to the Federal Member States on 1 September 2019. The CLOs plan to reach out 2,650 beneficiaries including 2,000 people from affected communities, IDPs, refugee/returnees and host communities in respective federal states. CLOs are recruited from affected communities which ensure access and acceptance in communities where UNMAS is serving.

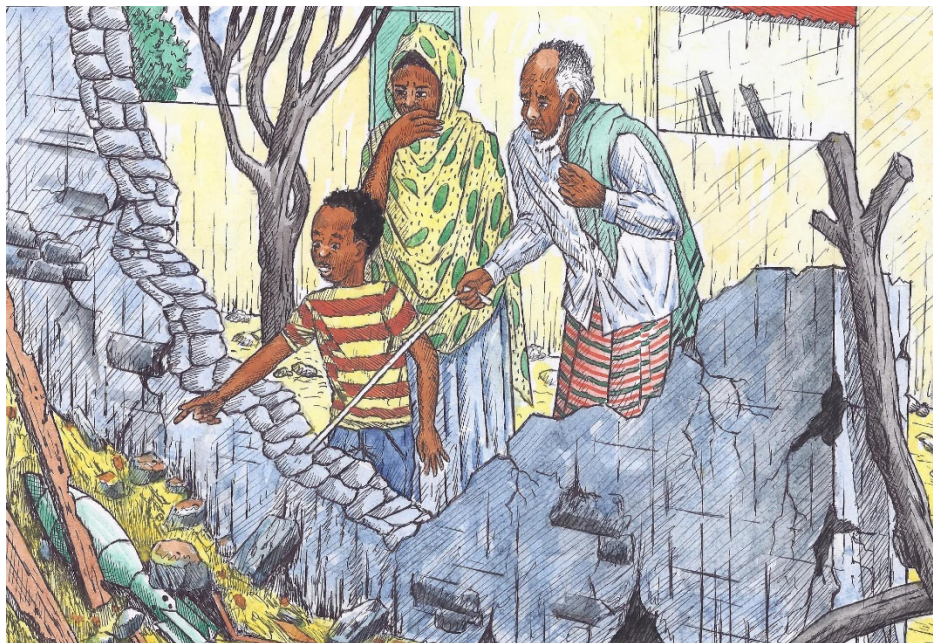
In addition, the project also aims to provide “train the trainer” training to 500 community focal points with focus on risk education. 150 local authorities will be sensitized during the project and briefed about the risk of explosive hazards in their areas and linked to Mine Action service providers. Through awareness training on explosive hazards, the beneficiaries will be equipped with relevant knowledge and skills to avoid risk-taking behavior and keep themselves safe when they come across any suspected explosive devices while going about their daily lives.



Mine Risk Education Poster. (UNMAS Photo)

One of the CLO trained, Abdi Ali, stressed on the importance of risk education in reducing casualty among children and vulnerable community members, “I want to thank UNMAS and the Somali Explosive Management Authority (SEMA) for providing us with useful skills to teach risk education and other component of Mine Action. I hope the knowledge we gained here today will help our communities and make a difference in reducing landmine accidents in Somalia.”

The project will be closely coordinated with SEMA in Mogadishu and the regional level in Galmudug Federal State. Collected data will be shared with the Humanitarian Mine Action agencies and Protection Cluster in Somalia. This data will improve access to humanitarian assistance and reduction of explosive hazards incidents, especially in populated areas.



Risk Education material developed for outreach and training. (UNMAS Photo)



Education in action. (UNMAS Photo)

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