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Project Brief



Somali Girls' Education Program— Transition (SOMGEP—T)

OVERVIEW SOMGEP-T is a four-year (2017-21) initiative funded by DFID's Girls' Education Challenge. The project is using a holistic, evidence-based approach to boost reading, numeracy and transition outcomes for 27,146 girls and 30,053 boys in 148 primary and 53 secondary schools located in rural and remote areas of Somalia and Somaliland.

**27,146 girls
&
30,053 boys**
To be reached



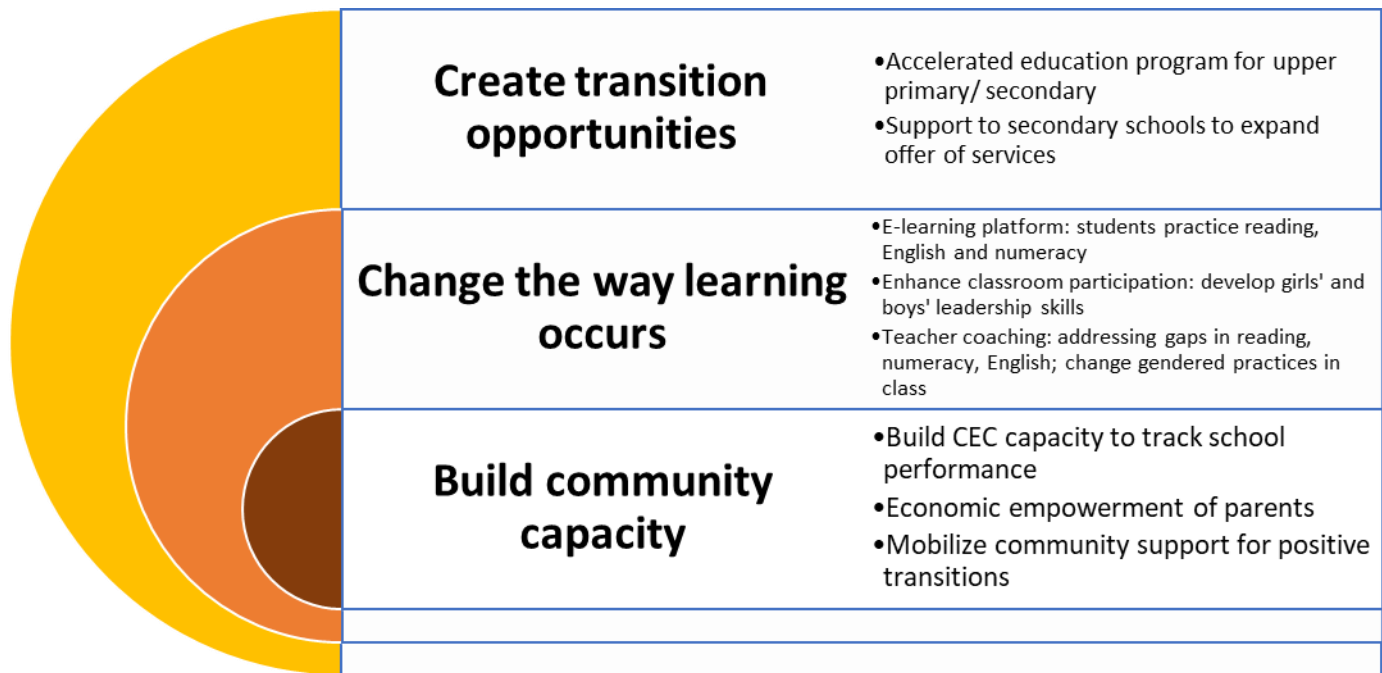
**148 Primary
53 secondary
schools**

SOMGEP-T's Framework

Evidence from a three-year longitudinal study conducted during the first phase of SOMGEP indicates that improved learning outcomes depend on the intersection of four key factors:

- Improved *attendance* rates, achieved through increased parental support to education and capacity to support the costs of schooling;
- Addressing key gaps in *teachers' knowledge of subject content and inclusive, non-violent, gender-transformative classroom practices*;
- Increasing the *capacity of Community Education Committees* to manage and support education services; and
- *Developing students' agency* to boost classroom participation, shifting traditional gender roles that hinder girls' voice and contribute to boys' disengagement from school.

Based on this framework, SOMGEP-T's approach was designed to boost learning outcomes and facilitate transitions to upper grades and to accelerated education courses:



Assessing Reading Skills – SEGRA

An advanced version of EGRA was developed to assess students in Grades 3-8 in the Somali context. The structure of the expanded reading assessment - SEGRA – is based on EGRA’s logic and on the results of previous large scale assessments conducted by CARE.

A Closer Look at Reading Outcomes

Rural female students in Somalia/ Somaliland show a progressive improvement in Somali reading fluency up to Grade 5. Reading fluency levels plateau at 39-42 wpm for individual word reading, and at 53wpm for passage reading. Despite the relatively low reading fluency levels achieved, the performance at the lower and intermediate reading comprehension tasks is consistently high, with fourth

graders reaching average scores of 72% and 56%, respectively. Learning gaps become evident at the advanced reading comprehension task, which includes inferential questions. The acquisition of reading comprehension skills reaches a plateau at Grade 5, potentially indicating issues with teacher capacity. Detailed results are presented in Table 1.

The results suggest that Somali teachers are able to support students to learn to decode simple texts and understand literal meaning quite efficiently. On the other hand, teachers are failing to develop students’ inferential reading skills. 40% of the female students scored zero in the advanced reading comprehension task, compared to 37% of the boys.

Table 1: Baseline: SEGRA Results

Grades	Word reading (wpm)	Reading Comprehension (lower level)	Reading Comprehension (intermediate)	Passage reading (wpm)	Reading Comprehension (advanced)
OOS	8.7	18.1	15.3	15.1	8.7
Grade 3	20.7	53.0	41.2	26.3	25.8
Grade 4	30.1	72.1	55.9	39.1	40.5
Grade 5	42.4	84.0	78.0	53.2	50.1
Grade 6	39.6	86.6	74.0	53.1	48.0

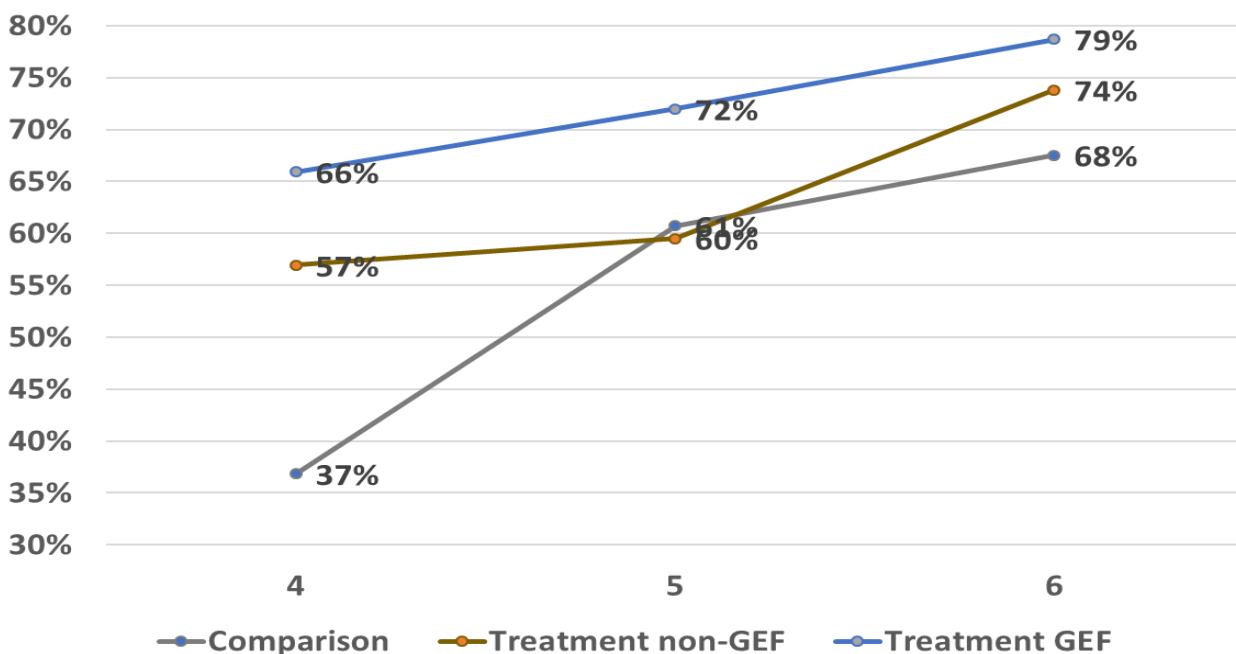
Drivers of Reading Outcomes

- *Attendance*: Higher attendance rates predict improved reading outcomes.
- *CEC engagement*: Having an active CEC at the community predicts improved reading outcomes.
- *Leadership skills*: Girls with higher Youth Leadership Scores have higher reading and numeracy scores. The result is potentially linked to girls' voice contributing to increased participation in class and capacity to ask questions of teachers when not understanding the content.
- *Disability*: Girls with disabilities have significantly lower reading scores.
- *Pastoralism*: Girls whose families own medium-sized livestock and those living in temporary structures score significantly lower in SEGRA. This result is potentially linked to seasonal absenteeism.
- *Absence of learning materials*: Predicts lower reading outcomes.
- *Being afraid of the teacher*: Predicts lower reading outcomes. Classroom observations indicate that 70% of the teachers use corporal punishment.
- *Poor teaching* (as reported by caregiver): Predicts lower reading outcomes.

Second Evaluation Round: Initial Gains

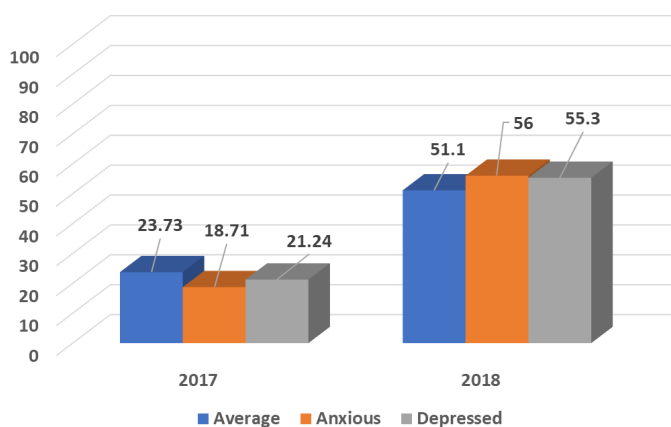
- **Learning**: Girls participating in Empowerment Forums (leadership skills development platforms) had significantly higher gains in literacy and numeracy skills than those in the comparison group. The average reading comprehension score for Grade 4 girls participating in Girls' Empowerment Forums is 29 percent points above the comparison group (66% compared to 37%). The average reading comprehension score for Grade 6 girls participating in Empowerment Forums is 11 percent points higher than the comparison group average (79% compared to 68%). The results highlight the importance of leadership skills development as a strategy to enhance classroom participation for the most marginalised, boosting learning outcomes (Figure 1),
- **Closing the gender gap in learning**: Girls in Grade 4 are already performing at the same level as boys, while at the baseline, girls learning scores were significantly lower than those of boys.
- **Transition**: Girls participating in Empowerment Forums are 11 percent points more likely to have positive transitions than those in the comparison group. Only 4% of the girls in the treatment group dropped out of school, compared to 8% in the comparison group.
- **Attendance**: Attendance remained stable in the treatment group (82%) while dropping three percent points for the comparison group (from 84% to 81%).

Reading Comprehension, Intermediate Level



- **Classroom practices:** 41% of the teachers in treatment areas are using formative assessments, compared to only 23% of the teachers in comparison schools.
- **Life skills:** Significant improvements in girls' voice (ability to speak with adults), self-confidence (particularly in relation to their ability to participate in mathematics classes) and reduction in social isolation (33% of the girls in the treatment group report feeling lonely at school, compared to 41% in the comparison group).
- **Gains for girls with disabilities:** Literacy gains for girls with anxiety and depression are respectively 10 percent points and 7 percent points above the average gains for all girls, showing that the approach has a particular benefit for girls with mental health issues.

Reading Scores



Project Overview

- Country:** Somalia
- Regions:** Somaliland, Puntland and Central Somalia
- Theme:** Girls' Education
- Time frame:** May 2017—December 2021, building on the first phase of the project: March 2013-March 2017
- Main donor:** DFID— GEC £12,126,935
- Lead organisation:** CARE International
- Key partners:** ADRA, Havoyoco, Nagaad, Tass

Persistent Challenges

- **Violence:** A risk mapping exercise shows that girls face harassment and physical violence from boys and men on the way to school and at school. While corporal punishment is declining in class, it is still widely used.
- **Struggling subgroups:** Learning outcomes for pastoralist girls and girls with disabilities are still significantly lower than average. The results indicate the need for specific approaches to cater for these subgroups.
- **Teaching quality:** While substantial gains were observed in some areas of numeracy, challenges with advanced calculations and problem-solving tasks persist. The project is currently investing in on-site coaching to close gaps.

About CARE Somalia

CARE has been providing emergency relief and lifesaving assistance to the Somali people since 1981. Our main programme activities since then have included projects in water and sanitation, sustainable pastoralist activities, civil society development, small-scale enterprise development, and education. We work in partnership with Somali and international aid agencies, civil society leaders and local authorities. CARE is operational in all areas of Somalia and Somaliland.



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