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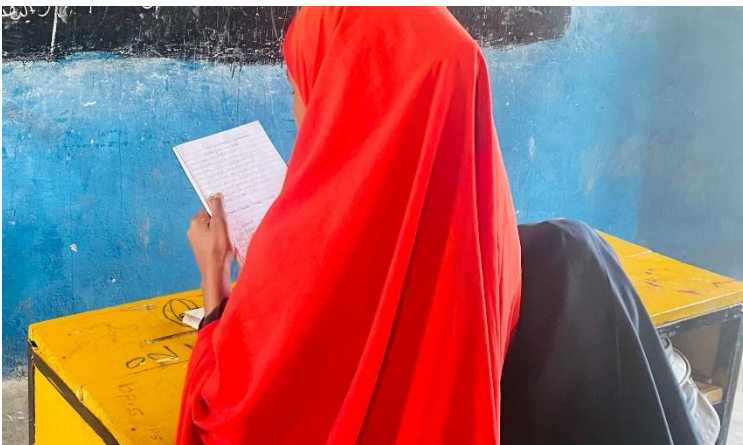
Education System Strengthening

Results from the AGES project in Somalia

In 2019-2024, the Adolescent Girls' Education in Somalia (AGES) project supported **90,698 extremely vulnerable girls and female youth in South Somalia to access education opportunities tailored to their needs**. To achieve this result, AGES worked closely with government institutions and other structures at the national, regional, district, state, community, and school levels to strengthen and expand service delivery and decentralized capacity. This document summarizes AGES system strengthening contributions in Somalia.

AGES provided technical assistance to the MoECHE to develop the Adult Education Policy and Curriculum Framework and the new Safeguarding Policy. AGES also supported MoEs' Gender and Inclusion Focal Points and Regional and District Education Officers to provide safeguarding training to school personnel; set up gender-responsive reporting mechanisms at school level; train and coach 1,022 teachers; roll out social emotional learning; and train teachers on career guidance.

Policy Development



Adult Education Policy and Curriculum Framework. In 2018-2021, through FCDO and USAID funding, AGES collaborated with the Federal Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education/ MoECHE and Federal Member States' Ministries of Education/ FMS MOEs to develop and refine a non-formal education (NFE) model, using an iterative adaptation process informed by rigorous testing and research. The 11-month NFE course was designed to develop basic literacy, numeracy and financial literacy skills among ultra-marginalized girls who

had never attended school or dropped out in early grades. Additionally, the NFE content included health, hygiene, participation in savings groups, and the development of social-emotional skills through a structured mentorship process fostering civic action (Girls' Empowerment Forums). To date, 54,233 ultra-marginalized girls and female youth ages 15-25 have benefitted from NFE courses.

In 2022-2023, through USAID funding, AGES provided technical assistance to the MoECHE to develop the Adult Education Policy and Curriculum Framework. Launched in July 2023, the Framework consolidates the NFE

course into the first level of a structured three-level Adult Education pathway intended to facilitate transitions into technical-vocational training and livelihoods for disadvantaged youth who have never attended school or dropped out in early grades, particularly young women and displaced individuals. In a country where 42% of the youth ages 15-19 have never attended school (45% female),¹ Adult Education provides a critical opportunity for development and economic insertion, contributing to stabilization.

Safeguarding Policy. The research conducted by AGES identified safeguarding issues as a critical barrier for retention and learning. The [baseline study](#) found that 44% of the formal education teachers, 31% of the Accelerated Basic Education/ABE teachers, and 12% of the NFE facilitators were using corporal punishment. Overall, 39% of the formal education teachers were observed doing so during class.² Additionally, girls reported facing harassment and abuse on the way to school and at school, and 25% of the caregivers of girls living with disabilities considered unsafe for them to attend school.³ In response, AGES worked with the MoECHE and FMS MOEs' Gender and Inclusion Focal Points and Regional and District Education Officers (REOs and DEOs) to provide safeguarding training to school personnel and set up gender-responsive reporting mechanisms in targeted areas, linked to existing protection services and DEOs/ GFPs. Through USAID funding, AGES provided technical assistance to the MoECHE to develop a Safeguarding Policy, institutionalizing the implementation of safeguarding mechanisms at school level. The Safeguarding Policy will be launched in July 2024. Through the newly launched Girls' Education Accelerator (GPE-funded, 2024-2027), the MoECHE / FMS MOEs' Gender and Inclusion Focal Points will provide training to REOs, DEOs, and school personnel for the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and monitor its rollout.

Institutional Capacity Strengthening

Teacher coaching capacity. AGES has supported the MoECHE and FMS MOEs to train a cadre of 15 state-based coaches (13M, 2F) who provide guidance to teachers to improve practices. AGES worked with the MoECHE and FMS MOEs to develop a structured coaching process, where coaches conduct classroom observations on a quarterly basis to track the use of student-centered, gender-responsive, and inclusive teaching practices. Informed by the results, the coaches use a structured coaching guide to provide guidance to teachers. The FMS MOEs coaches use electronic tools and a dashboard co-developed by AGES with USAID support to track teacher progress over time, enabling them to identify achievements and persistent gaps, and respond to those in a timely manner. In addition to in-person guidance, the coaches are also providing support to NFE facilitators and other teachers via WhatsApp.

Increased availability of qualified teachers.

Through USAID funding, AGES supported the MoECHE and FMS MOEs to train 1,022 teachers including 327 primary teachers (30% female); 284 ABE teachers (38% F), and 411 NFE facilitators (65% female). The targeted training of female ABE/NFE teacher candidates contributes to enhance the number of female teachers in a system where only 15% of the primary teachers are women. The use of a blended training approach, including in-person and remote components, followed by intensive coaching informed by classroom observations, enabled teachers with limited or no experience, including female, to successfully deliver NFE classes. NFE facilitators were able to increase the proportion of



¹ National Bureau of Statistics, 2022 Somalia Integrated Household Budget Survey, pgs.19-21

² Consilient (2020) Adolescent Girls' Education in Somalia – Baseline Evaluation, pgs. 162-163

³ Ibid, pg. 70; pg. 183; pg.209

NFE students who are established/ proficient readers from 29.7% at the baseline to 57% at the endline.⁴

Social-emotional skills development. Through FCDO and USAID funding, AGES strengthened the capacity of the MoECHE and FMS MOEs' Gender and Inclusion Focal Points/ GFPs to support social-emotional skills development in a gender-responsive and inclusive manner. Under USAID funding, AGES supported GFPs to expand the coverage of the NFE center-based Girls' Empowerment Forums (GEFs) from 620 to 9,110 participants. The GFPs provided ongoing support to adult female mentors and student peer mentors to develop social-emotional skills, engage in girl-led civic action, and build linkages with healthcare providers, Justice Committees, security sector, protection services, and Youth Centers. The Gender Focal Points also led the process of clustering the GEFs into 18 district-level networks. As of May 2024, 84% of the GEFs were functional; out of those, 89% were participating in district-level networks and 100% were conducting girl-led civic action, including awareness raising on girls' education, following up on dropout cases, providing psychosocial first aid, and conducting community dialogues on gender and youth issues.⁵ The participation in GEFs predicted an increase of 9 percentage points over and above average literacy scores for NFE participants.⁶

Institutionalizing career guidance in schools. A critical barrier to positive transitions is the high proportion of students who lack a vision for future careers. As of May 2023, 55% of the NFE graduates in Hirshabelle and 47% of those in Banadir stated that they would either get married or do nothing after completing the program.⁷ Through USAID CEFMU prevention funding, AGES supported the MoECHE to develop structured workforce readiness and career guidance for older students and trained a cadre of 12 (16.7%F) MOE officials as ToTs for its rollout. The ToTs trained 292 NFE facilitators (64% F) to provide workforce readiness training and career guidance in NFE centers, working in collaboration with 95 (92.6%female owned) business owners and staff identified as key resource persons for skills development among the private sector in each district. As of May 2024, the proportion of NFE graduates who stated that they either wanted to get married or do nothing had declined to 8%, with 44% now aiming to engage in TVET.⁸ Additionally, 27% of the graduates had already enrolled in TVET and 28% had set up a business.⁹ The final evaluation shows that 35% of the cohort 4 and 28% of the cohort 5 NFE graduates have engaged in self/wage employment, while 16% of both cohorts have transitioned into formal school.¹⁰ Additionally, 25% of the cohort 4 and 36% of the cohort 5 students have transitioned into other forms of non-formal and vocational education.¹¹ The average monthly income of cohort 4 NFE graduates, excluding outliers, has increased from \$16 to \$40, with a particular surge in Hirshabelle (from \$0.6 to \$58).¹²

The Adolescent Girls' Education in Somalia (AGES) project is an ambitious six-year initiative (2018-2024) funded by FCDO and USAID, which seeks to enable ultra-marginalised girls and female youth living in conflict-affected areas of Somalia to access quality education responsive to their needs. AGES combines the provision of three education modalities with financial literacy, youth savings groups, life skills, mentorship, and girl-led civic action. **AGES enrolled a total of 90,698 girls in education, including 21,945 in primary education; 1,244 in special needs schools; 13,276 in accelerated basic education (ABE); and 54,233 in non-formal education classes (NFE).** For more information on AGES programming, contact: Abdifarhan Gure, gure.farah@care.org



⁴ Consilient (2024) *Adolescent Girls' Education in Somalia – Final Evaluation (draft under review)*, pg. 92 (refers to Cohort 5 results only)

⁵ CARE (2024) *Adolescent Girls' Education in Somalia – Q23 Monitoring Survey*, pg.19; pg.21

⁶ Consilient (2024) *Adolescent Girls' Education in Somalia – Final Evaluation (draft under review)*, pg. 139

⁷ CARE (2024) *Adolescent Girls' Education in Somalia – Q19 Monitoring Survey*, pg.25

⁸ CARE (2024) *Adolescent Girls' Education in Somalia – Q23 Monitoring Survey*, pg.27

⁹ CARE (2024) *Adolescent Girls' Education in Somalia – Q23 Monitoring Survey*, pg.26

¹⁰ Consilient (2024) *Adolescent Girls' Education in Somalia – Final Evaluation (draft under review)*, pg. 143

¹¹ Consilient (2024) *Adolescent Girls' Education in Somalia – Final Evaluation (draft under review)*, pg. 143

¹² Consilient (2024) *Adolescent Girls' Education in Somalia – Final Evaluation (draft under review)*, pg. 161