

# SOMALIA COMPREHENSION AND ACTIVITIES

**Note:** Please be aware of the situation of children in your class before delivering this activity. If there are children in your class who have become homeless or have been forced to move from their homes for any reason, check in with them or their parents in advance.



## Aim

Develop a sense of empathy with communities suffering from the impacts of climate change through the lens of Nasteha's family.



## Resources

Somalia comprehension and activities



## Time

45–60 minutes

Nasteha is eight years old and is from the Bakool region in Southern Somalia.

She has been living in an **internally displaced persons'** camp with her mother Ambiyo, her father Mahat and her seven **siblings** since March 2022. They are among hundreds of thousands of Somalis who have had to flee their homes due to several **consecutive** seasons of **drought** that have affected the country. As a result of the lack of **precipitation** in the area, Nasteha and her family had to leave their home because it became very difficult to grow their crops and feed their **livestock**. After walking for three days and three nights her family arrived at an internally displaced persons' camp with very few belongings. Before the impacts of climate change Nasteha and her

family had a good life in their village in Southern Somalia. They owned a home with two rooms and a small plot of land. As well as a herd of 200 goats, they had a donkey, which they used to travel to the local market where they could sell their goats' milk. They could then use the money they got from this to buy some household goods.

The internally displaced persons' (IDP) camp is the home of thousands of families who have had to leave their homes because of climate change and the severe drought that has affected the area. It is a **desolate** place and as far as the eye can see there are hundreds of makeshift shelters. New families have been arriving every day since

Nasteha and her family.  
Photo credit: Joy Obuya,  
Trócaire.





Ambiyo cooking ambulo outside.

Photo credit: Joy Obuya/Trócaire.

early 2022. The earth is **scorched**, and the only **vegetation** is bush scrubs. Young children like Nasteha run around outside their shelters. There are no toys and no playgrounds but the children are very **innovative**. Some children play with sticks and empty water containers. Older boys use the containers as footballs. Across the camp you can see tall, **lean** men huddled together in small groups. Women, dressed in their colourful traditional outfits and many **swaddling** small babies, fetch water and cook over open fires outside. It is baking hot. Temperatures are nearly 40 degrees Celsius. Trócaire runs the entire health services in the surrounding areas, including a hospital and an **outreach** health clinic near the camp. In recent months the number of young children presenting with **malnutrition** has trebled, and there is growing pressure on the services.

The shelter where the family lives is approximately 12 feet (3.6 metres) by 10 feet (3.05 metres) and is built from sticks and twigs covered with scraps of different materials, such as plastic and cardboard. When Nasteha and her family arrived at the camp, they had nothing. The older children went to the bush and got sticks to help build the shelter for their family. They gathered bits of plastic and material from their neighbours. The family used the cardboard from boxes of plumpy nut (a **nutritious** food) they received from Trócaire to fill in the gaps. No material goes to waste here. There is just one bed in the shelter. Nasteha's father sleeps outside and the rest of the children sleep on mats on the ground.

The day starts early for the family. The children wake at sunrise. After prayers, the older children make tea and traditional pancakes called **anjera** from **soghrum**. The older children recently started going to primary school. Before this they attended an Islamic school known as Dugsi. Nasteha's mother does chores and makes a lunch of ambulo (a stew made from **maize** and beans), cooked on the fire outside. After lunch the children go back to school. When they come home, they have more ambulo if there is some left. Nasteha's father goes into the town to look for any **casual** work he can find. He gets whatever work he can to buy a little food, but most days he comes back with nothing. There is no work most of the time. Nasteha's sister Willow, who is fourteen, sometimes gets work in town washing clothes to make some money for the family. She also gathers sticks to sell as firewood so they can buy food. Soon her brothers Issack, who is twelve, and Fathan, who is ten, will be old enough to **acquire** work to support the family.

Holding her newborn sister, Willow says proudly: 'I want an education. When I grow up, I want a job and I would like to support my mother and father. I would like to teach in a school someday.' The older children in the family have never been to a traditional school. Recently, however, the oldest three have started in the school run by Trócaire in the IDP camp. They are very excited. They have uniforms, copybooks and books. 'I really want to learn,' says Willow.



### Activity 1

Look up the following words in your dictionary to find their correct meanings. Write down their definitions. Choose the correct word from the list to complete the sentences below.

**malnutrition      nutritious      drought      livestock**

- 1) If food is not easily available or someone has poor eating habits, they may start to suffer from a condition called \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_ foods contain lots of vitamins and minerals that helps our bodies to grow and develop.
- 3) Animals that are kept on a farm, such as cattle, goats and sheep, can be called \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) In 2022, Somalia had a severe \_\_\_\_\_, which meant that many people were not able to grow enough food to feed their families.

### Activity 2

Answer the following questions in your copybook.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) What age is Nasteha?                                     | 5) What type of work does Willow do to support her family?  |
| 2) Where do the events in the story take place?             | 6) Do you think life will be easier for Nasteha and her family this time next year? Why or why not? |
| 3) Why did Nasteha and her family have to leave their home? |   |
| 4) How old is Nasteha's sister, Willow?                     |   |

### Activity 3

**Option A:** Write one or two paragraphs that include at least three similarities and three differences between Nasteha's family and your family.

**Option B:** Write one or two paragraphs answering the following questions.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1) Are children aged fourteen allowed to work in Ireland or the UK? Why or why not?   | 3) What rights have been denied to Willow in this situation? |
| 2) Nasteha's sister, Willow, is only fourteen years old. Is it fair that she needs to work to support her family? Why or why not? |  |

### Activity 4

**Option A:** Complete the crossword using the clues provided below. All of the words are highlighted in the text except **internally displaced person**. Can you remember what it means to be an internally displaced person? Write your answer below.

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## Crossword Clues

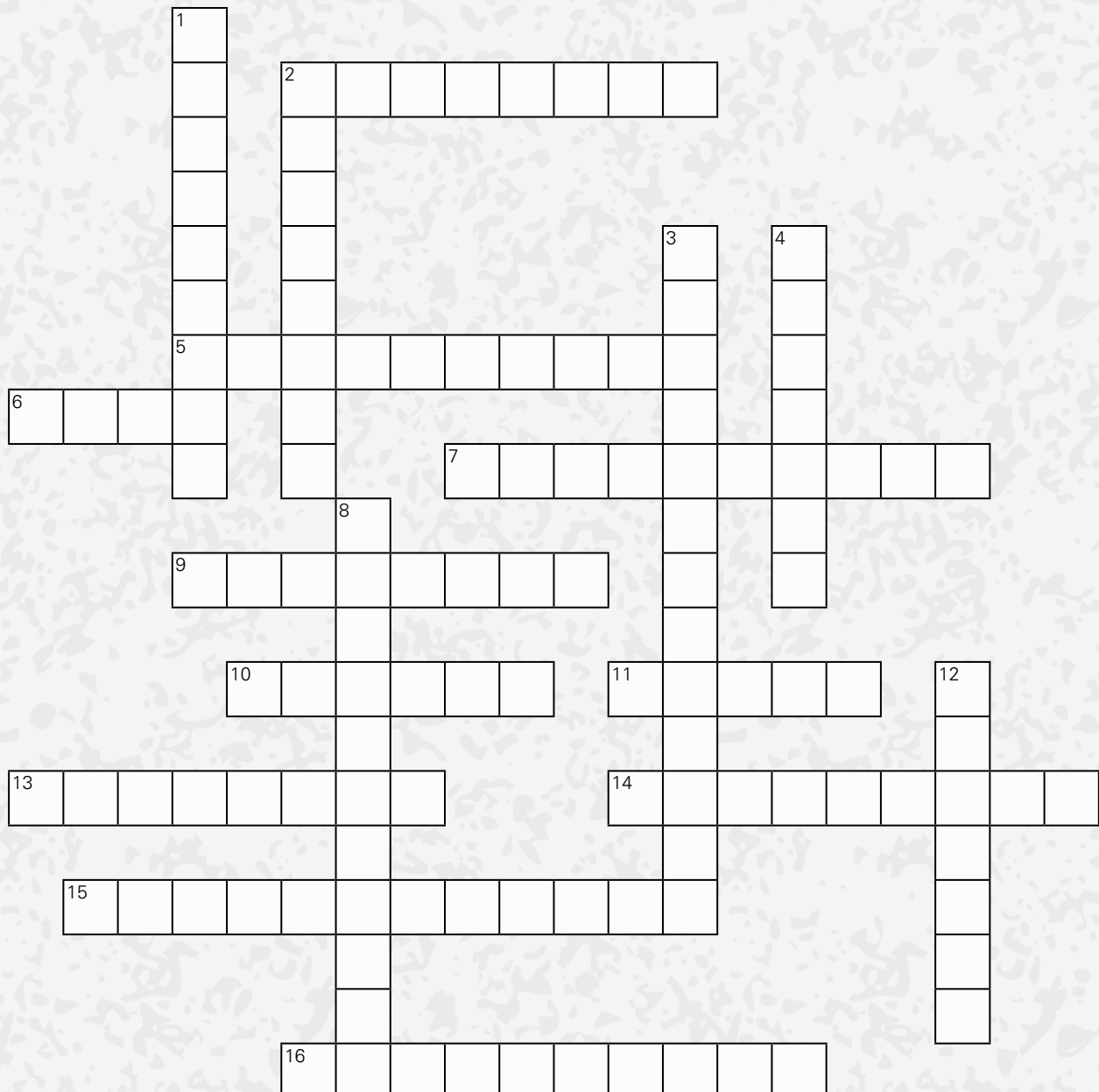
### Down

1. To wrap someone (especially a baby)
2. Another name for brothers and sisters
3. This can be rain, snow, sleet or hail
4. To get something
8. Following each other
12. When there is little or no rainfall for a long time

### Across

2. Burned by flames or heat
5. Something original
6. Another word for skinny
7. Containing many substances needed for life and growth
9. Not a nice place
10. Something that's not regular or permanent
11. Another word for corn
13. To bring services or information to people
14. Farm animals that can be sold
15. Not enough energy or nutrients
16. Plants found in a particular area

## Crossword



**Option B:** Find the words below. All of the words are highlighted in the text except **internally displaced person**. Can you remember what it means to be an internally displaced person? Write your answer below.

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### Word Search

N	M	U	R	H	G	O	S	C	A	S	U	A	L
Z	A	C	Q	U	I	R	E	G	P	E	A	S	R
M	P	R	E	C	I	P	I	T	A	T	I	O	N
V	A	A	S	G	N	I	L	B	I	S	C	I	N
C	E	L	N	S	W	A	D	D	L	I	N	G	U
C	M	G	N	J	E	S	T	R	O	R	G	L	T
N	K	A	E	U	E	A	P	O	I	O	E	I	R
L	T	M	I	T	T	R	T	U	N	T	U	V	I
S	E	O	Z	Z	A	R	A	G	J	A	C	E	T
A	U	A	N	M	E	T	I	H	U	T	S	S	I
I	T	E	N	N	N	I	I	T	I	U	G	T	O
H	C	A	E	R	T	U	O	O	I	S	E	O	U
T	E	V	I	T	U	C	E	S	N	O	C	C	S
I	N	N	O	V	A	T	I	V	E	S	N	K	W

MALNUTRITION

NUTRITIOUS

ANJERA

MAIZE

DROUGHT

CASUAL

CONSECUTIVE

PRECIPITATION

VEGETATION

SIBLINGS

SWADDLING

SOGHRUM

ACQUIRE

INNOVATIVE

OUTREACH

LIVESTOCK

LEAN