

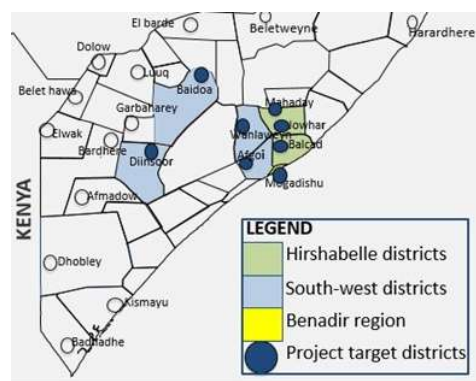


# Adolescent Girls' Education in Somalia (AGES)

## Impact Brief

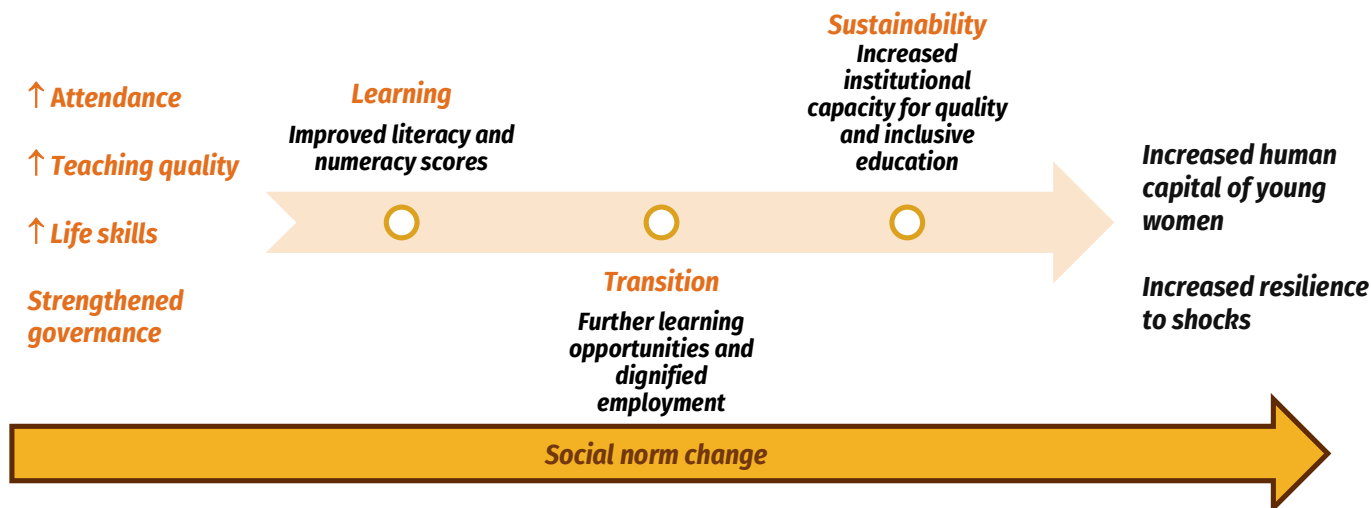
The Adolescent Girls' Education in Somalia (AGES) project is an ambitious six-year initiative (2018-2024) funded by FCDO's Girls' Education Challenge and USAID, which aims to boost learning outcomes and positive transitions for ultra-marginalized girls living in conflict-affected areas of Somalia. To date, AGES has **enabled 90,698 ultra-marginalized girls and female youth to access quality education** responsive to their needs. AGES enrolled 67,509 girls in ABE and NFE in 2019-23.

AGES has increased girls' access to four education modalities – regular primary school, special needs education, accelerated basic education (ABE), and non-formal education classes (NFE). ABE and NFE courses were combined with financial literacy, youth savings groups, apprenticeships, life skills, mentorship, and girl-led civic action. This approach boosted the positive impact on girls' learning outcomes, transitions, leadership and life skills, employment, and income.



AGES implementation areas

## Expected Outcomes



## AGES Program Approaches

AGES uses an integrated approach to build skills and conditions for positive youth development. In addition to providing access to education opportunities, AGES sought to **change social and gender norms hindering girls' education outcomes and transitions into the workforce**. Working with the Federal Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education (MOECHE), state Ministries of Education (MoEs), Community Education Committees (CECs), religious leaders, and female mentors, AGES facilitated dialogues to **change parents' perceptions about prioritizing girls' education**, including lessening the burden of household chores, allocating equitable resources to girls and boys, and listening to girls' aspirations and opinions.

**Total number girls reached | 90,698**  
**Female youth leading Girls' Empowerment Forums | 6,260**

To harness the power of youth-led civic action, AGES formed school-based clubs known as **Girls' Empowerment Forum (GEF)**. Through these platforms, marginalized girls develop leadership skills with the support from mentors trained by MoEs' Gender Focal Points. Girls participating in GEFs identify key issues affecting them and

conduct girl-led civic action to address those, with support from CECs and MoEs. GEFs are linked to resource persons within their communities and connected through 16 district-level GEF Networks, which amplify girls' voices and access to information.

At school level, AGES **developed teachers' skills** in subject content delivery, gender-responsive and inclusive classroom management, and identifying and responding to student skill levels. The CECs supported teachers to **address cases of absenteeism and dropout using an Early Warning System**. CECs are also tracking teachers' attendance, thus strengthening accountability in education. CECs were critical to support teachers in creating a welcoming and inclusive school environment, **addressing safeguarding issues** in collaboration with MoEs' Gender Focal points.

**Teachers trained | 1,230**  
**Community Education Committee members trained | 1,155**

**10,680 Female youth participating in VSLA**  
**880 Female youth in apprenticeships**

AGES sought to build a bridge between education and economic empowerment for older girls. ABE and NFE courses included a focus on **financial literacy; forming savings groups**; providing training on business selection, planning, & management; and linking girls to existing businesses for a three-month long

**apprenticeship-based skills development**. AGES has also linked youth members of savings groups to financial institutions, which trained them on available financial products for business expansion.

## Key results at a glance



**Reading Comprehension:**  
 AGES increased girls' average reading comprehension score by **20 percentage points**.



**Numeracy Skills:**  
 AGES increased girls' average numeracy score by **21 percentage points**.



**Girls with Disabilities**  
 had high learning gains: **20 percentage points in literacy and 22 percentage points in numeracy**.



**Entrepreneurship**  
 The % of female youth who are **small business owners** increased from **8% to 18%**.



**Life Skills**  
 GEF participation is associated with an **increase of 15 percentage points on literacy and 16 percentage points in numeracy**.



**Transition**  
74% girls successfully transitioned after graduating from NFE.



**Income**  
Average monthly income increased from \$15 to \$24.



**Leadership Skills \***  
50 percentage points increase in girls' leadership score. GEF participation was associated with a 12-percentage point increase in the YLI score.

\*CARE's [Youth Leadership Score](#) measures students' self-perceptions of leadership.

## AGES Impact

### Learning Outcomes:

Girls enrolled in the 11-month NFE program offered by AGES **improved their average numeracy scores by 21 percentage points** – from 28.5% to 49.6%. Their average literacy scores increased by 18 percentage points – from 16.6% to 34.9%.<sup>1</sup> **Reading comprehension increased even further: 20 percentage points.**<sup>2</sup>

**Girls with disabilities** also experienced gains of 20 percentage points in literacy and 22 percentage points in numeracy.<sup>3</sup> However, **married girls** living with their husbands had lower learning gains of 8 percentage points in literacy and 14 percentage points in numeracy.<sup>4</sup>

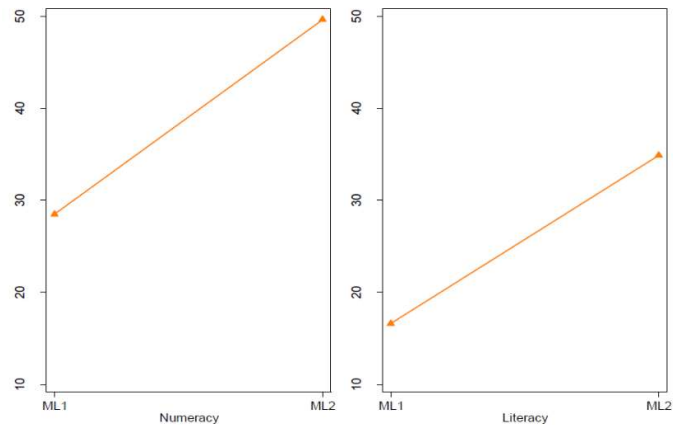
### Transition:

Evaluation results show that **74% of the AGES participants have successfully transitioned into further education or livelihoods.**<sup>5</sup> The evaluation considers transition to be a success if girls enrol in any grade at a formal school or ABE, transition into a technical or vocational education programme, and/or transition into age-appropriate,

**Girls with disabilities, those who are food insecure, and who had limited access to water were more likely to experience successful transitions.**

non-exploitative wage or self-employment. Among those who transitioned, 37% of the NFE graduates have continued their education despite being older (ages 16-26), while 28% engaged in age-appropriate work.<sup>6</sup>

Girls from **food insecure** households and those from households lacking sufficient water were **significantly more likely to successfully transition – 84% and 85%, respectively.**<sup>7</sup> **Girls living with disabilities have also transitioned at a higher rate of 78%.**<sup>8</sup> Even **married girls**, who face multiple barriers to transition, had a 50% successful transition rate.<sup>9</sup>



**Changes in aggregate numeracy and literacy scores for AGES-supported girls.**

<sup>1</sup> Consilient (2023) *Leave no Girls Behind: AGES Midline Evaluation - 2*, pg. 130-131

<sup>2</sup> Consilient (2023) *Leave no Girls Behind: AGES Midline Evaluation - 2*, pg. 135-136

<sup>3</sup> Consilient (2023) *Leave no Girls Behind: AGES Midline Evaluation - 2*, pg. 137

<sup>4</sup> Consilient (2023) *Leave no Girls Behind: AGES Midline Evaluation - 2*, pg. 138

<sup>5</sup> Consilient (2023) *Leave no Girls Behind: AGES Midline Evaluation - 2*, pg. 149

<sup>6</sup> Consilient (2023) *Leave no Girls Behind: AGES Midline Evaluation - 2*, pg. 149

<sup>7</sup> Consilient (2023) *Leave no Girls Behind: AGES Midline Evaluation - 2*, pg. 150

<sup>8</sup> Consilient (2023) *Leave no Girls Behind: AGES Midline Evaluation - 2*, pg. 150

<sup>9</sup> Consilient (2023) *Leave no Girls Behind: AGES Midline Evaluation - 2*, pg. 151

## Leadership Skills

Evaluation results show a **50-percentage point increase in participants' Youth Leadership Index (YLI)** scores. The Youth Leadership Index measures self-perceptions of leadership among youth, including voice, vision, decision-making, self-confidence, and organization skills.

The YLI score increased from 16.6% to 66.4%<sup>10</sup> **Each percentage point increase in the leadership index predicted a 0.3- percentage point increase in numeracy and 0.4- percentage point increase in literacy.**<sup>11</sup>



**Girls' Empowerment Forum discussing health and sanitation with community members**

## Youth-led Civic Action:

Girls participating in Girls' Empowerment Forums are leading a broad range of actions in their communities, including awareness on girls' education (71%), following up on dropouts (57%), organizing women empowerment forums at district level (55%), and conducting youth meetings to discuss issues affecting girls (31%).

In addition to addressing critical issues affecting youth, the **participation in GEFs is a strong predictor of gains in learning outcomes**, resulting in an average increase of 15 percentage points on literacy and 16 percentage points on numeracy.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, **girls who participated in a GEF are 4 percentage points more likely to transition successfully after graduating from NFE.**<sup>13</sup>

## Economic Empowerment

The share of girls who are unemployed has decreased by 19 percentage points - from 53% to 33%<sup>14</sup>. The proportion of female youth who are business owners increased from 8.1% to 18.4%.<sup>15</sup> Overall, **the average monthly income among AGES participants has increased from \$15 to \$24.**<sup>16</sup>

## Way Forward

**Economic empowerment:** AGES is further expanding apprenticeships to reach 1,900 female youth. To maximize gains, AGES is also linking female NFE graduates to other economic empowerment opportunities through a partnership with the USAID-funded IRIS program.

**Social-emotional skills:** Building upon the exceptional results of the Girls' Empowerment Forums, the MOECHE is investing in the development of teacher training modules on social-emotional learning and gender-responsive teaching through the national Girls' Education Accelerator Program.

For more information on AGES programming, contact: Abdifarhan Gure, [gure.farah@care.org](mailto:gure.farah@care.org)



<sup>10</sup> Consilient (2023) *Leave no Girls Behind: AGES Midline Evaluation - 2*, pg. 160  
<sup>11</sup> Consilient (2023) *Leave no Girls Behind: AGES Midline Evaluation - 2*, pg. 139  
<sup>12</sup> Consilient (2023) *Leave no Girls Behind: AGES Midline Evaluation - 2*, pg. 140  
<sup>13</sup> Consilient (2023) *Leave no Girls Behind: AGES Midline Evaluation - 2*, pg.153  
<sup>14</sup> Consilient (2023) *Leave no Girls Behind: AGES Midline Evaluation - 2*, pg.176  
<sup>15</sup> Consilient (2023) *Leave no Girls Behind: AGES Midline Evaluation - 2*, pg.177  
<sup>16</sup> Consilient (2023) *Leave no Girls Behind: AGES Midline Evaluation - 2*, pg.14