



## Somali Youth Learners Initiative (SYLI)



Abdulaziz Bashir / USAID

Girls and boys learning together in Qardo, Puntland in a newly constructed classroom

### Funding Level:

\$38 million

### Duration:

September 2011 – June 2017

### Activity Goals:

- Improve enrollment and academic performance of students in secondary schools
- Increase access to secondary education through construction and rehabilitation of schools
- Enhance quality of secondary education through trainings for current and future teachers
- Improve Ministries of Education and local communities' management of secondary education
- Increase opportunities for youth to contribute productively to society

### Activity Accomplishments:

- Increased enrollment by 17% for girls in the supported SYLI schools over the course of the program
- 333 classrooms built or repaired
- 455 other structures built or rehabilitated (latrines, hand washing stations, water tanks, office blocks, perimeter fencing)
- 26,575 textbooks and other teaching and learning aids were distributed
- 2,624 teachers completed short and long term in-service teacher training
- 233 pre-service female teachers graduated from two year course in education

### ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

USAID's Somali Youth Learners Initiative (SYLI) supported the next generation of Somali leaders by expanding access to quality secondary education opportunities for almost 25,000 youth. Through SYLI, the Federal Government of Somalia and regional Ministry of Education officials received support in strengthening secondary education; teachers participated in trainings to enhance their classroom skills; and youth gained access to economic opportunities, enabling them to become responsible members of society that contribute to their communities.

In Somalia, youth comprise the majority of the population. However, many lack basic education, employment opportunities, and a meaningful connection to the issues and governance of their community. Six out of 10 children aged 5-14 are not in school. In Puntland alone, 27% of primary teachers are trained. In south-central Somalia only 20.1% (primary) and 21.1% (secondary) are trained. Schools are in poor condition and have few textbooks and other learning materials. There is a substantial urban-rural divide in enrollment (primary and secondary) and gender inequities are large.

### ACTIVITY AREAS

In Somalia, SYLI aimed to meet the high demand for education and provide a safe space for youth to learn and acquire life skills. Across all regions of Somalia, SYLI provided an array of opportunities to youth, including formal and non-formal education that promotes literacy and numeracy, skills training and entrepreneurship, and leadership and conflict resolution training that strengthens civic participation and social cohesion. Throughout these efforts, SYLI promoted equal participation of boys and girls. SYLI also developed the capacity of Ministry of Education officials to provide fair, equitable, and quality education services to Somali youth through construction of schools, training of teachers, provision of teaching and learning materials, and capacity building of local Community Education Committees to sustain these investments.

### ACTIVITY IMPACT

USAID provided training and assistance to 57 secondary schools through SYLI, focusing on schools in communities where the government and community members are able to lead reform efforts in communities that have experienced high levels of violence, and where threats of extremism and criminality are prevalent.

SYLI collaborated with education authorities in providing education services for 24,790 (15,767 males, 9,023 females) secondary school-aged students in 57 schools across Somalia in the academic year of 2016-2017. To increase access to education, 333 classrooms were completed in addition to 455 other structures, such as science laboratories, latrines, libraries, perimeter walls, girl friendly spaces and administrative offices. The additional classroom spaces enabled more students to attend classes, reduced overcrowding and created a

- 12,160 students (of which 79% are female) completed six months literacy and numeracy course
- 387 youth completed business skills training; 156 youth received business startup grants
- 300 youth benefitted from apprenticeship/internship program
- Over 67,000 youth participated in civic participation activities
- Supported the development and passing of the Somaliland Education Policy

**Implementing Partner:**

Mercy Corps

**Key Partners:**

CARE International

Somaliland National Youth Organization (SONYO)

Puntland Youth Association Network (PYAN)

Mudug Development Association Network (MUDAN)

Somali Youth Leadership Forum (SYLF)

Juba Foundation

Ministries of Education

Ministries of Youth

Community Education Committees

**Activity Locations:**

Somaliland, Puntland, Galmudug, Hirshabelle, Southwest state and Jubbaland state

For more information contact:

[usaidsomalia-info@usaid.gov](mailto:usaidsomalia-info@usaid.gov)

Follow us on Twitter: [@USAIDSomalia](https://twitter.com/USAIDSomalia)

more conducive learning environment.

USAID's education assistance in Somalia resulted in outstanding completion rates for the 2015-2016 academic year, which averaged 97% (98% for boys and 95% for girls). This demonstrates that when given the opportunity, young people want to go to school and stay in school.

Access to education also requires providing the essential tools for teaching and learning. With USAID assistance through SYLI, almost 20,000 textbooks and other teaching and learning materials were provided. 233 pre-service female teachers graduated from a two year course in education in September 2016 and are now being recruited in schools throughout the country. In addition, 2,624 (2,483 male, 141 female) in-service teachers completed short and long-term training at qualified teacher training institutes across all regions. The trainings focused on student-centered learning and classroom management skills as well as English, mathematics, and science subjects.

To build Somali capacities, SYLI trained and supported staff from the Ministries of Education in Mogadishu and Galmudug to carry out public tendering processes for school construction. Potential contractors from the community were invited to bid for contracts and were assessed based on predetermined criteria in a blind review session conducted by the Ministry and USAID's implementing partner. In both cases, the Ministries had never carried out a public tendering process before and vowed to do so for all future construction activities. Promoting transparency is critical for building trust of local authorities as well as for promoting equity.

To foster a culture of tolerance and social engagement, more than 67,000 youth across Somalia participated in civic engagement activities. SYLI collaborated with the Ministries of Youth and Education and local youth organizations to provide youth with the right platforms and opportunities to network and discuss critical issues affecting them through advocacy forums. Furthermore, to create incentives for youth to work, SYLI integrated skills development training with innovative technologies for the benefit of 387 (207 male, 180 female) youth. Of the 387 youth who graduated, 156 micro-entrepreneurs and youth-owned microenterprises were given small business grants to start their own businesses.

USAID believes that adding student-led civic engagement activities into an education program gives youth opportunities to engage positively in their communities, and increases confidence in their ability to achieve change through non-violent means. Almost 2000 youth leaders were trained in leadership, conflict resolution, advocacy and communication and were supported in organizing cleaning-up campaigns, sports tournaments and school landscaping to name a few activities. Four major youth organizations were supported in Somaliland (SONYO), Puntland (PYAN), and Galmudug (GAYAN), along with a number of other youth networks, who successfully contributed to a new, more responsive and inclusive National Youth Policy.