

UK's girls education programme receives new funding in Somalia

Operating in Banadir, Hirshabelle, Jubaland and South West states, the programme is focused on improving access to quality education for young Somali women and girls.

With \$17.6 million in UK Aid, AGES is currently supporting 42,000 marginalised adolescent girls to access primary school, accelerated basic education and non-formal courses tailored to their needs.

With the additional USAID funding, nearly 40,000 more marginalised adolescent girls and young women aged 15 to 24 who have never attended school will get the chance to improve their lives through the 11-month non-formal education course. The joint funding will also provide support to young women to engage in income-generating activities and civic education, in addition to providing linkages to other development opportunities.

The announcement comes ahead of the July 28-29 Global Education Summit. Along with Kenya, the UK will be co-hosting this event, aimed at raising \$5 billion to ensure that all children, particularly those in developing countries including Somalia, have equitable access to quality education.

British Ambassador to Somalia Kate Foster said:

The UK-funded Adolescent Girls Education in Somalia programme has made significant contributions to the lives of tens of thousands of young Somali women. With this new USAID funding, we are expanding our approach to reach even more marginalised households and communities. It will build their resilience by providing young Somali women basic financial, literacy, numeracy and life skills.

USAID Somalia Mission Director Patrick Diskin said:

USAID is very excited to contribute to this successful UK-led initiative in order to provide more young Somali women with a foundational education they lack, yet so rightly deserve. These skills will provide women with increased livelihood and civic opportunities, which are critical for advancing Somalia's economic and social development.

Access to primary education remains a major challenge in Somalia, particularly for girls. According to the 2020 Somali Health and Demographic Survey, only 27 percent of primary school-aged children are receiving primary education, and only 25 percent of them are girls.

Sixty-five percent of young women aged 20 to 24 have not attended school at all or have only some primary education, compared to 53 percent of young men of the same age.

Multiple barriers affect access to education for adolescent girls in Somalia. The combination of the COVID-19 outbreak and economic conditions has further worsened the exclusion of the most vulnerable adolescent girls and young women from education opportunities.