

BRINGING GENDER BALANCE TO EDUCATION IN SOMALIA

Looking At Schools As Community Safe Spaces Transmitting Life-Saving Information



Training of Somali Female Teachers © CISP

Since 2008, the International Committee for the Development of People (CISP) has supported 32 Primary schools and 40 Koranic schools in four Districts within South Central Somalia. In 2011, CISP reached 48 Primary schools and 40 Koranic schools.

CISP's approach of supporting both types of schools has encouraged the Somali community to view secular education as a complement to religious instruction. Increasingly viewing schools as safe places, Somali girls and women have had the opportunity to receive training both as students and teachers. Within two years, this project has significantly increased the enrollment of female students and doubled the number of female teachers.



Enrolment of school girls increased by 10 % in schools supported by CISP and reached 49%. © CISP

Approximately about 10,000,038 students (46% girls) and 201,640 teachers (23% women), in approximately 250 rural locations, have been impacted by CISP's support of schools in the El-Der, Galad, Harardere and Dhusamareeb Districts (in Galgaduud and South Mudug regions). This support has come in the form of rehabilitating or constructing classrooms, distributing education materials, training of teachers, community awareness activities on the importance of education, and even the provision of monthly incentives to teachers in the absence of a functioning government.



School boys engaged in arts work in preparation of an awareness campaign to encourage girls attendance © CISP

In addition to the curricular lessons, training on health and hygiene, promotion of gender-segregated latrines, provision of hand-wash facilities, advocacy on the importance of safe water supply, sensitization on gender issues, and

International Committee for the Development of People (CISP) was founded in Rome in 1983. The INGO has been operating in Somalia since the beginning and is currently implementing projects in the sectors of education, health, water and sanitation, protection and livelihood.

promotion of child protection has provided life-saving information to the community.



Girls enjoying school play ground as a safe place in El Der © CISP

This project has sought to establish a gender balance in Somali schools, not only among students but also teachers. The distribution of locally made sanitary pads has not only increased the attendance of girls who stayed home during their periods, but also promoted the income-generating activities of local women's groups.



Distribution of sanitary pads to mothers and awareness raising on the importance of sending girls to school © CISP

The emphasis on exclusively training new female teachers has brought the percentage of teachers from 10% in 2008

to 20% in 2010 and to 23% in 2011. The use of mother-daughter extra-curricular activities has promoted the idea that the school environment is a safe space in which the Somali girl child can prosper. These activities have increased the rate of girl enrollment in schools from 32% in 2008 to 49% in 2010 and 46% in 2011.



Extracurricular activities in primary schools to encourage acceptance of secular school attendance by girls © CISP

Due to the demonstrated success of this project, CISP is expanding its activities in 2012 to more districts as well as IDP settlements. This expansion offers quality education to more than 16,800 Somali children - half of whom will be girls. Focusing on training female teachers, within a gender-segregated society, will provide more instructors for these young girls pursuing their education.

The new primary education program starting in March 2012 will target an additional 18 schools in Mogadishu, Hiraan and Middle Shabelle. Additionally 9 IDP camps where temporary schools will offer displaced children learning opportunities.

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