

Interview of Mursal Mohamed- youth webmaster Bosaso, Puntland state of Somalia



Mursal Mohamed (19), youth webmaster (left) being interviewed by Sulekha Mohamoud (member of UNICEF supported youth broadcasting initiative)

I am proud to be one of the webmasters of *hellosomaliyouth.net* website for Puntland section. My major duties as volunteer are to collect information, edit them where necessary and post them in the site. One way of doing this is by visiting youth/children organisations in the region, meeting with young people both in groups and individuals, explaining to them the objectives of the site and its importance to young people, orient them in its features and ways of sending the articles.

Being a webmaster means a lot to me. It is a way of building my career in the field of ICT (information communication technologies) that I want to grow in and also builds my leadership skills. It is a learning opportunity where I learn everyday new things and meet new young people. I learn the issues that are of most concern to them; I learn their ideas and opinions towards these issues.

What motivates me most is when I meet young teens and they tell me with a smiling face that they have read and seen their articles posted in the site and their opinions discussed! That is the moment I say to my self 'Hurrah! I am doing a great work'

This website is the only resource of its kind available for young people in Somalia. It is youth owned and youth managed and is free for all. It is a platform for youth in Somalia to discuss issues that are concerning them and affecting their everyday life and express their views. We discuss issues of peace/security, HIV/AIDS, Health, education, hygiene & sanitation, protection & rights, sports and local news.

The site has very much contributed to our development as young people and our participation to decisions reached in our communities. We receive right and invaluable information from our peers through the site. This information helps us and empowers us to take right decisions. One example that could serve us the way young people express their ideas and opinions through the site is the recent MSF Spain humanitarian staff kidnapping, where the young people in Puntland have strongly condemned the inhumanity cowardly actions taken by ignorant armed militia. We urged elders, women groups, civil society organisations and the government to take every reasonable action to safeguard the lives of the humanitarian workers..

The site operates beyond the clan borders that were created by the prolonged civil war, divisions and lack of effective central government for the last seventeen years. Through this we interact with young people in other regions of Somalia regardless of their identity and background, discuss areas of concern, copy and duplicate successful lessons.

We believe, in this globalisation era, to keep pace with the world for the sake of our development, we need to have connections with other young people out side Somalia; we need to have access to invaluable educational materials through the internet.

However, there are challenges that are not letting the site to reach most of the young people such as lack of youth centres with access of internet, limited number of internet users due to exorbitant costs that are not friendly to young people and some times community perception where elders and parents believe internet are not useful for children and young people.

Credits:

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