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Somalia, Malnutrition

Undernourishment of Somalia

Located on the Horn of Africa, just slightly smaller than Texas, **Somalia** is known as one of the poorest countries in the world. Their lack of an active central government, limited resources, drought, and poor feeding practices are the main causes of Poverty and Malnutrition. Malnutrition is when there is a lack of nutrients within a person's daily consumption. With their high malnutrition rate of 19.5% to 37%, the most reliable solution would be to transition a portion of the funds from financial aid to aid for food and nutrition security.

The country's poor health care and instability are being strained by Somalia's rapid population increase. Furthermore, research reveals that civil conflicts are significantly more likely in nations where 60 percent of the population is under 30, such as Somalia (70 percent). The small country of Somalia has a population of 16.69 million (Worldometer Live). The country is dominantly Islam, (more than 99% of the population). Somalia is 50.4% female and 49.6% male. The country has been classified as overpopulated – due to an increase of half a million people in just a few years. Their fertility rate is at 6 births per woman. This indicates that in 80 years, the population will be roughly five times bigger than it is now, with no clue of changes (good or bad) that will be made considering malnutrition. The population growth rate of Somalia is 2.92 percent, and it has been increasing every year since 2015.

A fast deteriorating drought in Somalia might lead to an "extreme crisis" by April 2022, with nearly 2.3 million people already suffering from severe water, food, and pasture shortages. Since 1990, Somalia has endured more than 12 droughts. With Somalia's hot and dry climate, the droughts that this country faced brought even more challenges. The challenge that was brought to them by these droughts was having to abandon their homes and lives in search of food, and pasture for their livestock (UN News). Due to the combined effects of extended drought, flooding, desert locust infestations, the economic implications of COVID-19, and extreme violence, 5.6 million people in Somalia are today food insecure, and 2.8 million people are unable to satisfy their daily food requirements.

The average family consists of six members. In these families, the entire family and community is held accountable for a child's upbringing. It is usual for Somali children to be reprimanded by someone other than their parents in the community. Parents and elders are held in high regard. Children should not speak back to or disobey somebody who is older than them. In adulthood, most people's actions are still impacted by their parents, especially women. Children and grandkids look after their elderly relatives well into old age. Somali women are frequently the primary breadwinners in their households. Due to the

effects of war, inflation, and male migration, this has become required. Females are in charge of 70% of displaced households if a man is not present. In Somalia, women are less than 21 years old, making marriage a unique experience. On average, the husbands are 30 years old.

In those average families, the average diet is proportionally small compared to the basic American household. Somalian meals are primarily made up of staple foods (maize, sorghum, rice, wheat, and pasta), oil, and a small amount of healthy foods like fruits and vegetables. Because of their price and accessibility, the majority of Somalis eat an energy-based diet more regularly. Women are culturally responsible for cooking and food preparation. In most cases, women make the food in the kitchen while the guys socialize elsewhere. Among peers, it may be unacceptable for a guy to demonstrate his expertise in the kitchen or cooking. When dining at home, men and women normally eat separately. This can also happen when you're dining at a restaurant.

Before a meal is served, it is critical to wash your hands. Guests are sometimes given a basin or jug of water to wash their hands at the table before and after a meal. Everyone congregates in front of a giant communal dish. Utensils are rarely used for eating Somali cuisine. When serving oneself from a plate, most people use their right hand. Food should not come into direct touch with the left hand.

An Injera is frequently used as a scoop. This is a sponge-like pancake that is frequently used to absorb food scraps. You are supposed to serve yourself immediately from the portion of the dish in front of you, reaching over to eat the food facing other people or on the opposite side of the dish is disrespectful. Do not return food to the dish that you have taken up with your hands, that is unsanitary and disgusting. Overeating is frowned upon in this polite society, since resources are scarce. So only eat until you are just about full. Unless it's a special occasion, don't ask for extra portions.

Malnutrition percentages lean mostly to children and expecting mothers, more than 1.2 million children under the age of five suffer acute malnutrition. 228 thousand, and counting, 327 thousand boys and 387 thousand girls aged 06-59 months and 175 thousand pregnant and lactating women were found with critical malnutrition and were sent for treatment in August of 2021. 0.9 million people have been reached and treated out of 2.3 million so far. 1 in 17 children are diagnosed with severe malnutrition in Somalia. In Somalia, one in every five women of reproductive age is severely malnourished, jeopardizing a mother's health during pregnancy and contributing to the high prevalence of low birth weight babies. According to a study on malnutrition cases in Somalia conducted by the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit, 53.9 percent of children under the age of five suffer from anemia. Iron deficiency anemia (IDA) and vitamin A insufficiency affect one-third of children, increasing their risk of illness and mortality. IDA is also more than 30% among women, increasing the risk of low-birth-weight babies and birth problems (Somalia Micronutrient Survey 2019). Over half of the women in the FSNAU study were deficient in Vitamin A, while 49.1% of pregnant women and 46.6 percent of non-pregnant women of reproductive age were anemic. Malnourished girls contribute to the cycle of malnutrition by giving birth to infants who are small for gestational age and/or low birth weight.

Over two decades of violence have practically ruined Somalia's educational system, which is marked by low quality, a shortage of competent professors, and insufficient funding. Somalia has one of the worst

educational deficits in the world. 972,000 children, or one out of every five Somali student-aged children, are displaced out of a total 4.7 million school-aged population (12.3 million overall Somali population). In the months of November 2016 to August 2017, about 50,000 children lost the opportunity to attend school due to relocation. Somalia has one of the world's largest out-of-school populations, with around 3 million out of 5 million school-aged children and youth not in school. Many children and youth are also displaced as a result of conflict, periodic floods, and poor diet.

To successfully address the nutrition situation, comprehensive programming and links targeting (WASH, Health, and FSL) are required, as well as early action and preventive interventions to the high-risk groups. The IFRC will use this Emergency Appeal to help the Somalia Red Crescent Society (SRCS) offer humanitarian aid to over 500,000 individuals in Somaliland and Puntland. It will support the IFRC's Pan-Africa Zero Hunger Initiative, which aims to lift Africa's most vulnerable people out of poverty and eliminate reliance on food aid. Since 1951, Save the Children has worked in Somalia as a humanitarian organization. By giving food, water, and medical support to at-risk communities, the group has aided over 500,000 children. Save the Children has established an emergency fund to increase the amount of welfare it can provide as the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to harm Somali children.

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