

## **IR2. FROM A SMALL SCALE GROCER TO A RENOWNED PHARMACIST by VSF-Suisse Somalia**

When Salado Farah Buule's husband died, she was left to look after their children and take over his animal health practice. For a woman with very little education this was a daunting task.

Initially Salado owned a small grocery shop in Ceelwak, Somalia where VSF Suisse mounted a vaccination campaign under the pastoralist program after a massive outbreak of livestock disease in the area.



Because she was more educated than most women in her community, Salado was selected to undergo a 14 days Community Animal Health Workers (CAHW) training sponsored by VSF-Suisse under the ELMT program. After this training she turned her grocery shop into a veterinary shop and started giving service to her community as a CAHW.

*“This was the break I needed. I had some little experience since my husband was a CAHW and so being selected for the training was a big opportunity for me” explains Salado.*

*Salado Farah Buule serves a customer at her pharmacy in Ceelwak*

She began veterinary drugs dispensation and attending to small animals within the Ceelwak town to increase her income and support her large extended family. When VSF-Suisse (under another program) started distributing animal health kits and equipment to CAHWs, Salado took advantage of this and expanded her services to neighbouring communities like Damaso, Awsqurun and Meri.

“I expanded my services to the neighbouring communities and my services included surveillance and control of the spread of various diseases, offering of preventive and curative animal care services and promotion of improved small stock (small ruminants & poultry).”

VSF-Suisse also wanted to support private veterinary pharmacies in the region and thus initiated a series of trainings in Business Development Management Skills targeting local animal health workers. Participants were supported to develop business plans and based on these six private veterinary pharmacies were supported on pilot basis in Gedo and Lower Juba.

“After my plan was approved, I decided to refurbish my small drug store in Ceelwak and in August 2008, I officially opened my Vet Pharmacy” explains a proud Salado.

VSF-Suisse partially supported her with the construction materials and a start-up kit of veterinary drugs and equipment worth USD 400 (funded by another project). Since one criteria used for selection was the ability of the participants to raise some capital for the business, Salado raised an equivalent of USD 3000.

The local network of 15 Ceelwak CAHWs were also mobilised, trained and linked to her pharmacy with an initial start up kit of drugs worth about \$150 to given to each (under another program). This was intended to provide a revolving fund to sustain their services to the community through the pharmacy.

Currently the number of pharmacies in Ceelwak has grown from six to 11 with most of them emulating the service provided by the VSF-Suisse established veterinary drugs stores.

Salado also has a refrigerator in her pharmacy for the storage of vaccines and ease of monitoring and distribution to the CAHWs who are linked to her pharmacy. The vaccines are still supplied to the project by VSF-Suisse through the FAO.

Salado's customers comprise of livestock keepers, the local network of active CAHWs and other pharmacy owners who buy in wholesale.

"I have a wide base of customers now and other than selling drugs I also organize vaccination and de-worming campaigns, either through the VSF-Suisse project or other NGOs, and some CAHWs also carryout treatment services under my guidance and supervision." She adds.



*The fridge that Salado has in her pharmacy for use by other CAHWs*

In addition, Salado maintains a record of all livestock sector service activities in the county and her pharmacy is the centre for disease outbreak reports and other relevant information.

One big challenge that Salado and other CAHWs in the area face is the lack of banking facilities in the region.

"This is a big challenge and we have resorted to keeping money in our houses which is very dangerous." She explains.

Everything else is going well for Salado and she plans to move to a larger premises that has good ventilation and loading and parking space that will attract more customers in the town centre.

"I was a little sceptical when VSF-S introduced the privatization idea to us. I thought they wanted to remove us from the program and deny us our source of income. Now I know that it was a good idea. I am really enjoying it." concludes Salado.