

PERSPECTIVES

Can teaching transform underprivileged children's situation by improving their quality of life? Some experiences through a teacher's lens

Maryam Abdiqani

Galkayo Education Center for Peace and Development, Galkayo, Somalia

ABSTRACT

This article reflects on my first six-month teaching experience at the Galkayo Education Center for Peace and Development, an institution dedicated to providing educational opportunities to marginalized communities, with a particular emphasis on girls and women. Situated in a region frequently affected by conflict and social inequality, the Center serves as a beacon of hope, striving to dismantle the barriers that prevent access to education.

Throughout my time there, I have encountered a range of challenges, including significant resource limitations, inadequate infrastructure, and entrenched cultural norms that often prioritize traditional roles over educational pursuits for girls. These obstacles tested my adaptability and resilience as an educator. Yet, amidst these difficulties, I witnessed remarkable stories of student empowerment and academic growth.

Working with my female students has been a transformative experience, revealing the profound emotional and physical impacts of female genital mutilation (FGM) on many of them. The trauma from FGM, which is widespread in Galkayo, often results in both severe physical pain and mental health issues, as the procedure involves crude methods and causes long-term health complications. Parents' beliefs in FGM are shaped by cultural and societal pressures, including fears of not securing a husband or maintaining family honor.

Education plays a crucial role in breaking the cycle of FGM, as it empowers girls to make informed decisions about their bodies and futures. Additionally, challenges faced by Somali parents, particularly men in the diaspora, who struggle to reconcile traditional cultural values with modern societal norms, further complicate the situation. These complex dynamics of gender, identity, and cultural adaptation highlight the importance of education and community engagement in combating harmful practices like FGM.

The article delves into the diverse backgrounds of the students, illustrating their unique challenges and aspirations. It highlights how education not only equips them with knowledge but also fosters self-confidence and agency, enabling them to challenge societal norms and envision brighter futures.

By examining these experiences through a teacher's lens, the article poses a critical question: can teaching genuinely transform the situations of underprivileged children by improving their quality of life? It argues that education serves as a catalyst for change, suggesting that when given the right support and opportunities, students can transcend their circumstances and contribute positively to their communities. Ultimately, this reflection underscores the profound impact that dedicated teaching can have in fostering resilience and hope in even the most challenging environments.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 2 November 2024
Accepted 16 December 2024

RESPONSIBLE EDITOR

Stig Wall

KEYWORDS

Female education,
Empowerment, Female Genital
Mutilation

CONTACT Maryam Abdiqani, e-mail: maryamaabdiqani6@gmail.com

Background

During my first six-month tenure at Galkayo Educational Center for Peace and Development (GECPD), I had the privilege of contributing to a variety of educational programs focused on empowering underprivileged youth and fostering community development. I witnessed firsthand how education serves as a powerful catalyst for change, especially in marginalized communities. By providing girls with educational opportunities, GECPD works to break the cycle of poverty that often limits the prospects of entire families. The pride in a mother's eyes when her daughter earns her first diploma is a profound testament to the transformative power of education.

GECPD's mission centers on expanding access to education and improving its quality for marginalized communities while promoting sustainable development practices. I was given the opportunity of starting a job as a teacher at GECPD on a position supported by a grant from a Rotary club based in Sweden. This has allowed me to experience the impact of education on girls' lives in a deeply personal way. Somali Health Action Journal (SHAJ) later invited me to share my experiences during my time at GECPD.

The aim of this paper is to highlight the importance of girls' education and GECPD's remarkable work in this area. They have built 12 education centers/schools that provide ongoing support for the provision of formal and non-formal education and skills training for women and girls as has been described in a previous publication in SHAJ [1]. The current paper may serve to further illustrate that work.

Why and how I became a teacher

At 14, during my first year of high school in Galkayo, I was deeply inspired by my geography teacher, Susan. She suggested I "consider a career in teaching, telling me, you have the qualities of an educator." At the time, I viewed it as a compliment from a teacher I greatly admired. However, as I grew older and began to realize the challenges of accessing education in Somalia, especially for girls and young women, her words took on a deeper meaning.

At that pivotal time, I was preparing to graduate from high school and planning to begin university studies. So far, I have earned a diploma in Human Resource Management, a bachelor's degree in economics, and completed an in-service teacher training program offered by the Ministry of Education through Garowe Teacher Education College (GTEC).

My teacher training program was a rewarding, informative, and exciting experience. The head teacher guided me on managing classrooms and interacting effectively with children. As part of my role, I participated in organizing and attending teacher-parent conferences, facilitating lessons, and observing and understanding student behavior. The time spent in classrooms was invaluable, providing opportunities to learn from

experienced professionals and engage directly with students.

My family made great sacrifices to send me to the best school in Galkayo, where all the teachers were foreigners. It was a dream school for many children in the city, but due to its high cost, many parents could not afford it. My father, an engineer and religious scholar, and my mother, a devoted housewife, provided a nurturing environment. After long school days spent with friends, I would always return home to the warmth of my mother's loving embrace and a home-cooked meal.

In my childhood I believed every child lived as I did, or perhaps even better. It was a shock to learn that many children are abandoned, deprived of education, and some beg for food on the streets. Worse still, many endure physical and sexual abuse. Since starting my job at GECPD Halabokhad Primary School, I have found myself constantly asking, "Why am I where I am, and why are they where they are?" and most importantly, "What can I do to help them?" These questions have driven my passion for making a difference in their lives.

Teaching felt like a perfect fit, blending everything I love: empowering young girls, advocating for the vulnerable, promoting female education, and using creativity to make lessons engaging. This experience deepened my passion for teaching, and watching my students improve in reading and writing has been immensely fulfilling. Most of my students at GECPD are girls, and as a female teacher, I feel I mirror the support I once received from Ms. Susan. This connection fuels my drive to support and guide them, just as my teacher did for me.

What made me come to GECPD

GECPD is a women's non-governmental organization (NGO) founded in 1999 by Hawa Aden Mohamed, an educator and women's rights activist, with the support of several professional women. Over the past 20 years, GECPD has made substantial progress in empowering women, particularly by focusing on education for girls and women born into poverty, who often lack access to such opportunities [1].

I first became aware of GECPD through educational journals and social media, where their work consistently stood out among other NGOs in the region. GECPD's commitment to advocating for women's and girls' rights, especially through education, deeply resonated with me. Prior to joining the organization, I attended several awareness sessions they held, which addressed critical issues such as female genital mutilation (FGM), gender-based violence (GBV), and the importance of female education. In January 2020, I had the opportunity to join GECPD's Halabokhad Primary School as an English teacher for six months. Afterward, I left to complete my studies, this role has allowed me to further contribute to the mission of GECPD, empowering students and promoting education in a region where it is critically needed.



Figure 1. Students practicing their tailoring and beauty therapy skills



Witnessing the moment a young girl understands a new concept is incredibly moving. GECPD unlocks this potential by ensuring access to quality education for every girl, recognizing that each educated girl serves as a beacon of hope for future generations. The ripple effect extends far beyond the individual, positively shaping families, communities, and society at large.

Despite increasing awareness of FGM's health risks, traditional beliefs and cultural values still strongly shape attitudes toward the practice. A study in two Somali districts, assessing whether current eradication strategies require adjustment presented a complex landscape: while some individuals support FGM due to its perceived cultural and social significance, others push for its abandonment, recognizing its harmful effects. The authors argue that effective eradication strategies must be culturally sensitive, involving community engagement, education, and the participation of influential local leaders to bring about sustainable change [2].

The persistence of FGM in Galkayo, particularly its most severe form, highlights the urgent need for effective eradication strategies. The continued suffering of women and girls due to FGM is a complex issue, intertwined with cultural, social, and economic factors. Moving forward, it would be useful to discuss targeted interventions and community education efforts to address these challenges.

My decision to join GECPD stemmed from a deep commitment to empowering women and girls in Somalia. The organization's emphasis on education, advocacy, and community-driven initiatives resonated strongly with my values and the urgent need for systemic change, especially in regions where FGM remains widespread. Joining GECPD provided me with a meaningful opportunity to contribute directly to addressing these challenges and fostering positive change at the grassroots level.

GECPD has nurtured and educated young women who now work in various organizations, both locally and internationally. Six young women, four of them at GECPD main center and the other two through phone calls, were happy to share their story with me. Four are currently employed at GECPD. These women hold roles in fields such as case management, emergency nursing, child protection, and teaching. Some began their educational journey in the early 2000s at Harfo, a GECPD school

hostel for girls, while others studied at the main center. Sharing the success stories of these accomplished young women with my students has provided them with role models to aspire to.

At GECPD, I found an opportunity to engage in providing essential guidance and education as a teacher. I was particularly inspired by GECPD's commitment to empowering women through educational programs that teach practical skills, including sewing, tailoring, basic math, and language proficiency in both English and Somali. All this encouraged me to help extend these opportunities to as many women and girls as possible. In addition to education, GECPD also offers cultural and recreational activities such as cultural song presentations, basketball, tailoring, and cultural dance. These activities not only enhance the girls' experiences but also foster a supportive and engaging community. The vibrant environment at GECPD, which promotes both educational and personal growth, was a major factor in my decision to join and continue supporting young girls on their path to empowerment.

The Center was established in the aftermath of the civil war, during which the collapse of the Somali society had unexpected consequences for the roles of women. The crises inadvertently empowered women by dismantling traditional structures. As a result, many women assumed roles typically reserved for men, taking on responsibilities in the workforce, community leadership, and family support. While the circumstances were dire, they created new opportunities for women to assert their agency and redefine their roles. This shift has been seen as a potential "blessing in disguise," with women becoming more visible and influential in areas such as politics and business. This emphasizes the resilience of Somali women and suggests that their evolving roles could contribute to lasting societal change and recovery [3].

Meeting my students and their families

Meeting my students for the first time was a pivotal moment, and since then, my experience has been very rewarding and given me new perspectives. Working with the girls has not only meant helping them academically

but has also taught me the importance of nurturing their emotional and mental well-being. I make it a priority to check in on them, especially if a student misses or skips classes.

Some of my female students suffer from severe menstrual pain exacerbated by the trauma of FGM. In some cases, the sight of blood triggers memories of the excruciating pain they endured as children during the procedure. FGM practitioners often use crude tools like razor blades, knives, or even broken glass, without anesthesia, causing the girls to feel every moment of the procedure. Many develop mental health issues from the trauma, while others endure physical pain, and the worst cases involve both. In Galkayo, FGM is a widespread social norm, and nearly all girls have undergone this harmful practice.

Some parents believe that FGM is a religious requirement, while others fear their daughters won't find a husband if they haven't undergone the practice, as potential husbands may question their virginity. In some cases, parents view FGM as a method to prevent premarital sex, with the intent to later have a doctor reverse the procedure after marriage. The World Health Organization (WHO) outlines in their fact sheet [4] the severe health risks of FGM, including long-term consequences like urinary incontinence, chronic pain, infections, and complications during childbirth.

UNICEF emphasizes that education for girls is one of the most effective tools in reducing FGM and early marriage. It empowers girls with knowledge, allowing them to make informed decisions about their own bodies and futures, thus breaking the cycle of harmful traditions [5].

Human Rights Watch discusses the link between educational attainment and the reduction of FGM. Educated communities are more likely to understand the harmful consequences of FGM and to reject the practice, while educated girls are more likely to resist it and to become advocates for their peers [6].

Current parents face challenges in balancing traditional notions of masculinity with the realities of a new cultural context. This struggle is explored in a study on how Somali men in the diaspora navigate their identities and societal expectations of masculinity [7]. The author examines how these men strive for "respectable masculinity", which often requires negotiating their roles as providers and protectors while also adapting to modern values in their new environment. The tension between maintaining cultural heritage and integrating into broader societal norms is a central theme, highlighting the need for recognition and respect within their community. Through interviews and case studies, the paper reveals how these men confront issues such as racialization and marginalization, articulating their identities in the face of these challenges. Ultimately, the study provides insights into the complex dynamics of gender, identity, and belonging within the Somali diaspora [7].



Figure 2. GECPD Halabokhad primary students taking their lesson

Engaging with my students' parents has also been a rewarding experience. We exchange greetings and discuss their children's progress, with many parents expressing gratitude for the opportunities provided by GECPD, recognizing it as a valuable chance for their children to grow and learn. I sometimes had the opportunity to meet former students reconnecting at Halabokhad Primary School at events that were a joyful experience for everybody. They shared updates on their lives and studies, and I had the chance to talk one-on-one with some of them about personal and academic matters. Many had faced challenges, such as long commutes, which make them late, and difficulties focusing due to hunger.

As a teacher, my role extends beyond the academic field and building strong relationships with parents is crucial for student success. Parents know their children best, so I maintain open communication with them to ensure I have all the necessary information to support their child's development.



Figure 3. Meeting with Halabokhad school student's parents

I once encountered a young girl in my second-chance class (a class at GECPD main center for teenage girls who didn't get the chance to attend school in their childhood) who wouldn't study or talk to anyone, although she always attended the lessons. Whenever we tried to talk to

her, she would look away. Together with the GECPD protection officer, we contacted her mother and sat down with her. She told us that her daughter had been like this for four years, ever since surviving a traumatic experience. One afternoon, the girl had lost her way home and ended up in an area where teenage boys were playing football. They chased her, removed almost all her clothes, and some people driving nearby heard her screams and chased the boys away. The girl was too shocked to speak, so they broadcasted her situation on the radio, which is how her mother found her. The trauma from that GBV-incident never left her, and she had been silent ever since.

This young girl inspired me to start offering art classes to help her reconnect with others and regain her energy. Art classes require interaction because students need to share supplies like pens and drawing kits. She responded well to the art class compared to other subjects. Although she didn't talk much, she began to utter a few words to her classmates, asking them to pass the tools she needed for her work.



Figure 4. Young artist painting a wall in GECPD main center

My Vision and Mission as a Teacher

As a teacher, my vision is to promote female education and inspire change through the transformative power of learning. In Somali culture, there is a saying: "Teach a woman, and you teach a whole community." This powerful belief fuels my dedication to education. My mother, who married young at sixteen and became a mother by seventeen, had to sacrifice her own schooling, unable to complete middle school. This experience left a profound mark on her, and she was determined to ensure that her daughters would have better opportunities. She sent us to the best school in Galkayo, giving us a chance at a future shaped by education. To honor her passion for learning, I work diligently to promote education by teaching others. GECPD has provided me with a platform to make this dream a reality.

My mission as a teacher is to empower girls and young women to become engaged learners, setting them on the path to success. I have developed some key principles to guide me in my work:

- *Create a Safe Space:* Socialize with young female

students to foster a safe and supportive learning environment.

- *Build Trust:* Establish respectful relationships with all students, cultivating mutual trust and understanding.
- *Encourage Collaboration:* Create communities of learners where shared knowledge and collaboration are valued.
- *Promote Girls' Education:* Actively support and encourage the success of girls' education.
- *Respect Individuality:* Honor and respond to each student's unique needs, ensuring personalized attention and care.

Setting Goals for and together with My Students

At school, we engage in a variety of activities aimed at building, promoting, and empowering women and girls. Our goal is to uncover their natural talents and help them acquire new skills. For example, students participate in art classes that allow them to express their creativity and share their talents with peers. We also conduct debate sessions where they practice advocacy skills, enabling them to express their opinions and develop critical thinking and effective communication.



Figure 5. Adult education and second chance students debating the importance of education.

These activities are intentionally designed to help students overcome social anxiety and depression, providing a sense of joy and transforming the school into a safe space, particularly for those dealing with psychological challenges. One of my primary goals is to ensure that my students are equipped with essential skills such as reading, writing, basic math, socialization, and the ambition to pursue their dreams. To foster this, we often engage in question-and-answer games where students reflect on their future by answering questions like, "What do you want to become?" or "Where do you see yourself in five years?" These exercises are designed to encourage ambition and the development of their talents.

Challenges

Many female students face psychological issues, sometimes causing them to faint during class. When I discussed this with their parents, they often attributed the problems to possession by evil spirits - a common belief among Somali parents. They believed exorcism or punishment was the solution. It was challenging to help them understand that their daughters were suffering from psychological issues and needed psychosocial counseling and emotional support.

During my time in the classroom, I noticed that some female students had difficulties in focusing on their studies due to childhood traumas, such as rape or emotional and physical abuse. Together with the GECPD protection staff, we provided psychosocial counseling to help them overcome these difficulties. Male students also face significant challenges, with many being victims of child labor. They are often expected to work at a young age to support their families, robbing them of a typical childhood that includes education and play.

Additionally, some girls who are forced into early marriages end up divorced and return to the same families that pressured them into marriage, only to be bullied for being a divorcee. One such girl, a former student from Halabokhad, shared her story with me. After completing eighth grade, her family married her off to a relative. He divorced her after two years, leaving her with a child. She now attends vocational training classes at GECPD, hoping to acquire skills to support herself and her child. Unfortunately, many girls remain trapped in toxic marriages, while only a few have the courage to leave and save themselves.

I recall a 14-year-old girl who was one of the students of GECPD Halabokhad School, an internally displaced person who was living with her aunt. Her family lived in rural areas, and she was the only one sent to the city to receive an education that would allow her to support her family in the future. However, her aunt was struggling financially, and there were days when they had no food to eat. The young girl fainted during break time while playing basketball. All the teachers, including myself, rushed to help her and brought her to the office to rest. We immediately called her aunt, who explained their difficult situation.

It was the first time I had seen a child faint from hunger, and the memory stayed with me for weeks. Since the school couldn't provide food for all the students, I, along with two other teachers, bought groceries for the girl's aunt. Today, that young girl is one of 33 students who graduated from eighth grade and is preparing to enter secondary school this year. During a recent visit to the school, she shared with me that her aunt had started a small business, which had significantly improved their financial situation. GECPD supports graduates from standard eight, with some receiving assistance from the organization itself, while others are supported by relatives and family members, as they continue their education in

various schools across the city.

Most female students in GECPD primary schools live with their parents in nearby communities, but the girls attending adult education and second-chance classes at the GECPD main center often live with relatives, having come from rural areas to study in the city. These students return to their families during school holidays in June and come back to the city in August when schools reopen. Some families with children attending Halabokhad Primary School also come from rural areas, moving with their children because they are too young to be left with relatives.

Despite efforts to provide psychological support, many students hesitate to share their mental health challenges due to the stigma associated with such issues. Mental health problems are often perceived as shameful or as signs of weakness, leading to fear of being labeled as insane or disabled. This contrasts with the acceptance of physical health problems, which are generally treated without stigma.

Some parents struggle to afford their children's education. Economic instability and constant conflict can further strain finances, leaving education as a lower priority leading to coping mechanisms like child labor, child marriage, or school dropout. In many cases, daughters are married off to wealthy men, and sons are sent to work to ease the family's financial burden, depriving children of both education and childhood.

At teacher-parent conferences, most attendees are mothers, as many fathers have either passed away, abandoned their families, or left in search of work. Most of these mothers never had the opportunity for education and, as a result, lack the skills to join the workforce. When asked why they didn't attend school, the mothers often reply that they worked at home while their brothers were sent to school. The National Education Strategic Plan published by the Somali Ministry of Education provides comprehensive data on enrollment rates, completion rates, and gender disparities in education. It often highlights the issue of boys being prioritized for schooling over girls, particularly in rural and low-income regions[8].

This disparity has created tensions among siblings, as the girls often feel less valued. Statistically, GECPD schools currently enroll 356 siblings, 146 girls and 210 boys. In low-income families, when parents cannot afford school fees for both children, the boy's education is typically prioritized. This reinforces gender inequality, as men tend to become the family's breadwinners, while women remain at home, often facing economic dependency and male dominance. Most mothers who support their children's education engage in cleaning jobs, run small businesses, or receive support from relatives.

A recent study from Somaliland recognizes education as a key driver of female empowerment demonstrated by various successful initiatives and programs [9]. These efforts highlight the critical role of community involvement, policy reform, and focused interventions in

fostering an environment where women's empowerment can flourish through education. Investing in girls' education is fundamental to achieving gender equality and promoting sustainable development. Educated women are better equipped to contribute to societal progress and change. The study specifically explored the long-term effects of Somali girls' education programs, focusing on how these girls, now women, have been affected in their later life outcomes. It highlights focused interventions like community-based schooling initiatives and scholarships for girls, leading to significant improvements in literacy and employment opportunities. These interventions also showed long-term effects, with many educated girls pursuing careers in healthcare, business, and governance, ultimately reducing gender inequality.

To strengthen GECPD's competence in addressing these issues, additional resources and training would be invaluable. Expanding the center's capacity to offer psychological support and sexual and reproductive health education would ensure that more girls and women receive the care they need. Collaborating with local health authorities is crucial to align services with the community's specific needs and raise awareness among families about available resources. It is also vital to train health professionals to provide specialized care for trauma survivors and to ensure a community-wide understanding of the rights and support systems for women and girls. I believe a more integrated approach, with ongoing partnerships and capacity-building efforts, can make a significant difference in improving the quality of life for these vulnerable populations.

My Way Forward

During my first six months at GECPD, I had the opportunity to engage in something I have always loved - spending meaningful time with my students. I have worked alongside dedicated individuals who are passionate about teaching, leadership, and making a difference in the lives of others. Watching my students progress, despite the many challenges they face, has been incredibly inspiring. These girls, many of whom travel long distances to be part of a community that values education, have shown remarkable dedication and consistency. Their commitment has positively impacted me, refining my teaching skills and boosting my confidence.

Looking forward, my goal as a teacher at GECPD is to continue participating in improving the lives of women and girls through education. Together, we aim to combat illiteracy and equip them with valuable skills that will enable them to support themselves independently. Our plans include awareness sessions for parents to tackle issues like child labor and child marriage. Moreover, we strive to create a safe environment where students feel comfortable sharing their struggles so we can offer mental health counseling and therapeutic sessions to alleviate their suffering. Together, we are committed to empowering

women and girls, paving the way for a brighter future.

Acknowledgment

I want to express my deep gratitude to Vännäs Rotary Club in Sweden for the incredible support they have provided me. I truly appreciate all the resources and assistance you have extended. Your commitment to making a positive impact in our community is truly inspiring. Your support has been invaluable in helping me advance in my teaching career and achieve my goals to support and empower young women and girls. Thank you once again for this wonderful opportunity.

Paper Context

This article reflects on my teaching experience at the Galkayo Education Center for Peace and Development (GECPD), which provides educational opportunities primarily for marginalized girls and women. It poses the question: can teaching truly uplift underprivileged children and improve their lives? The article argues that education is a powerful tool for change, asserting that with proper support, students can rise above their circumstances and positively impact their communities. Ultimately, this reflection emphasizes the significant role that committed teaching plays in fostering resilience and hope in even the most challenging conditions. Reflecting on my own teaching experience at GECPD, I saw firsthand how education can change the trajectory of young girls' lives. Similar to the study's findings, many of my students reported increased confidence and aspirations for education, suggesting that education plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of Somali girls.

Summary in Somali

CINWAAN

Ma baridda ayaa bedeli karta xaaladda carruurta danyarta ah iyadoo kor loogu qaadayo tayadooda nololaha? Qaar ka mid ah waayo-aragnimada aragtida macallinka.

SOOKOOBID

Mudadii aan ku sugnaa Xarunta Waxbarashada Galkayo ee Nabadda iyo Horumarka (GECPD), waxaan fursad u helay inaan ka qayb qaato barnaamijyo waxbarasho oo kala duwan oo diiradda saaray awoodsiinta carruurta iyo dhallinyarada danyarta ah iyo horumarinta bulshada. Waxaan si toos ah u arkay sida waxbarashadu ay u tahay awood xooggan oo isbeddel keeni karta, gaar ahaan bulshooyinka la haybsoocay. Iyadoo la siinayo gabdhaha fursado waxbarasho. GECPD waxay ka shaqaysaa burburinta wareegga faqriga oo badanaa xaddida mustaqbalka qoysaska. Xaruntani waxay bixisaa fursado waxbarasho oo loogu talagalay bulshooyinka aan ka faa'iideysan, gaar ahaan gabdhaha iyo haweenka, meel ay saameyn ku yeelatay khilaaf iyo sinnaan la'aan bulsheed. Maqaalku wuxuu baaraa caqabadaha lala kulmay, oo ay ku jiraan xaddidaadaha kheyraadka iyo caqabadaha dhaqanka, wuxuuna iftiiminayaa guulaha la xiriira awoodsiinta ardayda iyo koritaanka akadeemiga. Mudadii aan ka shaqeynayay Xarunta Waxbarashada Galkayo ee Nabadda iyo Horumarka (GECPD), waxaan helay fursad aan ku kaalmeynayay barnaamijyo waxbarasho oo diiradda saaraya awoodsiinta dhallinyarada danyarta ah iyo horumarinta bulshada. GECPD waa urur haween oo aan dowladeed ahayn oo la aasaasay sanadkii 1999-kii, iyada oo ay aasaastay Hawa Aden Mohamed, oo ah macallin iyo u doode haweenka, iyadoo ay taageerayaan dhowr haween oo aqoonyahan ah. Labaatankii sano ee la soo dhaafay, GECPD waxay gaartay horumar weyn oo ku aaddan awoodsiinta haweenka, gaar ahaan iyadoo diiradda saareysa waxbarashada gabdhaha iyo haweenka ku dhashay faqriga, kuwaas oo badanaa aan haysan fursadaha waxbarasho.

Markii ugu horeysay ee aan ka war helay GECPD waxay ahayd iyadoo aan ka akhriyay joornaalada waxbarashada iyo baraha bulshada, halkaas oo shaqadooda sijoogto ah uga dhex muuqatay bulshada. Go'aanka GECPD ee ku aaddan u doodista xuquuqda haweenka iyo gabdhaha, gaar ahaan iyada oo loo marayo waxbarashada, aad buu ii taabtay. Kahor inta aanan ku biirin ururka, waxaan ka qayb qaatay dhowr kulamo wacyigelin ah oo ay qabteen, kuwaas oo ka hadlayay arrimo muhiim ah sida gudniinka fircooniga, rabshadaha ku saleysan jinsiga, iyo muhiimadda waxbarashada haweenka. Halkaas oo aan ka helay fursad aan kubixiyo hagid iyo waxbarasho muhiim ah anigoo ah macallin. Waxaan si gaar ah u dhiirrigeliyay go'aanka GECPD ee ku aaddan awoodsiinta haweenka iyada oo loo marayo barnaamijyo waxbarasho oo baraya xirfado kala duwan, oo ay ku jiraan tolidda dharka, farshaxanka, xisaabta aasaasiga ah, iyo xirfadaha luqadda ee Ingiriisiga iyo Soomaaliga.

References

- [1] Aden MA, Majani F, Aden J, Bile KM, Lundmark B, Wall S. Empowering vulnerable Somali girls and women - a narrative on the role of education for health and development. *Somali Health Action J.* 2023;3(1). Available from: <https://doi.org/10.36368/shaj.v3i1.413>.
- [2] Gele AA, Bø BP, Sundby J. Attitudes toward female circumcision among men and women in two districts in Somalia: is it time to rethink our eradication strategy in Somalia? *ObstetGynecol Int.* 2013;2013:312734. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1155/2013/312734>.
- [3] Ingiriis HI, Hoehne MV. The impact of civil war and state collapse on the roles of Somali women: a blessing in disguise? *J East Afr Stud.* 2013;7(2):314-333. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2013.776281>.
- [4] WHO (2024). Female Genital Mutilation. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation>
- [5] UNICEF (2024). Female Genital Mutilation: A Global Concern. Available at: <https://data.unicef.org/resources/female-genital-mutilation-a-global-concern-2024/>
- [6] Human Rights Watch (2010). They Took me and Told me Nothing. Female Genital Mutilation in Iraqi Kurdistan Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/06/16/they-took-me-and-told-me-nothing/female-genital-mutilation-iraqi-kurdistan>
- [7] Kleist N. Negotiating respectable masculinity: gender and recognition in the Somali diaspora. *Afr Diaspora.* 2010;3(2):185-206.
- [8] Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education. Federal Government of Somalia (2022) National Education Sector Strategic plan. Available at: <https://moe.gov.so/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/ESSP-2022-2026.pdf>
- [9] Bradley T, Conroy K, Zaki M, Suleiman N. The role of education in promoting empowerment as agency in the lives of women and girls in Somaliland. *J Asian Afr Stud.* 2024;0(0). Available from: <https://doi-org.proxy.ub.umu.se/10.1177/00219096241243057>.