

## KEEPING HOPE ALIVE AMID THE PANDEMIC

“...My most inspiring moment... the resilience the community members have and a hope that there is a better tomorrow,” Ismail.

Somaliland recorded its first COVID-19 case on 31 March. As of 16 June, there were 565 confirmed cases. ADRA has greatly supported the COVID-19 response in Somaliland through awareness and prevention messages and distribution of hygiene and sanitation kits. Continuation of learning is also being supported through development and implementation of alternative education options like radio and online education programming. There will also be provision of psycho-social support through headteacher networks and provision of teacher incentives to enable them cope during this pandemic.

Our staff are at the forefront of the campaign against the virus, staying optimistic and hopeful in the face of impending danger and uncertainty. Ismail Abdikarin and Abdillahi Ibrahim share their experiences taking the lead in ensuring communities are sensitized on the virus' danger and the preventive measures.

### Ismail Abdikarin's Story

“I describe myself as a selfless person whose passion is to help people who are in need and showing them that there is hope in every situation. However, during this COVID-19 pandemic, my biggest challenge was creating hope for the people I was helping. I did not want to lie to them about the pandemic when they asked about medicine for the virus.



Ismail (left) giving a health worker receiving a megaphone for the COVID-19 awareness campaign in Lascanod

It was difficult for me to find truthful and hopeful words at the same time.

Despite all these, the responses from the beneficiaries were varied. Some of them welcomed and appreciated the recommended guidelines, whereas others refused to accept the existence of the disease. But we did not despair to elevate the awareness campaigns because we wanted everyone to have the knowledge on the virus and how to prevent it.

As I ensure that the community adheres to the preventive measures. I also ensure that I adhere to the same preventive measures. As I led the distribution



“I urge everyone to first protect themselves, secondly to protect their families, then we will be able to help others,”  
Abdillahi.

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Abdillahi Ibrahim, keeping himself protected as he ensures community members are aware of COVID-19 and its preventive measures.

process in the targeted communities, I also ensured that I protect myself by following guidelines set such as wearing a mask, social distancing and frequently washing my hands.

My most inspiring moments during this pandemic was the resilience I saw in the communities we visited especially from the IDP camps. These people are food insecure due to drought, lack access to basic needs like health and education and now the coronavirus pandemic, yet they still have a hope that there is a better tomorrow.

Seeing the resilience of these people, my stance has changed. I am learning to be more generous to help those in need, in whatever capacity. As we work to ensure that we prevent the virus in our communities, I urge all of us to follow the guidelines given to keep ourselves safe.”

Ismail Abdikarin is a Project Officer based in Lascanod, Somaliland.

#### Abdillahi Ibrahim's Story

“Before COVID-19 was announced in Somaliland, I always stayed informed on different international news outlet concerning the virus. Like everyone else,

I didn't think it was contagious, but as the number of the cases and deaths kept increasing in most countries, I knew that this was real and not fictitious.

“When the first case of the virus was announced in Somaliland, the government made a decision to close all the schools to prevent the spread of the virus.

The closure of schools was really emotive as it kept me away from the learners and the surrounding communities who rely on our humanitarian work. Despite all these, we have continued to engage with the communities through virtual communication like the internet and knowing about the well-being of our beneficiaries.

As a front-line staff, I coordinated and managed the services offered to the communities and ensuring that everything we provided reached the targeted communities.

As we went out to the community, they appreciated the work that we did and vowed to follow all the guidelines given to ensure that they protect themselves and their families. This motivated me to do more for the community.

As we continue to sensitize the communities, we also need to sensitize our families. I urge everyone to first protect themselves, secondly to protect their families, then we will be able to help others.”

Abdillahi Ibrahim is a Deputy Project Manager based in Somaliland.

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