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THE STORY OF SAMAARA

**Health & Nutrition
Program**



Samira Abdullahi's story

Samara Abdullahi is an 8-month-old infant. She is the youngest child in a family of six, living with her parents and five siblings (three boys and two girls). They used to reside in Labirar village, which is located 4 km from Qaranri. They are now in Qaranri village as IDP since they were displaced by looming drought situation that has seen failure of five consecutive seasons. Qaranri is one of the targeted communities for BRCiS Nutrition sensitive programming in Belet-Hawa district. Samara's family as mentioned, belongs to the group of internally displaced households who recently settled in Qaranri as part of the program. As a result of the drought in the area, they were forced to leave their village of Labirar. Previously, they relied primarily on a rain-fed farming for income.

Farhia Yusuf Mohamed, a 28-year-old mother of Samara, shares the challenges they faced during their journey to Qaranri and their hopes for reaching the village. She explains, "Back home, we had a farm where we grew maize and sorghum to meet our household food needs.

However, due to failure of five consecutive seasons it made impossible for us to endure the devastating drought situation." The journey to Qaranri was difficult and arduous, and they had no food for an entire day. However, the locals welcomed them upon arrival and provided food and water that sustained them for several days received from the program through water trucking scheme.

In addition to hunger, Samara's family also deals with their father's disability. He has a partially paralyzed leg, which prevents him from working and providing for his family. Farhia Yusuf says, "Living without my husband's support for a long time has been challenging. I had to assume the role of sole breadwinner."

Soon after their settlement in Qaranri, Samara fell ill and her condition worsened over the course of a month and a half. The limited access to adequate food resources prevented Samara from receiving exclusive breastfeeding and sufficient complementary feeding. Additionally, she had not received vaccinations, leaving her immune system weak and susceptible to malnutrition and related health conditions.

One morning, on August 1, 2020, a community health worker named Sayed Ali, who was actively searching for cases and conducting screenings and house visits as part of the BRCiS-supported Mobile Clinic under health and nutrition component, came across Samara at her house. At that time, Samara was extremely ill, weak, irritable, and had persistent cough and diarrhea. Sayed Ali immediately referred her to the BRCiS mobile clinic in Qaranri for enrolment in the OTP program. Samara was taken to the mobile clinic with a history of a week-long low-grade fever without shivering or chills, relieved with sponging and paracetamol. She also had a prolonged cough and green-colored diarrhea accompanied by abdominal cramping for ten days.

Upon examination, Samaara appeared irritable and lethargic with prominent ribs and wasted muscles. She had an anthropometric measurement of 5.0kg, MUAC of 9.0cm and a height of 55cm, indicating severe acute malnutrition.



Fig.1. Samaara Abdullahi during the admission process. Photo taken by Naima Mohamed Hersi, a LLG qualified nurse for the Belet-Hawa mobile clinic.

Following the protocol, an appetite test was conducted to determine Samara's readiness for therapeutic food (RUTF). She passed the test and was enrolled in the Outpatient Therapeutic Program (OTP). She visited the mobile clinic weekly for follow-up. During her enrolment, Samara received RUTF rations and systematic treatments, including VitaminA, Amoxicillin syrup, and deworming.

This accelerated her recovery from malnutrition. Community health workers made regular visits to her house to monitor RUTF consumption and educate her mother on proper care practices.

After five weeks in the OTP program, Samara successfully recovered, with amid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) of 11.9 cm and significant weight gain. She was then transferred to the Targeted Supplementary Feeding Program (TSFP) for an additional five weeks. In the TSFP program, she received ready-to-use supplementary foods (RUSF).

After a total of 10 weeks (five weeks in each program), Samara successfully recovered, reaching a weight of 9.3 kg and an MUAC of 13.0 cm. After completing the treatment and leaving the program, Samara's mother expressed joy, saying, ***"It exceeded my expectations. My little girl has recovered immensely, and her current condition is remarkable. I am grateful for the existence of these services."***

Summary of Samaara Anthropometric measurement before and after Anthropometric measurements

Anthropometric measurements	At admission	At discharge
Weight	5.0 kg	9.3 kg
MUAC	9.0 cm	13.0 cm



Fig.2. Comparison, Samaara's before and after treatment at our mobile clinic. Photo by Naima Hersi.