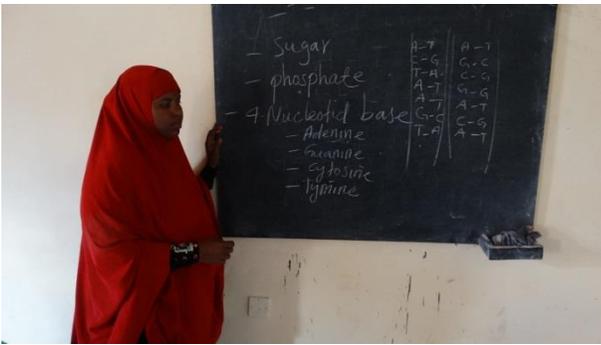




Transforming Lives

Training the first female teachers in Central Somalia

Scholarship program enables young women to continue their education, and gain the skills necessary to become successful teachers.



"I always wanted to be a teacher, we have no female secondary teachers in Mudug, I am glad to be among the first."

--Amina Abdullahi, 23 years,
Recipient of the teacher training scholarship

For many girls in Galkacyo and all over Somalia, access to education remains blocked. Early marriages and high demand for help at home caring for younger siblings are among the reasons that girls are prevented from enrolling in school. For the few lucky girls who are able to complete primary school, secondary school seems completely out of reach. Cultural barriers, as well as a lack of strong female role models and female teachers, contribute to the high dropout rates of female learners.

One of the fortunate few is 23-year-old Amina Abdullahi, a mother of three children all below the age of five. Growing up, she remembers money always being an issue in their household. Not having any choices, Amina was married off while in secondary school. She never dreamed that she would obtain an education beyond secondary school until she came across Mercy Corp's USAID-funded program, Somali Youth Learners Initiative (SYLI).

SYLI recently launched a two-year diploma scholarship for teacher training aimed at increasing the number of qualified female secondary teachers in Somalia. One of the most compelling arguments for increasing the number of female teachers is that they positively impact girls' education by directly improving enrollment and retention rates.

Amina, together with 30 other women, enrolled for the teacher training course at Galkacyo University in February 2015. Although balancing family life and school has not been easy, she is determined to succeed. "It's not easy, sometimes I am forced to miss classes due to my children being sick, but I am very determined as I see this as a second chance for my children's future", said Amina.

Amina is an exemplary student in her class. She has the confidence to speak in front of an audience and participate actively in class. She is admired by her fellow classmates for her determination and motivation. She serves as a great role model to all the other girls in her community, showing that with the right drive and ambition, young women can successfully have both a family and a profession.

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