



## Snapshot

### Growth in the education sector in Puntland

#### Somali Youth Learners Initiative improves the quality of education in secondary schools in Puntland.



Young girls in class in Galkayo, Somalia

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-- Mr. Ahmed Mohamud Warsame,  
Chairman of the Examination Board,  
Ministry of Education, Puntland

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With over 70% of the population under the age of 30, Somalia's youth population is primed to be its greatest asset. However, the obstacles facing these future leaders are immense due to decades of civil war. In particular, the education sector is plagued by scarce financial resources, lack of qualified teaching staff, and poor school infrastructure. As the country works toward stabilization, the need for investment in education is paramount. Through the USAID-funded Somali Youth Learners Initiative (SYLI), Mercy Corps and their local partners tackle Somalia's diverse education needs.

SYLI supports the next generation of Somali leaders by expanding access to quality secondary education through a variety of initiatives. In Puntland, SYLI has constructed and rehabilitated 17 secondary schools where the initiative has also provided teaching and learning materials, and training for both current and future teachers. SYLI further improved the learning environment through the provision of desks, the initiation of girls' empowerment forums, and the construction of girl-friendly spaces in the schools.

In the recently released national examination results for the 2014-2015 school year, USAID-supported schools in Puntland were among the best performers. Four SYLI-supported schools occupied the top ten slots with Omer Samatar Secondary in Galkayo coming in as the top performing school, followed by Gambol Secondary in Garowe.

The Chairman of the Examination Board of the Puntland Ministry of Education, Ahmed Mohamud Warsame, recognized that SYLI's holistic efforts over the past three years are having a positive impact. “There has been a significant improvement in SYLI-supported schools over the last three years; I have to give credit to the program for its outstanding contribution to the education sector.” Mr. Ali Ibrahim Hussein, Headmaster at Gambol secondary school in Garowe also attributed the school's improved student performance to SYLI's efforts. “Our performance was lower before SYLI; Gambol is now one of the best performing schools in Puntland due to the many improvements in classroom construction, teacher training and many more, we are very thankful to USAID.”

At the end of the five-year program, SYLI aims to have created inclusive and equitable secondary education opportunities for over 110,000 Somali youth thus providing them with an opportunity to change their future.