



**High-Quality Research Support (HQRS) Programme**

**GIRLS' EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES IN HODAN DISTRICT, MOGADISHU,  
SOMALIA**

HIGH-QUALITY RESEARCH SUPPORT PROGRAMME (HQRS)

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ABDIRISAK MOHAMED SAID

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.1. Research context

Girls' education has been a burning and continuous issue which has raised many debates in most developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where a high number of young girls do not attend school. Other major challenges include low retention and high dropout rates after enrollment. According to Tyokaa et al. (2014), "the global figure for out-of-school children is estimated to be 121 million, out of which 65 million (approximately 53.8%) were girls and over 80 percent of these girls live in sub-Saharan Africa."

In sub-Saharan African countries, Offorma's study indicates that "the number of girls out of school each year has risen from 20 million in 1990 to 24 million in 2002" (Offorma, 2009). Nigeria is among the West African countries that have the highest number of girls that are out of school, and more than 75% of the 3.4 million children out of school are girls (UNICEF, 2007).

Women play a very crucial part of leading in their societies and can't be denied their essential role for the family so that an educating a girl is one of the most indispensable investments that any country can make to move forward prosperously and community well-being. Unfortunately, there are barriers to girls' access and participation in formal education in some developing countries and many factors are responsible for low enrolment of girls in schools. In the case of northern Nigeria (discussed in Tyoakaa et al., 2014):

religious misinterpretation, cultural practice, poverty, early marriage, illiteracy, [and] inadequate school infrastructure [were identified] as some of the factors militating against girl-child education. To [the] majority of the parents, girl-child education is less important because no matter what level of education the girl attains, their hope is to see the girl-child get married. To some parents, [the] western type of education is termed to be a way of negative transformation and initiation of an individual into materialism, promiscuity and inculcation of western cultural ideologies.

Several issues are responsible for gender disparities that still exist in many African countries, including cultural and traditional norms, social perception, denied or limited access to education and parents' attitude toward girls' education. Parents may be biased towards the

daughters and prefer their sons, which leads to low self-confidence for the girls in themselves and for their dreams and aspirations (O'Neil and Domingo, 2015).

Like other African countries, Somalia experiences similar challenges facing access to education for girls. According to Abdi et al. (2009: 3), "Cultural norms and practices contribute to disproportionately low access to schooling; Somali culture assigns women and girls subordinate roles in the society. Women and girls lack educational opportunities and have very low representation in both the political and economic sectors". In the Somali context, the education infrastructure has been hurt by "decades of colonial neglect, followed by the outbreak of a civil war in 1990 that has led to widespread population displacement and paralysis of social services" (Abdi et al., 2009: 3). The Somalia Human Development Report indicates that "Somalia has one of the world's lowest enrolment rates for primary school-aged children – 42 per cent of children are in school. Of those, only 36 per cent are girls. The number of out-of-school and at-risk children and youth aged 6-18 years has been estimated at 4.4 million, out of a total population of 9.2 million" (Ministry of Human Development and Public Services, 2013: 1) and many are girls. Only 28 percent of girls go on to lower secondary schools and of these "only 37 percent sat the Form four examinations in 2011/2012" (Ministry of Human Development and Public Services, 2013: 7). Initiatives have been put in place to fix this, such as the Somalia Federal Republic G2S Initiative. "[The] multi-year funded Peace Building, Education and Advocacy Programme (2011-2013) began with an initial focus on Fast Track activities in central and southern Somalia. The aim is to get 100,000 additional children (45 percent girls) into basic education along with the requisite construction of learning spaces; provision of teaching learning materials; teacher recruitment and training" (Ministry of Human Development and Public Services, 2013: 2). Cultural ideas and actions help cause low access to schooling, which encourages girls to do domestic work essential for their near future when they establish new families. In addition to that, Somali culture assigns women and girls subordinate roles in the society. Women and girls lack educational opportunities and have very low representation in both the political, social and economic sectors (Abdi et al. 2009: 3).

Consequently, this paper explores major challenges facing access to education for girls in Somalia, with special reference Hodan district. Hodan district is among the largest 17 districts in Banaadir region, Mogadishu, and consists of 7 sub-villages. The nature and character of the people of Hodan district is non-violent and supportive of a democratic system of government, besides being keen supporters for humanity. The research paper will try to shed light on gender inequalities and its root causes. In conclusion, the paper will propose relevant options and recommendations on preventing gender bias. It will identify opportunities within the country if all people are educated, eliminating social barriers to girls' education.

### **1.3. Overall aim of the research**

The overall aim of the research is to identify major challenges and opportunities that girls face in achieving secondary school education in Hodan district, Mogadishu.

### **1.4. The specific objectives of the research are;**

- To examine the attitudes and practice towards girls education in Hodan district
- To identify the extent to which poverty affects the ability of the girl child to get a secondary education
- To explore the extent of gender disparity in enrolment in secondary schools in Hodan District

### **1.5. Problem Statement**

Somalia's long running civil unrest, political instability and cultural norms and practices contribute to disproportionately low access to schooling. This encourages girls to do domestic work which is essential for their near which ends up girls to miss their basic rights of educational opportunities and have very low representation in both the political and economic sectors in Somalia (Abdi et al. 2009: 3) The study investigates girls' educational challenges and how to overcome such problems.

**1.6. Research question:**

What are the challenges and opportunities of girls' education in Hodan District, Mogadishu?

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.1. Literature review

This chapter reviews the existing knowledge and literature about challenges and opportunities facing girls' education in Hodan. Transparency International "gathered [data] from 8,500 educators and parents in Ghana, Madagascar, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda, [and] found that education is being denied to African children in incredibly large numbers and most of them are girls" (Okwara et al., 2017: 49). According to UNICEF Somalia Multi-Cluster Survey (2011) female literacy rates in Somalia are especially low in rural areas - in Somaliland 44% are literate and in Puntland 37%.

Educating girls makes communities and societies healthier, wealthier, safer, and enhances economic growth - many studies show that women with basic education are less likely to be poor because providing girls with one additional year of schooling beyond the average can enhance family income tremendously (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2002). It also reduces child death because women equipped with information about how to care for herself and her children are more likely to get children immunized against diseases, and tackle the spread of many health problems; uneducated women face high levels of maternal mortality. An educated woman's children are more likely survive beyond the age of five as several studies indicated. It also said that "if we educate a man, we educate a man only, but if we educate a woman, we educate the whole family. This highlights the importance of female education. It is a fact that women are the first teachers of their children. Hence, if mothers are well educated, they can play an important role in shaping and molding of their sons and daughters" (Reshma, 2014: 1).

Challenges in getting girls an education include societal/traditional negative attitude towards women's education, early marriage, cultural norms, unfriendly environment, gender biases, socio-cultural factors, limited resources, parents' level of education and negative perception about girl education because families and community attitudes that have a strong influence on the decision to spend in children's education. This is against the UN convention which states that all children should have the same right to develop their potential in all situations and at all

times. For instance, every child should have equal access to education regardless of the child's gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability etc.

Socio-economic factors also plays a key role for the education of girls in developing countries because costs associated with schooling are higher for girls than boys such as tuition fees, cost of textbooks, uniforms, sanitary protection, transportation and other expenses (Davidson and Kanyuka, 1992). Therefore, in poor families with many children, whenever these costs exceed the income of the households girls are the first to be denied schooling and pulled out of school for family reasons such as fetching water/firewood, taking care of the children with helping their mothers and staying at home. It is preferred send boys to school whereas girls are subjected to multiple forms of oppression, exploitation and discrimination. Parents prefer to invest in boys as they are seen as the most important beneficiaries of family assets: it is believed that whatever is invested in boys will be of greater benefit to the whole family (Davison and Kanyuka, 1992). "Parents worry about wasting money on the education of girls who are likely to get pregnant or marry before completing school" (Fabrice, 2015), and don't think it's necessary to educate girls.

The needs of female children can be ignored, even in cases where there are no male children, which limits their opportunities; uneducated women can be forced into a loveless marriage, where they will be treated as garbage and used as a punching bag (Knowles et al., 2002). Another big challenge is that families strongly believe that, once married, girls become part of another family, possibly moving away from her tribe of origin as she reaches adolescence, and the value of her investment in education can be counted as a lost. "Investing in sons, rather than daughters, is perceived as bringing higher financial returns for families as boys are more likely to find work and be paid higher salaries" (Department for International Development, 2015: 8).

Some parents are reluctant to invest in girls' education because they don't think they will get back the value of money they invested because of negative societal attitudes about girls' education (Kapakasa, 1992). In addition, many people in African countries believe that women should be in the home for domestic chores rather than educating, and therefore the girls are



seen as future home-makers. When they get married, it is perceived that they forget their parents and focus on their newly established home. Parents, especially fathers, are often concerned about the continuation of their name, and in cases where a wealthy man dies his property and assets are only shared among his male offspring, with the female child denied the rights to inheritance. Girl schools have burned down and girls have been hurt going to school, for example Malala Yousafzai. These traditions and cultures are against human rights especially the basic rights of the child as per the UN convention, which prohibits any kind of child discrimination and segregation from their community.

Initiatives are being started to fix this. In Somalia, particularly the Central Southern Zone, a report by the Ministry of Human Development and Public Services (2013: 2) explains that, “the multi-year funded Peace Building, Education and Advocacy Programme (2011-2013) began with an initial focus on Fast Track activities in central and southern Somalia. The aim is to get 100,000 additional children (45 percent girls) into basic education along with the requisite construction of learning spaces; provision of teaching learning materials; teacher recruitment and training”.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter details the methodology of the study including data collection methods, data analysis, ethical considerations and the limitations of the study.

### 3.2. Methods of data collection

The study utilized qualitative methods focusing on primary data. The data was collected through interviews (unstructured) and focus group discussions. This involved conducting key informant interviews with girls, parents, school administrators, female teachers, ministry of education and religious leaders within the study area and focus group discussions to explore in-depth issues. This will help to minimize potential bias resulting from a single method. This study adopted descriptive research and collected qualitative data. One of the ways of collecting data for descriptive studies is the use of interview (Kothari, 2004) which involves securing information concerning a phenomenon under study from a sample of the concerned population.

#### ***Data collection methods***

Both primary and secondary qualitative data was collected through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

**Primary data.** This was collected using Key Informant interviews, observations and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). Interviewees included a variety of education sector stakeholders, including a school management, parents, a female teacher, educated girls, students and member of the ministry of education.

**Secondary data.** Desk based online searches, reports and books and articles by other authors were reviewed to retrieve information.

#### ***Key Informant Interviews***

All key informant interviews were conducted face-to-face, using semi-structured questions. This type of interview builds rapport between the interviewer and interviewee and enables the interviewees to give additional information. In total, five key informant interviews were conducted. This is represented in the following pattern: one respondent from school management, one parent, one educated girl, one religious leader and one from the ministry of education. KIIs are important data collection methods in qualitative research.

### ***Focus Group Discussions***

FGDs are valuable techniques designed to obtain qualitative data as they use group interaction to generate data, whilst hearing from others allows participants to sharpen up their ideas (Ritchie et al. 2014). Therefore 2 FGDs were conducted involving 14 participants, 7 in each group with the age range of 18-45 and comprised of 75% females. The results are presented along with quotes from the FGDs and anonymity is guaranteed by only indicating participants with their group name.

### **3.3. Data Analysis**

This was a participatory study where participants were asked open-ended questions followed by probing question to generate as much information as possible and data was analyzed in a written report form.

### **3.4. Ethical considerations**

- The study will respect participants' confidentiality and ensure anonymity. Participants will be informed of the benefits and risks that can result from this study, as well as being given the opportunity to ask questions.

- I will confirm with my research respondents that they are 18 years of age or older and in the case that they are not I will seek to obtain the consent permission of their gatekeeper (such as their parent).
- Good introduction of oneself and acknowledgement after conclusion of interview
- Voluntarily consent of respondents
- Neutrality
- Observe cultural sensitivity
- Plagiarism in research writing

### **3.5. Limitations and Further research**

Due to the sensitive nature of the topic and because of a lack of familiarity with FGDs or shyness of some of the participants, it may be possible that some of the participants won't share their opinions deeply and that this will impact on their ability to effectively respond to the questions. There were also limited resources available in terms of time, money and material. I strongly believe that this study will be a baseline for future researchers; I am leaving behind more questions that need further research.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.1. Introduction

This study was based on girls' educational challenges in Hodan district, Mogadishu, Somalia and was carried out during the months of June, July and August, 2017. The researcher engaged 17 participants in this study and used Key Informative Interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and observations during collection of the data. There were five Key Informant Interviews (one institution management, parent, female teacher, religious leader and one ministry of education), and two Focus Group Discussions (Universities students and parents).

The people questioned during the research have answered our questions as follows:

#### **The current situation of girls' education in Hodan district**

According to UNICEF (2015) Somalia is striving to improve both access to and quality of girls' education. During the discussions, the researcher noted that 14 (82.4%) out of 17 participants from both FGD and KII agreed that the current trend of girls' education in Hodan district and Somalia in general is growing faster than ever before, and perhaps Somali people have realized the role and impact of educated women in their community. Three (17.6%) respondents disagreed. The 14 (82%) research participants who were optimistic about the current situation towards girl education in Hodan district gave these comments:

*The girls' education in Hodan district is recently increasing in number according to the last few years because girl's enrolment in education centers has improved a lot, and they do a hard competition with the male gender and the good thing is that some schools established conducive environment for girls learning such as girl-friendly spaces, including separate latrines for girls and hand washing facilities (FGDs participant, university teacher, 2017).*

*The current situation of girls' education is at the highest level compared to previous years because now parents understood how important it is to send their girls to school and the values of educated ladies appear in every sector of the society whether it is socially, economically and politically. In addition to that you can see girls' enrolment in primary, secondary and university level has been increasing in recent years (FGDs participant, 2017).*

*It seems that girls education has been improved significantly last 10 years and we have seen the proportion of girls in educational intuitions have risen up since people have got more awareness about how an educated girl is beneficial to society. (KIIs, participant, 2017)*

*Actually the current situation of girls' education in Hodan is relatively much better than previous years when Somali community reference old proverbs which says girls should be in grave or in home, which means if you are parent of a lady you will be in worry until you transfer her responsibility to her husband and this old saying encourages early marriage since there is no other option (FGDs participant, 2017).*

*In my opinion girls' education in our district seems to be good and many girls are busy in education hoping to reach a bright future which they have in mind, and change their lives in a better way, in addition to that every girl gives more effort with ambitions to support her family and her community (KIIs, 2017).*

*Our girls are good at education if they get an opportunity and as parents we recognized that our children have the same rights whether they are boys or girls, in terms of benefits we experienced, girls are more beneficial than boys so nowadays parents send their girls to schools (FGDs, participant, 2017).*

The study emphasized the UNICEF report (2015) in the literature review and findings state that 14 (82.4%) out of 17 research respondents strongly agreed that the current girls' education in Hodan is relatively good and more girls in the district are joining school in an increasing rate. Furthermore, the majority of the research respondents were involved in the education sector and had witnessed the current trends in girls' education within family members, neighbors, or the surrounding community.

### **Major barriers facing girls' education in Hodan district**

Most African countries including Somalia have experienced similar challenges facing girls' access to education like poverty, cultural practices, poor school infrastructure, unfriendly environment, gender biases, natural disaster, limited resources and civil unrest. Besides that, people have been found to believe that women are in the home for domestic chores rather than education; therefore the girls are seen to be future homemakers. Furthermore, "the education infrastructure of Somalia has been damaged by decades of colonial neglect, followed by the outbreak of a civil war in 1990 and paralysis of social services" (Abdi, 2009: 15). The researcher asked 17 participants a question that relates to the major barriers facing to girls' education in the Hodan district. However, the study participants gave their different perspectives on the current girls' educational challenges in the district as below:

#### 1. Cultural barriers and negative perception towards girls' education

The study participants were asked about the major barriers facing girls' education in the district. Ten (58.8%) research respondents believed that the most common challenge that girls encounter during their educational journey is the cultural constraints within the community mind-set and it is believed that women are in the home for domestic chores rather than education; therefore the girls are seen as future home-makers. Whereas seven (41.2%) of the participants assumed that cultural beliefs are not the only factor preventing girls' education; there is an absence of government driven policies and programs that protect and promote girls' rights as per the United Nations convention for Human Rights. Other mentioned factors include a lack of educational flexibility, gender bias in terms of educating and employment because of male dominance, and the fact that most political positions are based on clans and nepotism.

*Early marriage is the one of the most important factors that cause girls to stop continuation of their education since she shifts to a new chapter of life which requires sacrifice for her children and the home workload and in general Somali ladies as they marry they automatically end their educational careers in primary or secondary level and sometimes this marriage is caused by*

*peer pressure or from community because they discourage girls who pursue their education (Klls student participant, 2017).*

*Traditional practices like a negative attitude towards girls' education, preference for boys over girls in education where the community resources are limited because of financial constraints and gender roles are considered at home where girls have lots of chores, which make them busy, affecting girls' participation in education (Klls, participant, 2017).*

*Schools are lacking girl friendly space therefore girls are not comfortable in learning in such an unconducive environment where they are unable to get facilities that girls need. During the developmental stage girls should be in school, which can also prevent pregnancy problems among girls leading to early dropout (FGDs, participant, 2017).*

*Fewer female teachers in the education centers are big challenge for girls to continue their learning activities but for sure if they interact female teacher sharing a lot of things during the developmental stage of girls for the time they need facilities that should be made available also prevent problems among girls leading to early dropout and also seems as a role model in the society which leads more girls to join education institutions while girls are more reluctant to ask questions of the male teacher which leads to not properly understanding that subject and eventually effects the performance of the students (FGDs participant, 2017).*

## 2. Poverty, financial constraints of the households and gender bias

Over 82%, or 14, of the research respondents believe there are plenty of obvious socioeconomic factors such as poverty which is abundant with a large number of the population living below the poverty line since the country experienced two decades of instability, and economic depression of the country that left many households earning less than one dollar per day. In this case some families prefer to send boys to school and put most of their effort towards paying school fees while girls stay at home doing home chores.

The following are some of their agreed views:



*Financial condition for the family and gender bias both are interconnected issues which determine families to take decision who they send to school for their children and if families can't afford to pay school fees for all the children the families may have a preference for educating boys over girls. Then just send boys to school and keep their daughters at home since they believe girl education is less important because no matter what level of education the girl attains, their hope is to see the girl get married and cook food for her husband. (FGDs participant, 2017).*

*The greatest challenge however is economical and inequalities of gender. If we solve the financial burden of girls' education, enrolment will increase. Most parents are poor and often prefer paying school fees for their sons. (Klls participant, 2017)*

### 3. Insecurity and lack of educational flexibility

12 (70.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that in the Hodan district and Mogadishu as a whole lack of educational flexibility is a major constraint that effects every person whose ambition is to learn in the afternoon or evening class especially secondary schools, colleges and Universities. Because of the security factor institutions offer only day classes.

*Lack of educational flexibility and insecurity surrounds girls education since Mogadishu is volatile in terms of security there is no afternoon and evening classes about secondary and university (FGDs participant, 2017).*

### 4. Absence of good cooperation between husband and wife

Eight (47%) of research respondents mentioned that most married girls miss the opportunity to resume their education careers because their husbands don't allocate time to learning and give opportunities to go to class after the wide has a child. It is difficult for a lady to solve the three competing commitments for childcare, house chores and learning. There is a very obvious argument that shows that the lack of collaboration between husband and wife is facilitating girls' failure to learn:

*There is less collaboration between husband and wife consequently when lady get married and birth she can't afford to attend class unless she get permission from husband and fees, she also needs someone who care her child the time she is in school (FGDs participant, 2017).*

#### 5. Exploitation of girls from poor and marginalized families

Thirteen (76.5%) out of 17 participants of this research strongly agreed that girls from poor or marginalized families within the community are denied their rights of education and are exploited as cheap labor by other families while they are seeking to satisfy basic needs for their poor families:

*Always very poor families don't able to send their children to school instead they struggle how to survive and cover daily life of the family. Despite the hard conditions facing these families the unquestionable fact is that girls are more vulnerable to be exploited as cheap labor and denied their basic rights for education as per United Nations convention of child rights (FGDs participant, 2017).*

#### 6. The negative perception towards girls' education and discouragement from the community

Finally, 13 out of 17 research participants collectively agreed that a negative perception still exists in the community's mind-set that sometimes discourages girls from going to school. It is believed that a girl's education is less important because no matter what level of education the girl attains their destination is to be housewife:

*Though community mind-set has changed little bit but still there is some negative cultural inheritance that discourages many girls to continue their education. In fact I have seen my people saying unwelcoming words for example are you still learning, don't you finish, how long have you been learning, didn't you know what happened Mrs Fulan she spent learning many years and now she is failed and telling other discouraging stories (KII participant, medicine student 2017).*

**Below are summarized the challenges to girls' education in Hodan district, Mogadishu;**

- Cultural issues
- Early marriage
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Financial constraints
- Less driving or pushing factor
- Lack of conducive environment or girl friendly space in education centers
- Inadequate female teachers or role models in the society which leads girls to be reluctant to join education institutions
- Families may have a preference for educating boys over girls
- Security issues
- Gender bias
- Poor cooperation from husband
- Unequal employment opportunities
- Discouragement from community
- Failure of examinations because of too much work at home
- Competing commitments
- Peer pressure

This research paper supported other previous studies in the literature review conducted by various scholars and authors including Davison (1993), Poultry (1991), Mukhtar et al. (2011) and Nuurre (2013). This study revealed that several interrelated social and economic factors affected girls' education in Hodan district. Thus, the researcher compared the previous literature with the discussions and findings of this study. This implied that most of the challenges were similar and all 17 participants agreed about the existence of many challenges. The study indicated that ten (58.8%) research participants agreed that the most common challenge is socio-cultural factors such as male dominated practices, early marriages, girls' heavier domestic and subsistence workload. Over 82% said financial constraints of the households and gender bias. Around 70% believed insecurity and lack of educational flexibility

and 76% of respondents mentioned exploitation of girls from poor families and the rest of participants argued for other issues like the absence of good cooperation husband and wife, negative perception, lack of female teachers, peer pressure, un-enforced laws and policies protecting girls and women.

### **Perception of the community towards girls' education in Hodan district and Somalia in general**

Despite the known benefits of female education, the Hodan community are not different from other Somali communities who prefer boys to girls, because our community believes that the educated man will be more of an asset to the family than educated woman.

As the result of discussions all the 17 research participants agreed community perception towards girls' participation in education has dramatically changed in the last 10 years. The study has revealed that the issue comes from Somali culture that believes girls' education has zero contribution to different aspects of social life such as economically, politically and at the managerial level. Furthermore, this matter leads girls to be discouraged and less ambitious to go to school. Participants continually discussed the perception of the community regarding girls' education and they said this sometimes led to low performance, failure and total drop out. Below are the some personal reflections that were agreed during the discussions:

*Actually the current situation of girls' education in Hodan is relatively much better than previous years when Somali community reference old proverb which says girls should be in grave or in home which means if you are parent of a lady, you will be in a worry until you transfer her responsibility to her husband and this old saying encourages early marriage since there is no other option (FGDs participant, 2017).*

*Although, the negative perception about girls' education has changed gradually it still exists among the community, and needs to be addressed immediately by engaging different parts of the community and also the government should promote women's empowerment and produce*

*policies and procedures which eliminate inequalities among our community (FGDs participant, 2017).*

*Some years back one of our neighbors had children including a school aged girl but her father was opposed to educating his girl and refused to contribute toward the fees of his daughter's education but his wife persisted, wanting to send her lady to school whatever takes while she was poor, selling charcoal and asking for contributions from relatives abroad to cover children's education. Fortunately, the lady graduated from university up to Masters level and she is currently working in UN agencies in Somalia, and she contributes more to her family making them economically stronger. They are now respected in the community for having an educated, successful daughter and her father changed his negative perception toward girls' education and now everyone in the neighboring community wants an educated daughter (Klls participant, 2017).*

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Impact of educated girls upon the Hodan community (their families and wider community)</b></p>
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The Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions show that educated girls reduce gender disparities leading to economic growth in society. 17 (100%) of the research participants affirmed that educated girls in Hodan have a positive impact on economic and social development in their community and the research participants believed that educated girls can generate new income sources and empower their families economically.

### **The girl as an individual**

Girls' education was thought to lead to a greater feeling of personal autonomy, self-respect and self-confidence, enabling them to discover their own potential talent, to develop themselves fully. An educated mother can serve as a role model and voice of the rest of the girls in the world.

## **The family**

16 out of 17 research participants declared that educated girls have a positive impact on their families, such as better childcare, vaccination (which reduces infant and child mortality), schooling, better nutrition, better communication with the children because she improves her knowledge of her children and other family members. In addition, participants showed support for the following ideas:

*There is a strong relationship between a girl's school attainment and her children's. If the mother is educated it is more likely to send her children to school than an uneducated mother. Mothers with schooling are often much better at supporting their children's learning and serves as a knowledge base of her children. For instance I have practical experienced of this because when I was in primary and secondary level my mother checked whether I attend class or not by checking the date and title of daily lessons and that couldn't happen if mother wasn't educated (KIIs participant, 2017).*

## **The community and society**

Research participants mentioned that education enhances women's awareness and the role they can play in their community and society in many aspects of life, finding solutions to challenges that hinder development and social stability. Community productivity increases as a result of women's education, with a corresponding decline in mother and infant mortality rates. The community in which women are educated will likely become more prosperous.

## **Conclusion**

These findings support previous studies conducted by various authors including Reshma (2014) and all 17 research participants collectively agreed that educated girls in Hodan have a positive impact on economic and social development in their community. Respondents emphasized that the effects of educated women upon their society were countless and include:

- a) Educated girls feel personal autonomy, self-respect and self-confidence, and are enabled to discover their own potential talent, to develop themselves fully

- b) Educated mothers are fountains of knowledge for her children and other families
- c) Educated girls understand and help to reduce girls' educational challenges
- d) Mothers can serve as role models and voices of the rest of the girls in world
- e) Educated women participate economic and social development their community

### **Opportunities for educated girls**

This section was based on the opportunities available in the market for educated girls and findings show that 13 out of 17 of the research participants agreed that educated girls receive a higher economic return on investment in education than boys. This is because, in recent years, women have more employment opportunities and accompanying benefits, e.g. at the World Bank and international NGOs, while the other four respondents said that they did not know. This indicates that educated women have vital opportunities, and below is the most repeated sentiment from the discussion:

*In fact, nowadays employers, whether they are UN agencies, International NGOs and World Bank, give more preferences to women, for example when two boys and one girl passed second interview stage the lady is more likely to win. Also at the World Bank, especially in capacity injection programs supporting government institutions, if two similar positions are offered girls are preferred in terms of salary and their returns can exceed those of men almost double (FGDs, 2017).*

**Interventions on prevention girl's educational challenges by government, international organizations and parents**

Participants focused their discussions on the current or previous interventions addressing girls' educational challenges implemented by international organizations, government, community or families. According to the data from the groups, 15 out of 17 agreed there were too few initiatives so far to prevent or reduce girls' educational challenges while two of them were unaware.

**Proposed Recommendations on prevention/reduction of girls' educational challenges in Hodan district**

Based on the research findings of this study, the following recommendations are given by the research participants in both the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) as part of the research into girls' educational challenges in Hodan district, Mogadishu, Somalia.

**Main topic areas of FGDs and KIIs**

Within the predictable limits of time and resources, including those of participants, neither the FGDs nor KIIs can cover all areas of potential interest; the girls' educational challenges that have negative consequences in the lives of our dear sisters and also put obstacles for our community development in different ways.

The discussions were around topics of girls' educational challenges in Hodan district, in order to gain insights as to what local people felt, their experiences and to what extent this problem affected them and what solutions they had in mind to prevent /or reduce the barriers towards girl's education in the district. FGDs and KIIs of 17 participants were asked: what can be done to prevent/or reduce the gender inequality for educational opportunities especially enrolment in primary and secondary schools in the Hodan district, Mogadishu and Somalia in general and suggested possible solutions.



**The study proposes the following recommendations:**

2) Collective campaign against gender inequality in educational opportunities

Many participants argued for a campaign against gender inequality in educational opportunities - two thirds of the FGDs and KIIs mentioned this, and they suggest there is an emergency need for a collective awareness campaign targeting negative stereotypes of girls' education. We must make collaboration better than before in order to tackle this issue. Participants recommended that this is the best strategy for the reduction of girls' educational challenges in the Hodan district.

As discussion continued participants identified that the level of awareness among different parts of societies and government institutions concerning girls' rights for education was very poor and they made following suggestions:

2) To encourage girls' educations among different parts of the community every important person should be included such as parents, school administrations, teachers, religious leaders, community leaders, diasporas, politicians, women's associations

3) The community and government should work hand in hand in this matter but government should take the lead to stop discrimination

4) Showing documentaries related to educated individuals discussing their experiences and problems during their educational process

5) To utilize media communication/social platforms for sharing ideas, regular meetings/seminars to encourage girls' education and provide workshops for parents concerning how to reduce the gender inequality for educational opportunities especially enrolment in primary and secondary schools in the Hodan district. The media has contributed a lot to changing people's perception already.

7) Governments should develop clear strategies and policies to promote girls' education. 15 out of 17 research participants believe that government doesn't perform well promoting girls' educational rights.

8) Governments should address the factors that improve girls' retention in schools.

9) Government should introduce special stipends for female students, make education free and invest more money in making the environment favorable and suitable for girls.

10) Government should provide school supplies according to the demands of the students.

11) In both primary and secondary schools, qualified female teachers should be made available to educate and provide an example to girls, to help prevent pregnancy problems leading to early dropout.

12) Educated girls should share their experience and how they tackled problems during their educational journey

13) Institutions should offer flexibility in timing for girls' education each month and the curriculum must include extra-curricular activities which accommodate the girls' safety concerns

14) Promote gender equality in employment.

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## Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Dear respondent,

My name is **Abdirisak Mohamed Said**, I am a researcher and conducting a research on **Girls Educational Challenges in Hodan district, Mogadishu, Somalia**. You have been selected as a key respondent in this study based on your experience on the study area. Your responses will be treated with confidentiality. Thanks for your time.

### SECTION A: Profile of the Respondents

1) Gender  Male  Female

2) Age  15-20 years  20-25 years  25-30years

30 – 35years  35 and above

3) Level of education

Primary Level  Secondary Level

Diploma Level  Bachelor Level

Other

**Specify:** .....

## **SECTION B: Checklist Guiding Questions for KIIs and FGD**

1. Can you please describe us the current situation of girl's education in Hodan district, Mogadishu?
2. In your opinion, what are the major barriers facing to girl's education in the Hodan district, Mogadishu?
3. What is the perception of the community about girl's education?
4. What impact does the girls education has on the community (their families and wider community) and
5. What are the opportunities in the labor market for the educated women?
6. What interventions have been done to deal with the girls educational challenges (either by government, international organizations or families)?
7. What can be done to prevent/or reduce the gender inequality for educational opportunities especially enrolment in primary and secondary schools in the Hodan district?