

## INEE Minimum Standards Case Study: Increasing Girls' Enrolment in Somalia

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| Location:     | Hiran, Central and South Somalia (CSS)                     |

### Background and Context

Somalia has had no functioning government for the past 19 years and the resulting protracted and complex emergency situation has denied an entire generation of children their fundamental rights. In Hiran, basic infrastructure and support systems have been destroyed by the recurrent conflict and further exacerbated by natural cyclical disasters such as drought and flooding. There has been no systematic support or investment in social services since 1992 and the current education system is extremely fragile with little resilience. In all emergencies, children are the most vulnerable, have the least resilience and are frequently victims of child soldier recruitment by armed militia groups.

Somalia suffers from donor fatigue as a result of the complexity of the ongoing emergency situation. This complexity, combined with limited access to the country, has also resulted in a reduced number of INGO's operating in the region. Save the Children has been working in Hiran region for the past 19 years and has gained community trust and acceptance, which is crucial for ongoing programming.

### Project Description

This three-month Education in Emergencies (EiE) intervention funded by DANIDA and implemented in Hiran sought to improve access to quality and relevant education for conflict-affected children. It built on the achievements of both previous and ongoing education projects to maximise the impact of the intervention. The project focused on addressing key issues facing the education system in Hiran, including the low retention rate of children and the low retention rate of teachers. Additionally, it aimed to support ongoing capacity building for community education authorities who acted in lieu of a Ministry of Education. This was achieved by increasing the relevance of the curriculum to conflict-affected children, improving access to emergency education, and increasing the retention of teachers. Doing so resulted in improved quality teaching and learning and improved capacity of communities to support education in emergencies.

### Application of INEE Minimum Standards

The DANIDA EiE project was implemented in accordance with the INEE Minimum Standards:

**Foundational Standards—Community Participation, Standard 1: Participation.** *Community members participate actively, transparently, and without discrimination in analysis, planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of education responses.*

Due to the short period of this project (three months), the community was not involved in the planning stages; however, the project was developed based on previous participatory planning exercises carried out with the community. The Community Education Committees, which included a diverse range of community members including school administrators, had a primary role in planning and facilitating teacher trainings. They also actively contributed to the distribution of teaching and learning materials as well as sanitary materials to the participating schools.

**Access and Learning Environment, Standard 1: Equal Access. *All individuals have access to quality and relevant education opportunities.***

In the 30 participating schools, monitoring was carried out by the Hiran Regional Education Committee (HREC) and the Save the Children Education staff in order to ensure that no discrimination took place, paying special attention to the enrolment of girls and disabled children. Children themselves carried out back-to-school mobilisation campaigns to encourage the enrolment of even the hardest to reach children. Sanitary materials were distributed to a total of 679 girls as an incentive to encourage them to enroll and remain in school due to evidence that they do not attend school during menses. With support of Save the Children, the HREC drafted and distributed a code of conduct to all teachers that outlined ways to achieve positive relationships between teachers and students. The CECs worked with the teachers to guide and support its implementation.

**Access and Learning Environment, Standard 2: Protection and Well-being. *Learning environments are secure and safe, and promote the protection and the psychosocial well-being of learners, teachers and other education personnel.***

As a result of the Code of Conduct, the cases of corporal punishment in the schools have decreased significantly. Additionally, it provided children opportunities to present their views and opinions at the school level.

**Teaching and Learning, Standard 2: Training, Professional Development, and Support. *Teachers and other education personnel receive periodic, relevant and structured training according to needs and circumstances.***

Teachers also received relevant and structured training during this project life: 187 teachers were trained in child-friendly teaching methodologies and subsequently developed action plans, which led to these positive practices becoming part of the curriculum. A total of 172 teachers received training in life-saving and peace-building messages.

**Teachers and Other Education Personnel, Standard 2: Conditions of Work. *Teachers and other education personnel have clearly defined conditions of work and are appropriately compensated.***

Teachers and other education personnel were provided with job descriptions as well as the codes of conduct to ensure clearly defined roles. In addition to the small salaries teachers receive from the community, Save the Children provided additional compensation for all teachers and for head teachers in the supported schools.

## Challenges

Save the Children encountered several challenges during the implementation of this project. While gender equity has improved for girls and, in fact, female enrolment is now 46%, it still remains difficult to recruit female teachers. Reluctance of women to take on roles in management comes partly from community attitudes towards gender and partly from the gender division of labour in many communities in the region. Though changing attitudes was not within the scope of the project, the participation of the community, as well as the use of local resources, enabled Save the Children to overcome certain gender barriers.

Teachers proved motivated to learn new pedagogical methods and participate in the trainings offered by the DANIDA project. However, their actual progress and success in implementing their new knowledge and skills remains limited due to the teachers' low academic levels.

The participatory nature of the project enabled us to identify the challenges as they surfaced and implement necessary measures to mitigate any negative impact they may have. The community's active involvement in the execution of the project was a key factor in achieving the positive outcomes.

## Outcomes

- 175 teachers (37 female) were trained on child rights, the prevention of HIV/AIDS, understanding peace and conflict, and sanitation and hygiene in the school environment. As a result, there was an increased relevance of the curriculum for the lives of conflict-affected children in 20 primary schools and 10 Alternative Approaches to Basic Education centres. Application of child-friendly approaches and life-saving messages to teaching methods provided a more protective learning environment.
- Improved access and retention, especially for girls, as a result of the distribution of school materials, recreational materials, and sanitary materials. In addition, 86% of children who had finished the previous school year returned for the new school year and 96% of these were girls.
- 172 teachers (33 female) from 20 primary schools and 10 AABE centres attended workshops on child-friendly teaching and classroom management. These teachers also received incentives throughout the three-month holiday period in order to motivate them to return for the next school year.
- The local education authority, HREC, demonstrated improved capacity to support education in emergencies through their organisation of the Grade 4 examinations for the first time. 63% of SC-supported schools with children in Grade 4 took part in the examinations.

## Lessons Learned and Effective Practice

Project activities were able to continue through the incorporation of the INEE Minimum Standards. The capacity building of the Community Education Committees and the local education authorities in previous projects (which remains a priority for Save the Children programming) has enabled successful monitoring and effective management of the schools despite the insecurity faced.

The Minimum Standards Domain on Access to education regardless of gender, ethnicity or age encouraged interventions such as the distribution of sanitary towels, community mobilisation on girls' rights to education and the construction of adequate hygiene and sanitation facilities for girls. These activities have had a positive impact on girls' enrolment in schools and should be included in future projects. In order to increase the impact on adult women, however, projects such as this one should be linked with other interventions in livelihoods and/or nutrition so as to tackle gender issues affecting adults, such as the limited scope of women to engage in activities that do not directly contribute to the welfare of their immediate families.

### Would you like to share your Minimum Standards experience?

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