



Policy Briefing

Bridging the Education Gap in Farming Communities

Introduction

On March 23, 2025, civil society actors gathered in Mogadishu to emphasize the urgent need for improved access to education in farming communities. Children in rural areas face numerous barriers to schooling, including economic hardship, long distances to schools, and limited resources. During the event, EFASOM released a policy briefing statement highlighting these challenges and the importance of investing in rural education. The statement underscored the need for targeted interventions to break the cycle of poverty, reduce child labor, and promote gender equality by ensuring that both boys and girls have equal educational opportunities.

Policy Focus

The policy briefing emphasized the role of education in strengthening rural development, as educated individuals contribute to better farming practices, economic growth, and community resilience. It called on policymakers to prioritize rural education by increasing funding, improving school infrastructure, and implementing innovative solutions such as mobile schools and community-based learning programs. By bringing together civil society, educators, and policymakers, the event reinforced the need for collective action to bridge the education gap for farming communities and ensure that all children, regardless of their location, have the opportunity to learn and thrive.

In fact, education is a fundamental right and a key driver of social and economic development. However, in many rural and farming communities in Somalia, a significant number of children remain out of school due to economic constraints, lack of infrastructure, and cultural attitudes that deprioritize education.

A case study (shown below) by EFASOM highlights that many children in remote villages support their families in agriculture instead of attending school. This policy briefing outlines the key challenges and presents evidence-based recommendations to improve access to education for these children.

The discussion points included:

1. **Challenges in Access to Education for Farming Communities:** The group discussed the barriers, such as poverty, distance, and lack of infrastructure, that prevented children in farming communities from accessing education.
2. **Impact of Education on Farming Communities:** They explored how education contributed to the economic, social, and cultural development of farming communities, including increasing agricultural productivity and improving the standard of living.
3. **Government and Policy Support:** They debated the role of the government in ensuring educational opportunities for rural areas and the effectiveness of existing policies. They also discussed potential reforms to enhance education access in farming communities.
4. **Role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):** The group examined how CSOs played a pivotal role in raising awareness, providing resources, and collaborating with stakeholders to improve educational opportunities for rural children.

5. **The Role of Technology in Education:** They discussed how technology, including mobile learning, online courses, and digital resources, bridged the educational gap in remote farming communities.
6. **Gender and Education:** The group addressed the specific challenges faced by girls in farming communities and discussed strategies to promote gender equity in education.
7. **Partnerships and Collaboration:** They explored potential partnerships between the government, NGOs, the private sector, and local communities to improve access to quality education in rural areas.
8. **Sustainable Solutions:** The discussion focused on long-term, sustainable solutions to overcome educational challenges in farming communities, such as mobile schools, community-led education programs, and government investment.
9. **Impact of Education on Child Labor:** They debated the relationship between education and child labor in farming communities, and how education could reduce reliance on children in the workforce.
10. **Advocacy and Awareness Campaigns:** The group explored strategies for raising awareness at the national and international levels about the educational needs of farming communities and advocated for policy changes.

Key Challenges

a) Economic Barriers

- Families in farming communities often rely on child labor for household income, making school attendance secondary to economic survival.
- The cost of schooling (e.g., school fees, uniforms, and materials) creates an additional burden for low-income families.
- A lack of financial incentives discourages parents from prioritizing education over immediate economic needs.

b) **Limited Access to Schools**

- Many remote villages lack formal schools or require children to travel long distances to access education.
- Poor infrastructure, including inadequate school buildings, lack of trained teachers, and insufficient learning materials, further hampers educational opportunities.

c) **Cultural Attitudes Toward Education**

- In some communities, education is not seen as essential, particularly for girls, who are often expected to contribute to household duties.
- Parents may lack awareness of the long-term benefits of education and instead prioritize agricultural labor.
- Early marriages and gender norms further limit educational opportunities for girls.

Policy Recommendations

To address these challenges, EFASOM proposes the following interventions:

a) **Expanding Alternative Education Models**

- Implement mobile and community schools to reach children in remote areas where traditional schooling is not feasible.
- Introduce flexible learning schedules to accommodate children engaged in farming activities.

b) **Providing Economic Incentives for School Enrollment**

- Establish school feeding programs to reduce food insecurity and encourage attendance.
- Develop cash transfer programs for poor families who enroll children in school.
- Support livelihood programs for parents to reduce dependency on child labor.

c) **Strengthening Education Infrastructure Build more schools in farming villages.**

- Recruit and train local teachers to address staffing shortages.
- Improve school facilities, including access to safe water, sanitation, and electricity.

d) **Enhancing Community Engagement and Awareness**

- Conduct community awareness campaigns on the benefits of education for all.
- Partner with religious and community leaders to advocate for children's education.
- Encourage parent-teacher associations (PTAs) to promote local ownership of education initiatives.

Legal and Policy Framework

This policy briefing aligns with Somalia's Education Law (Part 1, Chapter 1, Article 5, Clause 9), which mandates the Ministry of Education to prioritize rural education development. The proposed interventions support this mandate by:

- Expanding education access in underserved areas.
- Reducing economic barriers to schooling.
- Promoting policy reforms that integrate alternative learning methods.

Conclusion and Call to Action

The government's commitment is crucial to ensuring every child in rural Somalia has access to quality education. To ensure that every child in farming communities has access to quality education, EFASOM calls upon:

- The Ministry of Education to prioritize rural education infrastructure and alternative learning programs.
- International donors and NGOs to invest in school feeding, teacher training, and economic incentives for families.
- Local governments and community leaders to advocate for education as a fundamental right.
- The private sector to support corporate social responsibility (CSR)

Education

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In reference to EFASOM case study reported from a remote village, many out-of-school children support their families in agriculture.

Key Challenges:

1. **Economic Barriers:** Families in farming rely on child labor.
2. **Limited Access to Schools:** Remote villages often lack schools.
3. **Cultural Attitudes:** Education is not prioritized in some communities.

Policy Recommendations

1. **Alternative Education:** Implement mobile and community schools.
2. **Economic Incentives:** Provide school feeding programs for OOS children.
3. **Education Infrastructure:** Build more schools in farming remote villages.
4. **Engagement:** Conduct awareness campaigns for farming families.



Legal Framework: In accordance with Somalia's Education Law, Part 1, Chapter 1, Article 5, Clause 9 (Page 4), one of the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education is the development of rural education. This policy briefing aligns with this mandate to ensure that children in farming communities access to education.



Case Study: Documentary

Abdirahman

The Journey to Access Education:

Abdirahman, a 13-year-old orphan from a rural community, faced immense hardships from an early age. His father was tragically killed by armed robbers, leaving his mother to raise him alone. The family survived through small-scale farming and goat herding, but with limited resources, Abdirahman never had the opportunity to attend school. Through the support of EFASOM and its collaboration with Karan Orphan Boys Center, Abdirahman was enrolled in a boarding school in Mogadishu.

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AFTER



BEFORE

BIO DATA

Abdirahman Mohamed Ali ✓

Mother: Hawa Omar ✓

13-Year-Old Orphan ✓

Farming at Aqab Duco Village ✓

Middle Shabelle Region, Somalia ✓

EFASOM

Report photo:



List of Attendance

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equal future

Education For All Somalia Coalition

Activity 3.1.1.1: Undertake education sector analysis using the 4s strategy to determine how much is allocated to gender and inclusive education programs.

Policy Briefs Meeting
Attendance Sheet

Date: 23 March 2025
Location: Mogadishu, Somalia



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Attendance Sheet

Date: 23 March 2025
Location: Mogadishu, Somalia

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