



The Legal Clinic was officially opened by Somaliland Vice President, Ahmed Yusuf Yasin on 7 December 2003.



MDGs WATCH

A preliminary baseline Millennium Development Goals Report is currently being drafted with national and international stakeholders, and will be published by mid- 2004.

Legal Clinic opened at the University of Hargeisa

The Faculty of Law at the University of Hargeisa in collaboration with UNDP has opened the first legal clinic in Somaliland, with the dual aims of improving access to justice and providing law students with an opportunity to apply the theories obtained in their legal studies.

The University of Hargeisa Faculty of Law legal clinic will serve as a means to provide the economically deprived, vulnerable groups of Somaliland with free, accessible, high quality legal representation. Furthermore, it will provide the students with a more detailed and practical understanding of Somaliland law and of the real legal problems faced by advocates engaged in client representation.

This is how it works:

The student identifies and researches the legal issues of a prospective case, then the student and the clinical director, a trained lawyer, make an assessment of the merits of the case which results in a decision whether to accept or deny representation. The prospective client is then advised of the decision at a subsequent meeting with the student and the director.

If the clinic is unable to accept the case, the individual in need of representation will be referred to an appropriate alternative source of assistance such as the Somaliland Bar Association. If the clinic accepts the case, the prospective client and the director will sign an agreement, and all legal services are free.

Twenty students including one female have been participating in the inaugural clinic that began operating in January.

A six-month stint at the legal clinic will be compulsory for all third year Law students at the University, ensuring that the students all get valuable work experience, and that the more marginalized groups in society have a means to pursue justice.

Custodial Corps training

14 custodial corps personnel from all over Somaliland have completed a one-month training course in custodial management. The course included admission and custody of prisoners; prisoners' properties; accommodations and classification of prisoners (convicted, criminal, civil, juvenile, young and women prisoners), keeping of keys, transfer of prisoners. Further training was in human rights in prisons encompassing international Human Rights standards for law enforcement, maintaining human dignity, health rights of prisoners, HIV in prison, prisoners contacts with outside world, complaints and inspections procedures, treatment of special categories of prisoners and persons under detention without sentence.

The training was in response to a technical needs assessment completed at the Hargeisa Prison and Custodial Corps. Four trainers received training and they in turn trained their subordinates, supervised by a UNDP Somalia consultant. It is intended that the new graduates will train other custodial corps in their respective locations



23-year old, Amina Jama, from Garadag, Sanaag Region, used to be a teacher at an orphanage before joining the Custodial Corps. She says that the training has helped her realise that the segregation arrangements at her prison are inadequate.



A rights-based approach to human development ensures that poor and vulnerable groups have their needs met by providing relief aid and basic services while creating sustainable systems that merge with already existing infrastructures.



Rights-based programming

UNDP Somalia is now working towards implementing a rights-based approach to development, in a bid to get an inclusive, cohesive, holistic, multi-agency, multi-sectoral and sustainable approach to development initiatives and interventions.

A rights-based approach to development is inspired by basic human rights and human development principles that endeavour to ensure that poor and vulnerable groups have their basic needs met by providing relief aid and basic services – and also by creating more sustainable systems that merge with already-existing infrastructures in the area in the hope that they can become self-sufficient thereby negating the need for more assistance.

Rights-based programming also hinges on the participation of the civil society, international agencies, local authorities and the private sector where appropriate.

This idea has been practically applied by the Reintegration of Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons (RRIDP) Programme which has an integrated approach to Human Rights, Health, Education, Production Systems (economic activities), Environmental Rehabilitation and Participation.

An instance of this is illustrated by the newly established legal clinic attached to the University of Hargeisa Law Faculty. It is aimed at giving law students the opportunity to practice their theory, and also allows the poor, disenfranchised, vulnerable groups, such as the IDPs and returnee refugees access to justice they would otherwise be unable to afford. The legal clinic is supported by the UNDP Rule of Law and Security Programme.

In health, the RRIDP Programme is concentrating on staffing the already-existing clinics as opposed to building new ones which would remain unutilised due to lack of staff and medical equipment and drugs. Together with WHO, the RRIDP programme aims to establish local systems, eventually decentralizing health services and primary health care.

In education, in close cooperation with UNESCO, the main aim is to ensure standardization of schools in the different communities to ensure sustainability and institutionalisation.

With ILO, the RRIDP programme aspires to improve local economic activities for the IDPs and returnee refugees by creating a broader economic environment, local business employment and productive management and direct support to starting entrepreneurs.

The environmental interventions include encouraging community-based programmes to rehabilitate water sources and protect ecologically fragile zones, as well as identifying and evaluating alternative agricultural practices that are beneficial and sustainable.

The strengthening of local administrative bodies is also key to rights-based programming. They need to be able to provide basic services and perform required duties, as well as be equipped to make decisions on priorities, usage of local resources, suggesting uses of international assistance and taking initiatives or contracting required services.

Ultimately, human development is about giving people access and choices so that they can have a decent living and provide for themselves and their families, in the hope that the coming generations will be self-sustaining regardless of their parents experience as IDPs or returnee refugees.

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