Somalia/Somaliland

Responding to protection concerns at the domestic level

By Elijah Mulumba, Programme Manager at Candlelight

Bilan and Raage1 lived in Dawaco village, one of the project target sites in the Sanaag region of Somaliland. They were the parents of eight children – five boys and three girls. Raage intimidated and threatened Bilan, causing her to flee for her life, leaving behind her children. Shortly after, Raage also left the house. The children – the oldest of whom was only twelve years old – were left abandoned and vulnerable in a village with no relatives. They were looked after by a neighbour who brought them some food and other necessities. Nonetheless, they yearned for the care and love of their parents.

When Candlelight Community Protection Facilitators heard about this tragic situation, they quickly reached out to the village's community elder. Shortly after, they paid a visit to the children, who were living on their own and in dire need of assistance. They started working on ways to reconnect the children to their mother, who was in the nearby Badhan district. Bilan told Candlelight about her security concerns if she were to return to Dawaco. To address her concerns, Candlelight spoke to Raage, and suggested that family elders should mediate the issue, as a third party. Candlelight covered the costs of the meetings and transportation. The family mediation was successful, and the father agreed for the children to reunite with their mother, and that he would provide for his family. Now, the children are no longer by themselves and reunited with their mother.

Factors that contributed to the success of this intervention include the involvement of trained protection facilitators, respected community leaders (i.e. the elders), financial support to the family for transportation and other basic needs, and the support of law enforcement officials, who were ready to enforce the law if dialogue failed.

---

1 Names have been changed for purposes of confidentiality.