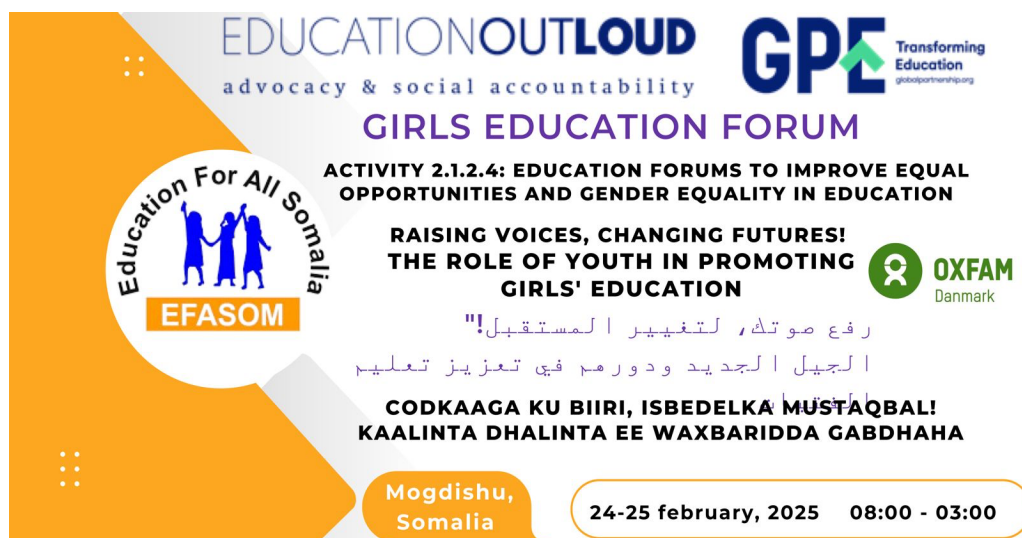


Forum Report: Girls Education Forum

Raising Voices, Changing Futures! The Role of Youth in Promoting Girls' Education



Mogadishu, Somalia | 24-25 February 2025



Introduction

The Girls Education Forum, organized under the Education For All Somalia (EFASOM) initiative and supported by the Education Out Loud (EOL) Project, was held in Mogadishu, Somalia, on 24-25 February 2025. The forum brought together youth leaders, educators, policymakers, civil society representatives, and community stakeholders to address the barriers to gender equality in education and explore strategies to promote equal opportunities for girls in Somalia and beyond.

The forum aimed to create an inclusive platform for dialogue, raise awareness about the challenges girls face in accessing education, and inspire actionable solutions to advance gender equality in education. Through presentations, group work, and panel discussions, participants shared insights, best practices, and innovative approaches to empower girls and transform educational systems. Additionally, the forum emphasized the crucial role of youth in promoting girls' education by advocating for policy changes, raising awareness, mentoring younger students, and fostering community engagement to break down barriers and ensure equal educational opportunities for all.

Objectives of the Forum

The objectives of the forum were to:

- ❖ Raise awareness about the barriers to girls' education and the importance of gender equality in education.
- ❖ Promote dialogue among key stakeholders, including youth leaders, educators, and policymakers, to address these challenges.
- ❖ Share successful initiatives and strategies that have advanced gender equality in education.
- ❖ Advocate for policy changes and systemic reforms to ensure equal access to education for all.
- ❖ Empower youth leaders to take active roles in promoting girls' education and gender equality.
- ❖ Foster collaboration among organizations and individuals working toward educational reform.

Key Outcomes and Discussions:

Day 1: Gender Equality and Youth Leadership in Education

Session 1.1: Youth Leaders on the Importance of Gender Equality in Education

Presenter: Avv. Amina Abdukadir

During this session, the following points were discussed:

- ❖ Importance of Gender Equality in Education.
- ❖ Role of Youth Leaders
- ❖ Impact of Girls' Education

Session 1.2: The Role of Youth in Promoting Girls' Education

Presenter: Dr. Nadifa Omar

The discussion focused on:

- ❖ How youth can take initiative by organizing awareness campaigns, mentoring younger girls, and advocating for safe learning environments.
- ❖ The effectiveness of peer education and community engagement in breaking barriers to girls' education.
- ❖ The instrumental role of youth leaders in mobilizing communities and fostering collaboration among stakeholders to enhance girls' education.

Session 1.3: Investing in Girls' Education Transforms Communities, Countries, and the Entire World

Presenter: Maama Nuurta Mohamed

Key discussions included:

- ❖ The long-term benefits of investing in girls' education, including improved health, economic growth, and reduced poverty.
- ❖ How educated girls contribute to their communities, advocate for social justice, and participate in leadership roles.
- ❖ The need to view girls' education as a global investment with far-reaching impacts on sustainable development.

Day 2: Creating Inclusive and Safe Educational Environments

Session 2.1: Youth and Education – Young People Advocate for Better Educational Policies

Presenter: Anab Muhidin

The following points were discussed:

- ❖ Challenges Faced by Youth in Education.
- ❖ Youth Advocacy Strategies
- ❖ Collaboration for Systemic Change

Session 2.2: Creating Safe Spaces for Girls in School

Presenter: Hawa Ali Osman

The discussion covered:

- ❖ The importance of safe learning environments for girls' academic success, mental well-being, and long-term empowerment.
- ❖ Strategies such as implementing anti-harassment policies, providing menstrual hygiene facilities, and fostering peer support networks.
- ❖ The role of safe spaces in encouraging girls to participate fully in school activities and pursue their educational goals without fear.

Session 2.3: Achieving Gender Equality in Education

Presenter: Sabirin Abdukadir

Key points discussed were::

- ❖ Education Equality & Development
- ❖ Overcoming Financial & Security Barriers
- ❖ Role of Community Engagement
- ❖ Improving School Infrastructure.
- ❖ Investment in Girls' Education

Group Work and Panel Discussions

Group Work Highlights

Group 1: Why is Gender Equality in Education Important?

1. **Eradicating Ignorance:** Gender equality in education helps eliminate ignorance by ensuring that both girls and boys have access to knowledge and learning opportunities.
2. **Equal Educational Opportunities and Poverty Reduction:** It provides equal educational opportunities for all, which plays a key role in reducing poverty and empowering individuals to contribute to their communities.
3. **Community Collaboration and Individual Responsibility:** Gender equality fosters community collaboration, where every individual takes responsibility for their role in promoting education and equality.
4. **Improved Community Health Awareness:** It enhances community health awareness, leading to better health outcomes and well-being for all.
5. **Resolving Family Conflicts and Strengthening Relationships:** Gender equality in education helps address family conflicts and strengthens relationships by promoting mutual respect and understanding.
6. **Ensuring Security and Stability:** It contributes to creating a secure and stable environment, which is essential for effective learning and personal growth.



Group 2: The Role of Youth in Promoting Girls' Education?

Building Strong Networks:

- ❖ Economic Collaboration: Youth can create economic initiatives among themselves to support girls' education.
- ❖ Awareness Campaigns: They can organize awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of educating girls.
- ❖ Youth Committees: Establishing youth committees to advocate for girls' education and address related challenges.

Enhancing Awareness:

- ❖ Addressing Small Challenges: Youth can create awareness programs to help girls overcome small but significant barriers to education.
- ❖ Empowering Girls: Strengthening awareness initiatives to help girls recognize their self-worth and potential.

Group 3: Key Points and Future Changes

1. Reducing Poverty (Nationally):
 - ❖ Addressing poverty at a national level to ensure equal access to education for all.
2. Economic Growth:
 - ❖ Promoting economic development to create more opportunities for girls' education.
3. Community Collaboration (Mothers Uniting):
 - ❖ Encouraging mothers and community members to work together to support girls' education.

4. Resolving Gender-Based Conflicts:

- ❖ Addressing and resolving conflicts related to gender to create a more inclusive environment.

5. Building Confidence:

- ❖ Empowering girls to build self-confidence and believe in their abilities.

6. Role Models:

- ❖ Highlighting and promoting female role models to inspire girls to pursue education and leadership roles.

Future Changes:

1. Reducing Illiteracy:

- ❖ Decreasing illiteracy rates to ensure more girls have access to education.

2. Gender Equality:

- ❖ Promoting gender equality to create a fair and just society.

3. Reducing Conflicts:

- Minimizing conflicts to create a stable environment for learning.

4. Community Health:

- ❖ Improving community health to support the overall well-being of girls and their families.

5. Preserving Societal Values:

- ❖ Protecting and promoting societal values that encourage education and equality.

Panel Discussion: The Role of Youth in Achieving Inclusive Education for Boys and Girls

What role can youth play in ensuring inclusive education?

Youth play a crucial role in achieving inclusive education. For example, in my school, young volunteers actively support girls who drop out of education. They encouraged me to tutor 15 girls and even advocated for a grading policy that grants them five additional points in exams to prevent them from falling behind. This is a significant and impactful step. Youth involvement is essential in ensuring education for all. “Abdirahman Mohamed, Dhidban Foundation”

What are the challenges preventing girls from accessing inclusive education?

- ❖ Security concerns
- ❖ Low household income
- ❖ Child labor

What are the solutions to these challenges?

- ❖ Volunteer initiatives
- ❖ Community participation
- ❖ Government support .” Suleeqa Abdi Nur Somali disability Network”

How can these challenges be addressed?

By increasing community awareness, strengthening government involvement, and ensuring education reaches all parts of the country . “Mohamed Buule Dahir, Civil Society Activist and EFASOM Member”

How do these challenges impact girls’ education?

They have a severe impact, often discouraging girls from continuing their studies. Overcoming these barriers requires strong school management, safe learning environments, and government policies that protect girls’ educational rights.” Abduqadir Mohamed, EFASOM Board Member”

How can youth advocate for inclusive education, and how can they enhance their advocacy efforts?

Youth represent the largest segment of society and hold significant influence. They can play a vital role in expanding access to education by holding the government accountable and raising awareness within communities. Social media is a powerful tool that allows youth to amplify their voices and drive change in education accessibility.”Amaal Abdulaahi Ahmed .EFASOM volunteer and National Youth Member”

Conclusion

The Girls Education Forum successfully highlighted the critical role of youth in promoting girls’ education and advancing gender equality. Through engaging discussions, participants identified key barriers to girls’ education and proposed actionable solutions, including policy reforms, community engagement, and the creation of safe learning environments.

The forum underscored the importance of viewing girls’ education as a global investment with transformative potential for individuals, communities, and nations. By empowering youth leaders, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, and advocating for systemic change, we can create a more inclusive and equitable education system that ensures every girl has the opportunity to thrive.

The outcomes of the forum serve as a call to action for governments, organizations, and communities to prioritize girls’ education and work collectively toward achieving gender equality in education. Together, we can raise voices and change futures, ensuring that no girl is left behind.

Recommendations:

- ❖ Strengthen policies to eliminate barriers to girls' education, such as child marriage and gender-based violence.
- ❖ Invest in safe and inclusive school infrastructure, including sanitation facilities and menstrual hygiene products.
- ❖ Provide gender-sensitive teacher training and promote inclusive curricula that challenge stereotypes.
- ❖ Empower youth leaders through mentorship programs and platforms for advocacy.
- ❖ Foster community engagement to shift cultural norms and prioritize girls' education.



Forum Photos





