



SNAPSHOT

Somali Soap Opera Promotes Financial Literacy

Stories target youth and are transmitted via innovative mobile technologies



A woman displays an audio listening device next to the *Fire and Gold* launch poster. / Photo: EDC

Dabiyo Dahab: ***“Take Control of Your Finances!”***

Telling Our Story
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Washington, DC 20523-1000
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

As many Somali youth are learning, being good at arithmetic is not the same as knowing how to manage a household or run a business. That is one of the messages of a new Somalia soap opera, dubbed *Fire and Gold*, launched in February, 2011.

The collaboration between USAID and Education Development Center was rolled out as an innovative way to promote financial literacy in Somalia among young people.

The soap-opera format uses traditional Somali story-telling methods to educate, combined with innovative and interactive technology that attract youth.

Fire and Gold is being broadcast through MP3-enabled devices that allow for consistently high-quality audio on demand, and the ability to re-play any episode at any time. An interactive feature allows students to answer questions about an episode using the phone's keypad and immediately learn if their response was right or wrong.

During the three-day launch workshop held in Hargeisa, Somaliland, ten partner organizations from all Somali regions—Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia—were present.

Fire and Gold is being rolled out under USAID's youth livelihood program known as *Shaqodoon* in Somali, or “Job Seeker.” The program helps identify quick-impact, market driven employment opportunities for youth. Somalia has been in conflict for decades, making it very difficult for young people to find jobs.

Since 2008 and working with Somali private enterprises, more than 2,275 Somali youth (39 percent of them female) have been provided with a livelihood opportunity including mentoring, skill building, internships or job placements in Somalia.

Under the new *Fire and Gold* financial literacy series, youth gain new skills and are asked to think about what they want to achieve personally and professionally. They are then challenged to create a plan for reaching those goals.

The message is resonating among many youth who aspire to do big things in life: Take Control of Your Finances!