

UNICEF Somalia — Education



Teenage mother Sucdi Mudey Ali decided to attend school for the first time two months ago and takes her baby to school with her Credit UNICEF / Hema Vinod and Yehye Abdii Ibrahim

Education in Southern and Central Regions

In central and southern regions of the country, the impact of the civil war still has an acute bearing on the restoration of public education. More than 75 per cent of public schools that existed before the civil war have been destroyed and/or closed. Due to the complex and uncertain political and social context, state intervention in the education sector has been limited and fraught with implementation difficulties.

- GER Somalia overall 32 percent
- GER Central South 22.1 percent
- GER for pastoralist communities 3.1 percent
- GER for IDPs overall 16.8%
- Survival rate to Grade 5 at 65 percent overall for Somalia and 64 percent in Central South, as low as 36 percent in Bakool Region

Reaching the hardest-to-reach in Central and Southern Somalia

Doolow, Gedo Region, Southern Somalia.

UNICEF and USAID in partnership are providing education opportunities for children and youth who, until now, have never had a chance to benefit from education services. Via an Alternative (or Accelerated) Basic Education programme (ABE), education is playing a critical role in overcoming inequities and contributing to supporting an inclusive statebuilding process that will support stability and peace in Somalia.

It was only after Sucdi, now nineteen, had a baby, she realized how much she wanted to learn how to read and write. Nineteen-year-old Sucdi is now studying in a ABE facility in one of the most underserved regions of Central and South Somalia, her one-year-old at her side.

The school in Kaharey village, five kilometres south of Doolow town is supported by UNICEF local NGO partner HIRDA.

“How can I help children if I cannot read or write?” she explains as her reason for starting school at this stage. Her husband, a farmer, who is illiterate, fully supported her decision,

Sucdi sits happily with the other pupils ranging in age from eight to 16.

She is also an active member of the Community Education Committee (CEC), attending the mandatory weekly meeting and is fully involved in all the related activities with teachers, children and parents. She follows up children who are missing school and takes part in resolving local conflicts. She is a leader in the class, helping the teacher and encouraging classmates to finish their assignments.

“I love learning English’ she says. In the two months she has been at school, she has learnt to read letters and can write her name as she proudly points to on the front of her exercise book. Her main request was for desks for the children.

As she sits on the floor, with her sleeping baby at her side, this inspiring young mother is working hard to make up for all the years when education was a far-fetched dream.

With the support of USAID, UNICEF together with its local partners is now also focussing on reaching an additional 15,000 children and learning from pastoralist communities in some of the most drought-affected regions of Bay, Bakool and Gedow regions of Central South Somalia.

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Learners in Grade 3 supported by DFID and UNICEF—protecting children and strengthening resilience through education. Credit UNICEF / Education team Central South Somalia

DFID-supported Resilience programme

- Education has an integral role to play in building resilient schools and communities and in bridging the humanitarian and development divide by providing opportunities to mitigate effects from shocks and stresses that many communities continue to face in Somalia.
- With access to quality education, children can better fulfil their potential and contribute to the growth and stability of their society.
- Ongoing funding from DFID of \$2,000,000 towards contributes to providing access to quality education to 24,323 (14,243 boys, 10,080 girls) children in settlements and newly accessible areas in Gedo region of Somalia.
- 110 Community Education Committees (CEC's) have been established and are supporting local education efforts including communicating among community members and mobilizing local resources towards education.
- 100 Child-to-Child (CTC) clubs have been established in schools enabling children to engage with their peers and support each other throughout their learning and encouraging each other in the daily learning experiences

Building Resilience through education

Prior to the drought there were 145 households in Dhumadhumaday Village comprised of pastoralist and agro-pastoralists. With the onset of drought and worsening conditions 45 households which were purely pastoralist migrated to distant areas with their livestock in search of pasture and support, while the remaining households stayed in their village. Drought has affected goats and other livestock, many of which have died. One household which previously had 100 goats has seen most die and have been left with less than 40 now.

This had a major impact on the food security for many of the children in the village who were also forced out of school to support their households survive the drought. Being in a more rural and remote area of Central and Southern Somalia, little assistance had yet been received by the community as most of the INGOs and other aid organizations have been concentrated in easier to reach urban areas and in towns where IDPs have concentrated. Only one small German NGO had been present in the village, which focussed on providing basic food items like sugar, rice and oil for the 30 of the most vulnerable households in the village. No one was there to provide any support for children to remain in school or to use education services as a life-saving entry point for vulnerable children.

UNICEF, together with its local NGO partner HIRAD and WFP, has been filling this gap by providing critical support to the community. A school feeding programme has been used to ensure children remain in school while emergency incentives are provided for teacher to remain in school and supplies distributed to support children's learning, without which schools would have already been closed. Parents are also greatly appreciative as keeping children in school has ensured that children remain safe and protected while parents have been freed to focus on providing critical needs for their households to survive the worst impacts of the drought.

UNICEF with local NGO partners is now striving to sustain and build upon the amazing results achieved with the support of partners such as DFID thus far.



Porridge (breakfast) cooking for children in the school

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Farhia Rashid at her new business centre at Dalxiiska IDP. Credit photo: Yahye Abdi

Youth Empowerment Programme (YEP) key facts

- 75% of the country's population of 12 million below 35 years of age.
- 80% of the youth in the country are unemployed
- According to the World Bank, 40% of people globally who join rebel movements are motivated by lack of economic opportunity.
- Supporting youth (aged 16-34 yrs) is regarded as a critical issue to address for building a peaceful and secure Somalia
- YEP has led to increased levels of social cohesion and resilience in communities where youth are supported
- 1,504 youth (62% female) graduating from three youth education programme (YEP) centres in central south regions and four in Puntland
- 96 training facilitators supported with training to improve pedagogy through training
- Conflict-sensitive approach for YEP interventions applied to build potential of youth as agents of change to support peacebuilding and statebuilding in Somalia

Capitalizing on Somalia's demographic dividend by helping youth

Somalia has one of the youngest populations in the world, with over 75% of the country's population of 12 million below 35 years of age. It is estimated over 80% of the youth in the country are unemployed and thus signify a 'youth bulge' that can provide either a 'demographic dividend' to support Somalia's development, or a 'demographic disaster' if the youth of Somalia are not supported to recover from years of conflict and political instability.

Farhia Rashid is a 24-year-old single mother with one daughter and lives with her mother in Dalxiis IDP camp in Kismayu. In 2010, due to conflict and insecurity Farhia fled her home town Bardhere and sought refuge in one of Dadaab's refugee camps in Kenya. By June 2016, Farhia and her family decided to return Somalia to Kismayu—the capital of Jubbaland State and a 'commercial city' settling in Dalxiiska, which is close to the Indian Ocean.

Unlike many unemployed youth struggling to find jobs, Farhia has overcome the odds and has started a business to support her family's reintegration and provide for critical needs of her household.

Prior to her enrolment at UNICEF-supported Youth Empowerment

Program (YEP), she struggled to find vocational training opportunities in Kismayu. But with the launch of the YEP program she received learning opportunities that never existed for her and gained tie and dye making business skills in the textile sector. After completing her training she also received a business start-up package. She now has a successful business and makes a profit of 5 to 10 dollars per day - enough to cover her family living expenses. "I Am very happy for the skills gained at the vocational centre and I would not have managed to start my business without it...what I learnt is with me and will continue to have it to use for the rest of my life. It gives me confidence to run my business and be independent," says Farhia.

With generous funding from Japan, UNICEF provides youth vocational skills to enable disadvantaged and unemployed youth gain business and life skills that transform their life. To date more than 1,500 youth like Farhia have benefited from this support and look forward to a brighter, more peaceful and resilient future in Somalia.

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Students in South Central Somalia take part in recreation activities at their school. Credit UNICEF /

UNICEF Education Achievements Up to June 2017

51,9970 children provided with teaching and learning materials and textbooks

School construction was completed in Puntland resulting in **84 new permanent classrooms for children**, while construction was launched in Somaliland.

104,462 children (43 % girls) affected by drought and crisis were supported to remain or return to schools, including children in IDP camps and pastoralists in the most affected regions of Somalia

15,741 children (48.5% girls) accessing alternative basic education. Alternative basic education (ABE) textbooks were also provided to all children (with a child/textbook ratio of 1:1) and 70 Temporary Learning Spaces were constructed for children in pastoralist areas.

National Teacher Training Institute (NTTI) construction completed in Somaliland

1,807 teachers and head teachers (16 % women) received incentives to continue their in schools and temporary learning spaces across the country

1504 youth (62% female) graduating from youth education programme (YEP) centres in Central South regions and in Puntland

Education and Humanitarian Action

In February 2017, in response to the continuing drought in Somalia, the Executive Director of UNICEF declared Somalia an Emergency to prevent famine for an initial period of 6 months from 20 February 2017 to 20 August 2017. As part of its pre-famine response UNICEF quickly mobilized to support the most vulnerable and at-risk children in the country using education as a critical entry point to deliver life-saving activities and ensure children remain safe and protected.

Building on lessons learned from the drought of 2011 and utilizing UNICEF's comparative advantages, cost-efficient partnerships with local NGOs have been utilized to provide temporary learning spaces and learning materials, ensure teachers remain in schools, and provide emergency cash grants to support the most vulnerable children in the worst affected and hardest-to-reach areas of Somalia.

By the beginning of July 2017, the Education Cluster for humanitarian response had reached 171,459 children. Of this UNICEF accounted for 61% of all children reached (or 104,462, 43% girls) with comparatively less funding than all education partners combined. UNICEF's response is also ensuring the children are protected in schools and provided with psychosocial support through the training of teachers to respond to critical needs of children.

FIVE PILLARS UNICEF Somalia Education

1. Increase equitable access to quality formal basic education
2. Support out of school children through diverse delivery of basic education
3. Empower vulnerable adolescents and youth through access to alternative education and vocational training
4. Support education authorities and school management to improve quality education services for all
5. Support children affected by emergency through conflict sensitive EiE programming

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