



Volume 7

SOMALI  
ADOLESCENT  
AND YOUTH

OR **BOOM  
GLOOM?**





Volume 7

# SOMALI ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH

# OR BOOM GLOOM?







## PREFACE

“If the youth are wise, society will be wise; if the youth are rich, society will be rich; if the youth are strong, society will be strong; if the youth are independent, society will be independent; if the youth are free, society will be free; if the youth progress, society will progress.”

-Liang Qichao

For development to be sustainable, it is essential that youth are supported and encouraged to take an active role in shaping our futures as they are the ones who will go on to lead future generations and drive efforts for global sustainable development.

One of the greatest features of young people is their capacity for imagination and creativity. In a rapidly changing and highly dynamic world, we need to be able to keep pace with newly emerging challenges through reform and develop new, more suitable approaches. By bringing fresh ideas and new perspectives and blending these with their capacities for creative approaches to tackling new problems, youth hold the keys to innovation that are crucial for us and as such should be encouraged to participate and play an even greater role.

Just as the torch was once handed to us by our predecessors, so will it be passed on to our future generations along with the hopes and dreams of those around us. Realizing our hopes and dreams for a better future; one that truly leaves no one behind, means opening the doors for our youth to follow their dreams and act upon their hopes. It is our sincere hope that Somalia's youth will follow their aspirations and in doing so work together to build an equal and inclusive world; one that gives all members of future generations the opportunities to realize their dreams and enjoy peaceful and prosperous lives.





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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Adolescents and youth form a significant part of the population. The substantial size of the youth population is not matched by a corresponding understanding of their status and the socio-economic challenges they face. There are limited records, statistical data and research projects which target young people. Adolescents and youth face many uncertainties about their future, and are affected in fragile states by internal and external migration, unemployment and violence. These issues faced by this demographic pose an existing threat to the nation.

Somali youth have historically played a key role in the politics of their country. The Somali Youth Club (SYC) later renamed the Somali Youth League (SYL) was founded by thirteen youth in 1943 and is widely considered to be the first modern political party in Somalia. During the civil war and in the decades since, youth participation in the political process has dwindled. The youth did not get opportunities to improve their wellbeing or access quality education. As a result, they became vulnerable to violence, immigration, terrorism, illiteracy, exclusion from the governance system and peace-building operations. This laid ample groundwork for the recruitment and mobilization of hundreds of despondent youth by the radical youth wing of Somalia's now-defunct Union of Islamic Courts; Al Shabaab.

In December 2017, the second Somali National Youth Conference was held in Mogadishu where hundreds of youth representatives from around Somalia gathered for talks on the future development of young Somalis. During the conference, the National Youth Policy (2017-2021) was also launched. The overall goal of the policy is to promote youth participation in all spheres of development to ensure they attain their full potential. The findings from the Population Estimation Survey (PESS) provides key indicators on Somali adolescents and youth.

**Adolescents and Youth Population:** Adolescents and youth (10-35 years) form 50.8 percent of the total Somali population. Adolescents and youth form 49.6 percent of the total male population and 51.9 percent of the total female population. Of the total adolescent and youth population, 49.6 percent are males and 50.4 percent are females.

**Marital Status and Households:** About 7.1 percent of the population aged 15-17 have been married and about 5.7 percent are currently married. The proportion of the population which has been married increases with age; in the age group 20-24, close to 50 percent of the population has been married, in the age group

25-29, 76.2 percent, and in the age group 30-35 over 90 percent of the studied sample has been married. Among the women aged 15-17, the proportions which have been married are almost twice as high (9.4 percent) than among the men (4.9 percent). The gap in the proportion of males and females who have been married is wider in the middle age groups and it narrows among those aged 30-35 (females 93.6 percent; males 87.7 percent). The survey shows that 57.98 percent of all Somali households are headed by persons 36 years and over. The adolescents (10-19 years) head one percent of the total households in Somalia whereas the youth aged 15-24 head 7.5 percent of the households, those aged 15-29 head 20.4 percent and those between 15-35 head 42.12 percent of the total households in the country.

**Education:** The survey reports a literacy rate of 40 percent for the total population 15 and above which decreases rapidly with age. It stands at 52.2 percent for adolescents (15-19 years), but only 35 percent for youth 30-35 years. Furthermore, about 50 percent of the secondary school age youth who are currently enrolled, are enrolled in primary school. A similar proportion of those who should be in post-secondary institutions are enrolled in secondary school.

**Labor force Participation, Employment and Unemployment:** Somali adolescents and youth make up 60 percent of the Somali labor force. Even among the 10-14 year olds, 17.3 percent are economically active. This age cohort are children who are not expected to be working, but should instead be enrolled in primary school. On the other hand, almost 50 percent of the working age youth 20-35 years are economically inactive. An estimated 23.7 percent of the adolescents (10-19 years) are active, 43.8 percent are active among the 20-24 year olds and 54.6 percent among the age group 25-29. Unemployment among youth is 33 percent for the age group of 15-24 years, 30.4 percent among the population aged 15-29 and 27.6 percent for the population 15–35 years. The highest unemployment rates are found in urban areas and IDP camps.

**Mobility:** About 53 percent of the adolescents and youth who moved into the country within the 12 months preceding the survey, were males and 47 percent females. Most of the young return migrants were coming from African countries, followed by Asia and Europe.

**Youth as Partners for Change:** The most critical actions to be taken to harness the potential of young people today as well as of future generations include:

- Improvements in the quantity and quality of education. Efforts need to be geared towards increasing school enrolment—especially for girls. It is key to have policies and programs in place that advocate for and ensure that every child of school going age is also going to school. Quality of education is a driving force for improved quality of life, knowledge and skills development and future economic growth. Post primary institutions play a critical role in building the capacity of the young people for the labor market. Young people need to be equipped with relevant skills that are competitive.



- Capacity building for the labor market will make economic sense if it is matched with investments in employment creation, both by the public and the private sectors to match the supply. Barriers to youth employment such as 'clannism' need to be eliminated in the labor market chain. Support of youth innovation and entrepreneurship is critical for the creation of jobs for the young population.
- Legal and institutional frameworks fighting discrimination based on age and gender and promoting social inclusion will contribute greatly towards empowering adolescents and youth and making them a part of the development process. Harmful cultural practices such as FGM/C increase the risk of alienation of the young females. Educational and community-based programs are needed to challenge traditional attitudes and practices that put males and females at risk of poor development outcomes.
- Improving knowledge of and access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH). All young people should have access to programs that aim to ensure they are informed about their SRH, have knowledge of HIV/AIDs, birth spacing methods and gender based violence (including FGM/C) as well as how to address such cases and access youth and gender friendly facilities. Knowledge is critical to enable youth make informed decisions and be in control of their lives. Equipped with knowledge about SRH, youth and especially females - tend to be more confident, assertive and able to negotiate for their rights.
- Age and sex-disaggregated data are key in understanding the status of adolescents and youth, identifying adolescent and youth issues and addressing them in development policies and programs. Missed opportunities to adequately prepare, educate and invest in the young generation will be extremely costly, if not impossible to reverse for the young people themselves as well as for the entire country.



# 01

## Introduction



## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Justification for an Adolescents and Youth Report

Adolescents and youth form a significant part of the population. They represent the transition from childhood to adulthood; they are the most important age group since their dynamics determine the social, economic, political and demographic future of the society.

The substantial size of the youth population is not matched by a corresponding understanding of their status and the socio-economic challenges they face. There are limited records, statistical data and research projects which target young people. Adolescents and youth

face many uncertainties about their future, and are affected in fragile states by internal and external migration, unemployment, violence etc. and these issues faced by this demographic pose an existing threat to the nation.

In every country, poverty, lack of education and employment opportunities, and difficulties in accessing healthcare severely affect marginalized groups – including youth, women, children, individuals with disabilities, and ethnic minorities. In fragile states the marginalized groups are very often neglected and left behind.

The 'Arab spring' across North Africa and the Arab States was very much the result of a

Youth aspire to live in a socially and politically inclusive society in which they feel valued, have opportunities to learn, have access to employment, engage productively in the community, have a voice and contribute to the society.



disillusioned and dissatisfied youth population (Moore, 2012).

Youth aspire to live in a socially and politically inclusive society in which they feel valued, have opportunities to learn, have access to employment, engage productively in the community, have a voice and contribute to the society. .

In 2012, the Somalia Human Development Report was dedicated to Somalia's young women and men. It argued that a failure to invest in youth as an asset for the broader economy and society will continue to incur formidable costs, including the perpetration of intergenerational poverty and conflict (UNDP, 2012).

The Population Estimation Survey for Somalia (PESS) produced quantitative indicators to provide an estimate of the size and structure of the population. To add a qualitative dimension

to the data and provide explanations for some of the observed youth indicators from the Population Estimation Survey, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted and the results have been summarized in a qualitative study.

Youth participants for the FGDs were identified through the existing, recognized, active and representative youth groups. The FGDs were composed of six to ten members with equal male and female representation. Two such groups were interviewed in each of the identified locations. Participants to the KIIs were persons with first-hand knowledge in youth matters. The key youth informants included youth leaders, heads of civil society organizations dealing with youth matters and the government officials from the ministry responsible for youth affairs. KIIs were administered to participants individually and not as a group.





# 02

## Background of Somali Adolescents and Youth

## 2. Background of Somali adolescents and youth

### 2.1 Who are the adolescents and youth?

The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies adolescence as the period in human growth and development that occurs after childhood and before adulthood, from ages 10 to 19 years. Biological processes drive many aspects of this growth and development, with the onset of puberty marking the passage from childhood to adolescence. This period is marked by emotional, social, psychological, physical transitions that require special attention in order to make these changes meaningful and successful. Adolescents are usually categorized as early adolescents (10-14 years) and late adolescents (15-19 years) (WHO, 2017).

Different societies use different parameters for their definition of youth. Some societies use biological markers (the period between puberty and parenthood) while others use cultural or religious markers to define youth as a distinct social status with accompanied roles, responsibilities in society, and customs. Cultural norms, personal aspirations and societal expectations are often different amongst young males and females. In some societies, youth is even used to mean young men only, perpetuating injustice towards young women. For sustained social, political and economic growth, it is important to appreciate the disparate burdens faced by young women and men and the unequal access to opportunities faced by young women (Lancy & Grove, 2009).

The United Nations (UN) defines the age cohort 15 – 24 as the youth population. The African charter defines youth as persons between the ages of 15 and 35 years (United Nations

General Assembly, 2001). Majority of the Arab states define youth as those aged between 15-24 and 15-29 years (Creative Commons, 2014). The National Youth Policy of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) 2017-2021, refers to persons aged 15-40 as youth.

In this report, the age group between 10 and 35 is used to characterize adolescents and youth. This covers a wide range of experiences and transitions depending on age. The adolescents at the lower end of the age group between 10-14 are still considered children in most respects. By the time they get to 15-19, they are transitioning from puberty to maturity and when this stage of life is over, she/he has set in motion many of the events that will determine their future life path. Youth aged 21 through 24 are also considered as young adults. They are still discovering their interests and talents while making commitments—to work, to a spouse and often they are parenting. Finally, after the age of 30, many will have settled down in both career and family life.

To present the different phases of being a youth, this report disaggregates the age band 10-35 depending on the variation of the experience by age group. The report also presents summary indicators for adolescents aged 10-19 (adolescents) as well as youth aged 15-24 and 15-29 (common youth definition within the Arab league). The table below shows youth definitions of the Arab League member states.



**Table 1:** Youth definition in the Arab world

Country	Youth definition (yrs)	No. of countries
Iraq	10-30	①
UAE	11-25	①
Jordan	12-30	②
Mauritania	12-30	
Palestine	13-29	①
Djibouti	15-24	
Qatar	15-24	⑤
Saudi Arabia	15-24	
Sudan	15-24	
Yemen	15-24	
Syria	15-25	①
Algeria	15-29	
Lebanon	15-29	④
Morocco	15-29	
Tunisia	15-29	
Somalia	15-40	①
Kuwait	18-30	①
Egypt	18-35	①
Bahrain	Unspecified	
Comoros	Unspecified	④
Libya	Unspecified	
Oman	Unspecified	

**Source:** Country specific youth policy documents  
 Colour codes refer to different youth definitions in terms of age bracket

## 2.2 History of Somali youth

**It is hard** to Somali youth have historically played a key role in the politics of their country. The Somali Youth Club (SYC) later renamed the Somali Youth League (SYL) was founded by thirteen youth in 1943 and is widely considered to be the first modern political party in Somalia. Five of the thirteen founders were teenagers and the oldest founding member was merely 33 years old. Later on, the first independent government was formed by a coalition of the southern-based Somali Youth League (SYL) and the northern-based Somali National League (SNL). The establishment of the SYL is annually commemorated on May 15 in Somalia with celebrations organized throughout the country to honour the SYL's members and their key role in the nation's path to independence. During the civil war and in the decades since, youth participation in the political process has dwindled. The youth did not get opportunities to improve their wellbeing or access quality education. As a result, they became vulnerable to violence, immigration, terrorism, illiteracy, exclusion from the governance system and peace-building operations. (The National Youth Policy of the The Federal Government of Somalia, 2016)

This laid ample groundwork for the recruitment and mobilization of hundreds of despondent youth by the radical youth wing of Somalia's now-defunct Union of Islamic Courts; Al Shabaab. The group has been waging a war against secularism and its strength has been its ability to address the needs of certain groups, particularly the youth, who have been marginalized by both political processes and resource conflicts. (UNDP, 2012)

In December 2017, the second Somali National Youth Conference was held in Mogadishu where hundreds of youth representatives from around Somalia gathered for talks on the future development of young Somalis. During the

conference, the National Youth Policy (2017-2021) was also launched. The overall goal of the policy is to promote youth participation in all spheres of development to ensure they attain their full potential.

Nowadays, the Somali adolescents and youth are a social group that faces problems and uncertainties about their future. The qualitative study findings indicate the following challenges faced by youth nowadays in Somalia which are alarming :

- High levels of illiteracy,
- Limited education and training opportunities,
- Early marriage rate
- Unemployment and under-employment,
- Lack of political participation,
- Lack of health services,
- Radicalization,
- Insecurity,
- Consumption of drugs, especially khat

## Youth participation

The United Nations Security Council adopted unanimously, on 9 December 2015, a ground-breaking resolution on Youth, Peace and Security which recognizes that “young people play an important and positive role in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security”.

UNSCR 2250 (2015) identifies five key pillars for action: participation, protection, prevention, partnerships and disengagement and reintegration. United Nations Member States were urged to give youth a greater voice in decision-making at the local, national, regional and international levels and to consider setting up mechanisms that would enable young people to participate meaningfully in peace processes.

Somali youth play little to no role in decision-making. Following the overthrow of the Siyad Barre regime, kinship and clan structures once

again became the central organizing force around which social, political and economic life revolved. Decisions were and are still made by the clan elders on behalf of their clans.

**Our politics have no room for the youth; they only consider older people to participate; because we had a culture where only the old man can take decisions and can talk about the future of his community, we transferred this culture to our modern politics.**

**-Youth FGD participant**

Besides the obstacle of the clan elders, reasons that are given for the lack of active social and political participation of young people include illiteracy, low levels of education and the lack of financial resources required to participate in politics. Young women are even less likely to participate due to cultural and religious norms.

**Religion is a barrier for women to participate in politics, both when we translate it and when we apply it to our context. Thirdly, our culture is a barrier to women because it pushes them backwards and reduces their voices; moreover, our national laws could also be a barrier to women, because they are not giving them much room in politics. For example, if a man runs for a political position against a woman, it is obvious that the man will be elected, because elders think that only a man can represent them.**

**- Youth FGD participant**

Despite these barriers, both literature and the qualitative findings indicate that young Somalis are making efforts to have their voices heard. They strongly believe that they have a big role to play in the social, economic and political development of their country. They have formed youth groups which provide a political voice and economic opportunities for its members. Programs led by both local and international NGOs are mentoring and building the capacity

## More Somali women are bearing children between the ages of 25 to 29 than in any other age group.

of young people to actively participate in the social, economic and political spheres.

### 2.3 Health and well-being of adolescents and youth

The health-related behaviors and conditions that underlie the major non-communicable diseases usually start or are reinforced during the second decade of life. Health problems and behaviors that arise during adolescence – chronic illnesses and drug use, for example – affect the physical and cognitive development. Adolescents’ evolving capacities affect how they think about their health, how they perceive their future, and what influences their decisions and actions. Not only does this have a serious impact on the health and development of adolescents today but it also affects their health as adults tomorrow (WHO, 2014).

Numerous factors protect or undermine adolescents’ health on many different levels: at the individual level depending for example on age, gender, knowledge, skills and empowerment; at the level of families and peers, where adolescents have most of their close relationships; and in their communities and through organizations or institutions that provide adolescents with services and opportunities, such as schools and health facilities. More distantly, health is influenced through cultural practices and norms, through

the mass media and interactive digital media; and through social determinants, including policies and political decisions about the distribution of resources, power and the exercise of human rights (WHO, 2014).

More Somali women are bearing children between the ages of 25 to 29 than in any other age group. The Maternal Mortality Ratio Survey from the 2018-2019 Somali Health and Demographic Survey, indicates that the Age-Specific Fertility Rate (ASFR) is highest among young women aged 30-34 (306 per 1000 women in that age group) and lowest among those aged 15-19 (60 per 1000 women in that age group). The table below shows the breakdown of ASFR for young women in Somalia.

**Table 2:** Age-Specific Fertility Rates, SHDS MMR Survey, 2018-2019 (Weighted)

Age group	Rural	Urban	Total
15-19	68	59	<b>60</b>
20-24	254	227	<b>232</b>
25-29	319	303	<b>306</b>
30-34	312	294	<b>297</b>
35-39	243	236	<b>238</b>

Literature and qualitative findings indicate that Somali adolescents and youth are already consuming khat, which has serious impacts on their health; especially their mental health and also leads to sleep disorders.

Adolescent and youth health is affected by the following:

- Lack of awareness on health issues, particularly on sexual and reproductive health (SRH), and access to health facilities. There are no youth-oriented facilities to cater for the needs of the youth nowadays in Somalia.
- Young women are compounded by gender based violence (GBV) which affects both physical and mental health. Although most girls undergo female genital mutilation before their adolescent years, most of the effects of this procedure are felt during pregnancy and post-natal period, and have a worse impact on the adolescent mothers.
- Practice of the early marriages which ultimately leads to pregnancy and birth related complications which endanger the life and health status for both the mother and the child.
- Low level of education is one of the factors that affect the uptake of health services. Illiteracy and/or lack of education also limit access to information.
- Poverty is also linked to poor health outcomes among young people. Poor youth cannot afford to pay for health care in the health facilities, as the Somali state is only able to provide very limited cost free healthcare, and even this is restricted to specific areas and cities.

The growing size of the adolescent and youth population in Somalia has implications not only for the present but also for future requirements for services, interventions including various programs implementation.

The participants in the qualitative study, including young adult males and females as well as key government officials in the ministry of youth, collectively believe that relevant interventions to improve the health of adolescents and youth should include the following:

- Health awareness campaigns on issues affecting adolescents and youth,
- Capacity building of health workers, including training and hiring of additional health workers;
- Pro-poor policies that ensure the inclusion of marginalized groups, including IDPs, for equal access to health care affecting adolescents and youth,
- Capacity building of health workers, including training and hiring of additional health workers;
- Pro-poor policies that ensure the inclusion of marginalized groups, including IDPs, for equal access to health care.







# 03

## Adolescents and Youth in the Somali Population

### 3. Adolescents and youth in the Somali Population

Understanding the size, composition and geographical distribution of adolescent and youth groups in the Somali population is important for the development of age and gender specific programs and policies which respond to the diverse needs and challenges facing the diverse sub-population.

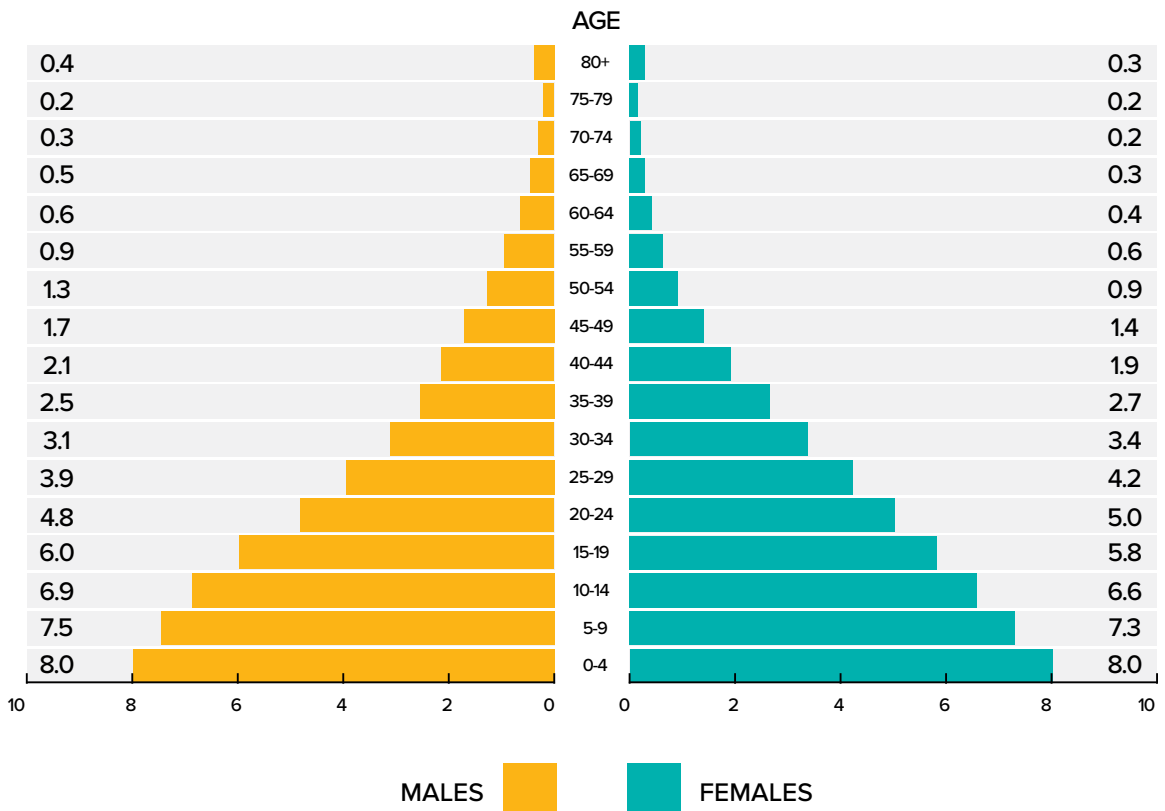
Furthermore, the socio-economic and environmental realities for young people in the world currently mean that they are one of the largest groups of marginalized and excluded people that the world has ever seen.

The findings of the 2014 Population Estimation Survey for Somalia (PESS) indicate that adolescents and youth (10-35 years) form 50.8 percent of the total Somali population, as illustrated in the population pyramid presented in Figure 1 below. Adolescents and youth form 49.6 percent of the total male population and 51.9 percent of the total female population. Of the total adolescent and youth population, 49.6 percent are males and 50.4 percent are females (UNFPA, 2015).

Adolescents (10-19 years) account for 51.3 percent of the adolescent and youth population and 27.0 percent of the total Somali population. (These and the following calculations are all based on unsmoothed PESS age data, only figures 1 and 39 use smoothed data.)

#### 3.1 Adolescents and youth by age and sex

**Figure 1** Total population by five-year age groups and sex, in percent, 2014 (smoothed data)





Among the adolescent and youth population, 28.4 percent are between the ages 10-14 (early adolescents). They form 14.9 percent of the total population of which 53.5 percent are males and 46.5 percent are females.

The late adolescents (15-19 years) account for about 22.9 percent of the adolescent and youth population and 12.1 percent of the total Somali population. The males aged 15-19 are 51.3 percent of the total population in this age cohort and females are 48.7 percent.

The youth aged 15-24 form 21.4 percent, whereas those aged 15-29 constitute 28.4 percent of the total Somali population and 57.9 percent of the total adolescent and youth population. Of this population segment, 47.8 percent are males while 52.2 percent are females.

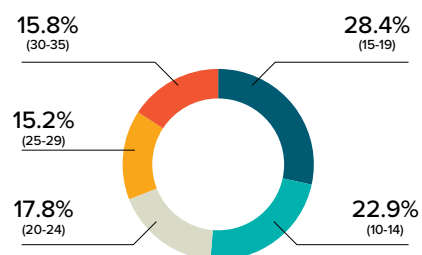
The population below age 35 is expected to increase in the coming years, given the broad base of the pyramid. The youth division of the African Union Commission estimates that 65 percent of the total population of Africa is below the age of 35 years, and over 35 percent are between the ages of 15 and 35 (African Union, 2017). In Somalia, 81.5 percent are below 35 years and 38 percent of the population is between 15-35 years. The younger the adolescent and youth groups, the bigger their size. The early adolescents form the largest group, followed by the late adolescents. The adolescents are in many ways also the most at risk population.

## 3.2 Geographical distribution

The largest proportion of adolescents and youth reside in the urban areas (43.5 percent) while the smallest resides in IDP camps at 8.6 percent (see Figure 3).

The adolescents and youth who reside in the rural and nomadic areas make up 23.3 percent

**Figure 2** Adolescents and youth by five-year age groups, in percent, 2014



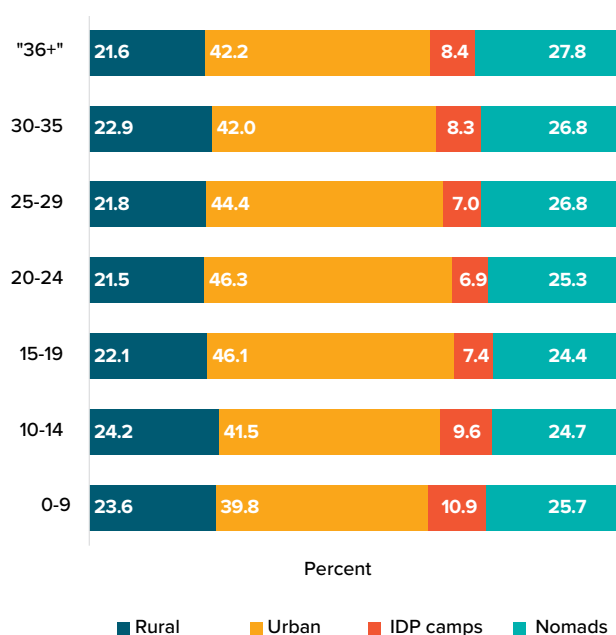
**Figure 3** Adolescents and youth by type of residence, in percent, 2014



**Figure 4** Adolescents and youth by type of residence, in percent, 2014



**Figure 5** Adolescents and youth by age groups and type of residence, in percent, 2014



while 24.6 percent of the total adolescent and youth population respectively

Among those aged 15-35, only 7.4 percent reside in the IDP camps while 44.9 percent reside in the urban areas. The rural and nomadic residences have 22.1 and 25.7 percent respectively of adolescents and youth aged 15-35 (Figure 4).

The age-groups 15-19 and 20-24 have the largest share residing in urban areas at around 46 percent. It declines to about 22 percent in rural areas and 7 percent among IDPs. The proportion of young people living in nomadic areas tends to increase with age and reaches

around 27 percent among the 25+. Urban, rural and nomadic areas offer different opportunities for adolescents and youth.

Urban centres are known to attract economic investments, and offer a higher concentration of jobs; particularly skilled labor and public services than other areas. Urban areas also have better access to social amenities such as schools and health facilities. Risks such as conflict and recruitment into armed militia are however more prevalent in the urban areas. On the other hand, nomadic and rural areas offer more opportunities in unskilled labor given that the Somali economy is mainly dependent on livestock and livestock products



The early adolescents form the largest group, followed by the late adolescents. The adolescents are in many ways also the most at risk population.







# 04

## Marital Status and Households of Adolescents and Youth

## 4. Marital status and households of adolescents and youth

Families and households form the primary social units. They play a crucial role in Somali society, as they shape individuals, influence their interactions and provide safety nets against shocks and stress factors (Mokomane, 2012).

### 4.1 Marital status

Information on marital status by age and sex reflects the process of family formation and dissolution, and it is important because it has implications on fertility rate. Married females are the main target of maternal and child health programs. The data in this section present the adolescents and youth in 3 dimensions: have never been married, currently married and have been married.

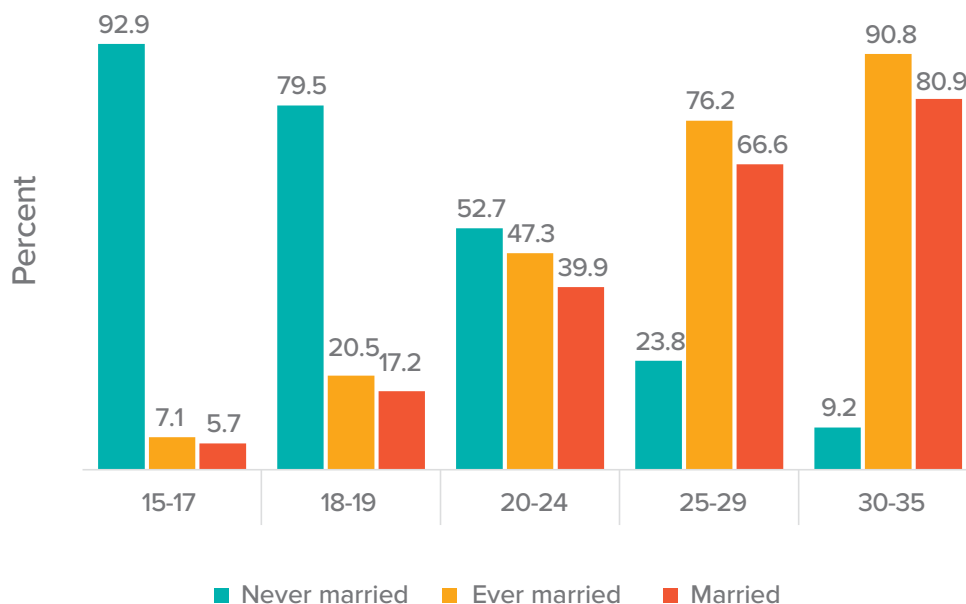
The group of individuals who have been married includes people currently married, people who are divorced, and those who have been abandoned or widowed. In the provisional

Somalia constitution, 2012, Article 28 states that a marriage shall not be legal without the free consent of both the man and the woman, or if either party has not reached the age of maturity (Federal Republic of Somalia, 2012).

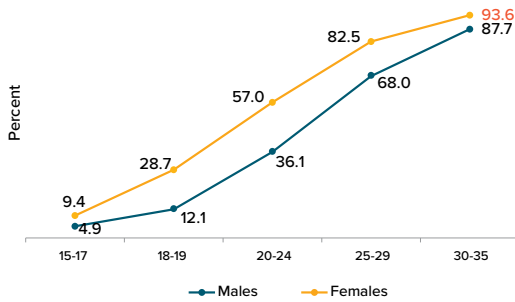
In Article 29, the word “child” means a person under 18 years of age. Findings as shown in Figure 6, show that about 71 percent of the population aged 15-17 have been married and about 5.7 percent are currently married. The proportion of the population which has been married increases with age; in the age group 20-24, close to 50 percent of the population has been married, in the age group 25-29, 76.2 percent, and in the age group 30-35 over 90 percent of the studied sample has been married.

There are however evident differences between women and men (Figure 7 and 8). Young women marry earlier than young men, and are also more often affected by divorce and

**Figure 6** Marital status of adolescents and youth by age group, in percent, 2014



**Figure 7** Ever married adolescents and youth by age group and sex, in percent, 2014



by widowhood. As expected, the likelihood of marriage increase with age for both sexes. But among the women aged 15-17, the proportions which have been married are almost twice as high (9.4 percent) than among the men (4.9 percent). The gap in the proportion of males and females who have been married is wider in the middle age groups and it narrows among those aged 30-35 (females 93.6 percent; males 87.7 percent).

**Figure 8** Currently married adolescents and youth by age group and sex, in percent, 2014

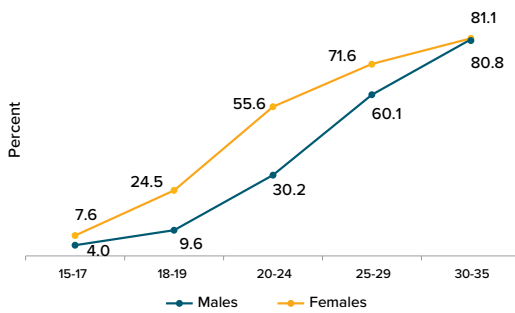
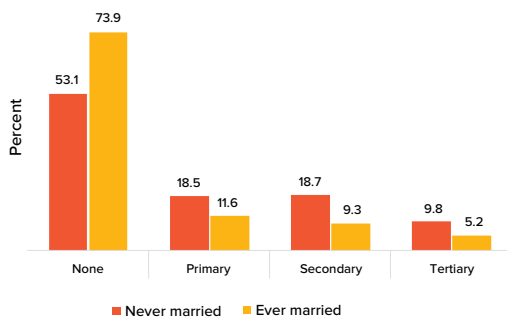


Figure 8 shows the distribution of the currently married adolescents and youth by age. The pattern is the same as for individuals who have been married at any point (figure 7). Many more females are currently married in virtually all age groups apart from the 30-35 years old, where the proportion of currently married are more or less the same among females and males (around 81 percent).

**Figure 9** Ever married and never married youth (20-35 years) by level of education completed, in percent, 2014



**Figure 10** Never married and ever married adolescents and youth by type of residence, in percent, 2014

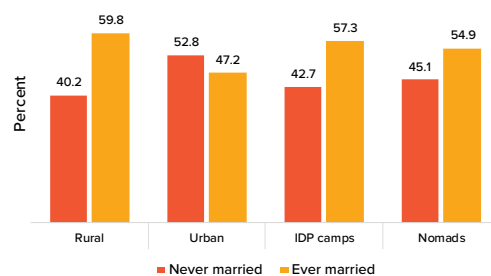
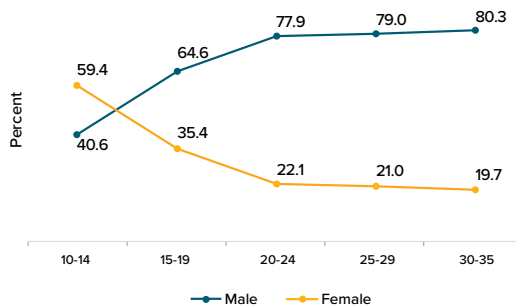


Figure 9 below shows both youth that have been married at any point, and the youth that have never been married between the ages of 20-35 according to the level of education attained. Almost 74 percent of youth who have been married (20-35) have not completed any level of education compared to 53.1 percent who have never been married, whereas 18.7 percent of the youth who have not been

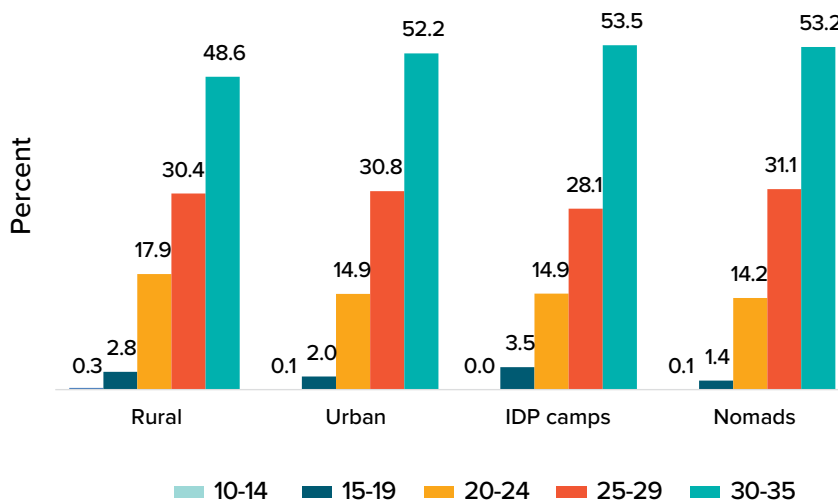
**Figure 11** Heads of households by age, in percent, 2014



**Figure 12** Distribution of adolescents and youth headed households by age and sex, in percent, 2014



**Figure 13** Heads of households by age and type of residence, in percent, 2014



married have completed secondary education, compared to only 9.3 who have been married.

Figure 10 shows that rural youth aged 15-35 have with close to 60 percent, the highest share of ever married, compared to only 47.2 percent in the urban areas. The disparity could be a result of many factors, such as the pursuit of education among the urban youth and lack of employment, which could in turn lead to the postponement of marriage.

### 4.2 Household headship

A household in the PESS was defined as persons who share a common living and cooking arrangement and are also accountable to one person- the head of the household; they do not necessarily need to have blood relations. A household head was defined as the person in charge of a household, sometimes he or she is the breadwinner.

Household headship rates increase with age. The survey shows that 57.8 percent of all Somali households are headed by persons 36 years and over. The adolescents (10-19 years) head one percent of the total households in Somalia whereas the youth aged 15-24 head 7.5 percent of the households, those aged 15-29 head 20.4 percent and those between 15-



35 head 42.2 percent of the total households in the country (Figure 11)

Male adolescents and youth head 68.5 percent of total adolescent and youth headed households. The male-female gap in household headship increases with age. It is only among the 10-14 year olds where the proportion of female headed households is higher than that of male headed households.

As shown in Figure 13, there is little variation in household headship patterns by type of residence.

Figure 14 shows that 70.9 percent of the young household heads (20-35 years) have not completed any level of education.

**Figure 14** Youth (20-35) headed households by level of education completed, in percent, 2014

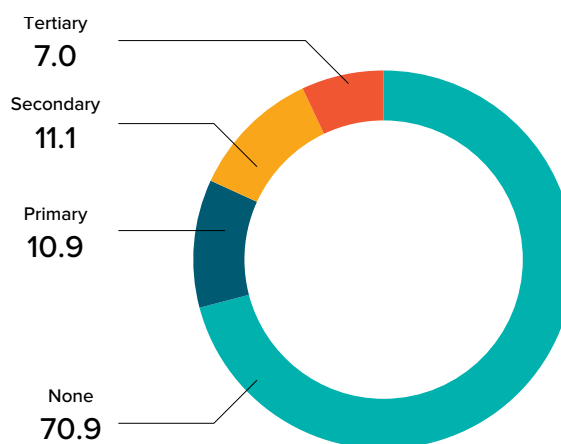
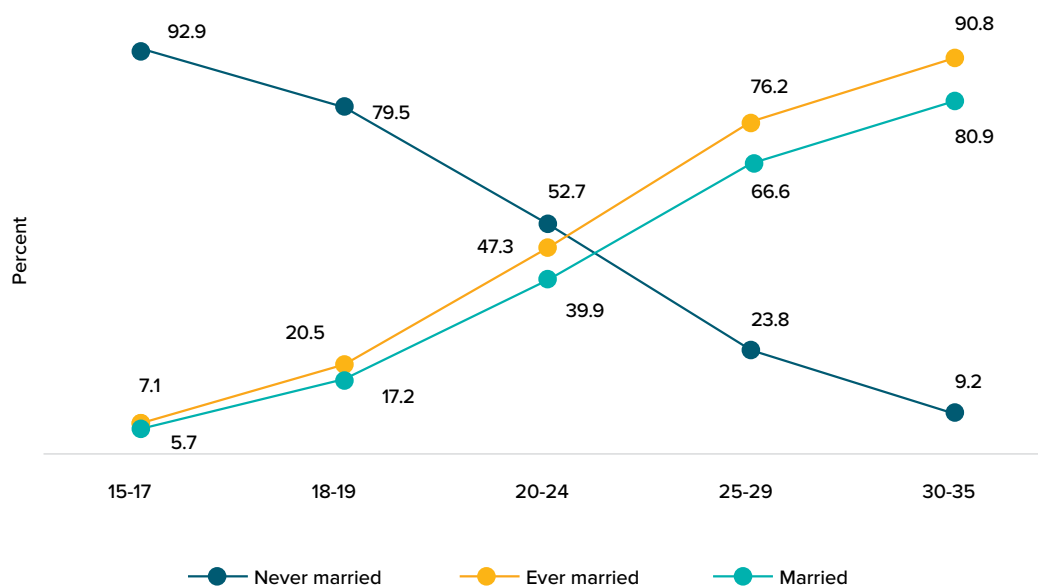


Figure 15 shows marital status of the adolescent

**Figure 15** Adolescent and youth household heads by marital status and age group, in percent, 2014



and youth (15-35) by age. As expected, marriage rates amongst adolescents and youth increase with age. 7.1 percent of adolescents and youth aged 15-17 have been married, and 90.8 percent of their counterparts in the age group 30-35 have likewise been married. The proportions of the adolescents and youth currently married increase with age (15-17 years- 5.7 percent, 18-19 years- 17.2 percent, 20-24 years- 39.9 percent, 25-29 years- 66.6 percent, 30-35 years- 80.9 percent).

### 4.3 Challenges and opportunities

Research in various parts of the world has shown a positive link between the educational attainment of the household head and the well-being of the household. The health of infants and young children, educational outcomes of children and household poverty are some of the indicators that are closely correlated with the household head's level of education. An educated person has better access to information and can make informed decisions. In addition, higher levels of education are associated with better paying jobs and a higher household income (UNDP, 2012).

The realization of the human rights for adolescents and youth requires supportive and protective laws and policies; conditions to enable them to complete secondary school at a minimum; training, assets and other support to earn a livelihood and sustain a family when

#### BOX 1

The human rights of adolescents and youth include, among others:

- Life, liberty and security
- Health
- Education
- Information
- Expression
- Association
- Freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment including sexual violence
- Consent to marriage

Source: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

they form one; and timely access to education, information and health services, especially for their sexual and reproductive health. (UNFPA, 2013)

Given that most young Somali household heads have not completed any level of education, the likelihood of such households being poor, having poor health outcomes especially for children under-five and low enrolment of their children in school is significant. There is a need to emphasize the importance of access to education for all, the creation of opportunities and incentives for adolescents and youth, and particularly girls, to finish primary school and move on to secondary school.

Although less than 20 percent of youth aged 15-19 reported that they were ever married, it

Although less than 20 percent of youth aged 15-19 reported that they were ever married, it is alarming that there were twice as many girls as boys among them.

is alarming that there were twice as many girls as boys among them. Early marriage leads to early pregnancy, which puts at risk the lives of both mother and child as mentioned earlier in the report. In addition to the higher maternal and child mortality, teenage mothers are at a greater risk of obstetric fistula. Children born to such mothers are more vulnerable to low weight at birth, with severe long-term effects on their health (UNFPA & PRB, 2012). Besides the health complications, teenage pregnancies can also have negative social and economic effects on girls, their families and communities. Once married, many girls drop out of school. A girl with little or no education has fewer skills and opportunities to find a job. This can also have an economic cost with households losing out on the income a young woman could possibly earn, if she had not had an early pregnancy (UNFPA & PRB, 2012).

The participants in the qualitative study singled out early marriage as a major barrier to economic participation of women. Early marriage denies young girls a chance at pursuing education especially at the higher level, which in turn affects their future chances of being employed which in turn affects their status in their community and their society, so this is a kind of vicious cycle

Reducing early marriage, particularly of girls under 18 years, will help reduce maternal and child mortality as well as improve maternal and child health. If both girls and boys are not forced to take up parental responsibilities at an early age, they will be able to finish primary school and continue to secondary level. This will improve their economic opportunities, the welfare of their families and in turn reduce poverty in their households and in the country overall.







# 05

## Education of Adolescents and Youth



## 5. Education of adolescents and youth

### 5.1 Background Information

Education is a human right for every adolescent and youth. It is an essential tool for empowering adolescents and youth and provides the foundation for further skill development that is necessary for economic growth. Both the United Nations 'World Program of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond' and the 'African Youth Charter' recognize the importance of youth education and emphasize that governments need to focus on access to education among the young people for youth development (African Union Commission, 2006; UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs, 2010).

The Somali pre-war governments prioritized education by initiating several interventions, including the 1973-1974 urban literacy campaign, and eventually the provision of free education up to university level for all citizens countrywide. However, the collapse of the state led to the collapse of the education system. Schools ceased to exist for all practical purposes, and many Somali children and young people lost the chance to access formal education. The education sector has undergone rapid development since 2012, after the liberation of several strategic cities from the control by armed groups. Private initiatives have led to the increase in the number of learning institutions at school, college and university levels. Despite these efforts, access to education remains a challenge. Quality of education is another major challenge, particularly for colleges and universities due to the lack of regulations.

Pre-primary education in Somalia includes kindergartens and other similar pre-primary children programs. This level normally involves

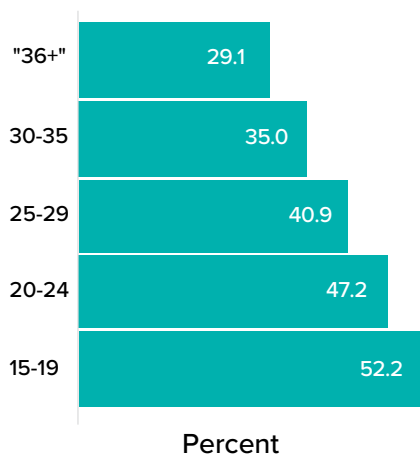
children of official school ages 3-5 enrolled in the pre-primary education. Primary education is from grades/classes one to eight and is divided into two: lower primary (1-4) and upper primary (5-8). Secondary education has four forms with entrance to secondary education being determined by the centrally administered standard examinations mostly at grade 8 and for some other curriculums at grade 9 (end of primary education). Students sit a national exam at the end of their secondary schooling to qualify for entry into a tertiary institution. A university degree in Somalia is usually obtained after completion of four years.

The PESS reports a literacy rate of 40 percent for the total population 15 and above. As presented in Figure 16, literacy decreases rapidly with age. It is 52.2 percent for adolescents (15-19 years), but only 35 percent for youth 30-35 years.

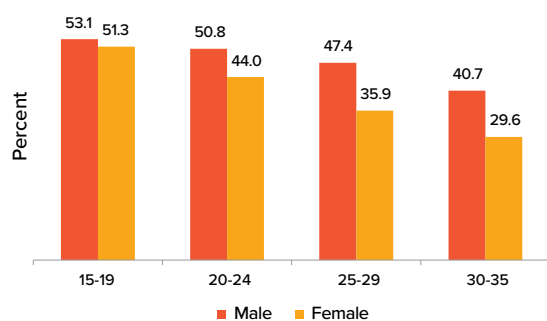
Among male adolescents (15-19 years) the literacy rate is 53.1 percent compared to 51.3 percent among their female counterparts. The literacy rate for males 15-24 years is 51.9 percent and 50.4 percent for those 15-29 years, compared to 47.7 percent and 43.8 percent among the 15-24 and 15-29 year old females respectively. In the male youth population (15-35 years), 48.0 percent are literate while in the female youth population (15-35 years) 40.2 percent are literate.

Literacy rates for adolescents (15-19) in urban areas stand at 80 percent and range between 59 and 74 percent for youth between 20 and 35. Among the young nomadic population however, literacy rates remain below 20 percent for all age groups (Figure 18).

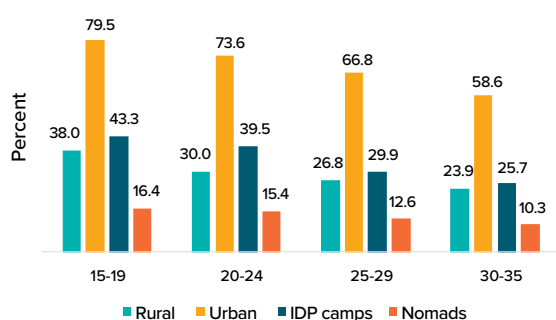
**Figure 16** Literacy rates by age groups, in percent, 2014



**Figure 17** Literacy rates by sex and age groups, in percent, 2014



**Figure 18** Literacy rates for adolescents and youth by type of residence



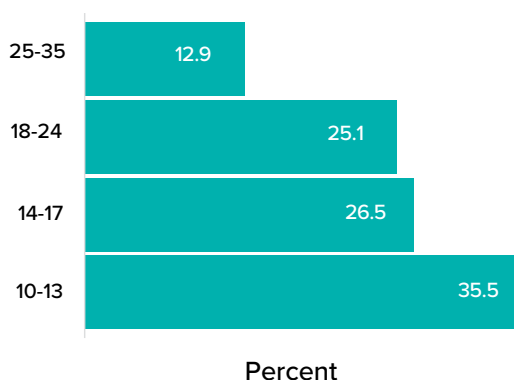
## 5.2 School enrolment and educational attainment

Adolescents between 10-17 years are within primary and secondary school age. However, only 62 percent of the total population enrolled is in the age group 10-17. Youth between 18 and 24 represent 25.1 percent and those above 24 years account for 12.9 percent of the currently enrolled (primary, secondary and tertiary levels together). Figure 20 shows the breakdown of the enrolment rates by level of educational institution.

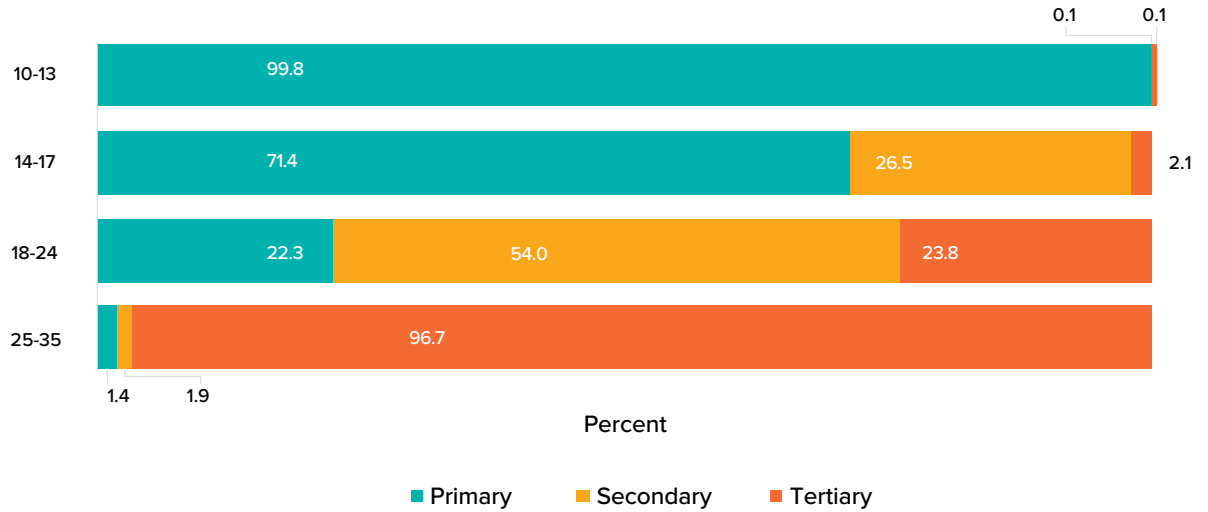
Enrolment rates vary strongly by type of residence of young people. Across all age groups, urban areas have the highest enrolment rates, while Nomadic areas have the lowest, preceded by the internally displaced youth.

There is a gender gap in the proportion of adolescent and youth who are currently enrolled in educational institutions. Among the enrolled adolescents 10-13, 45.9 percent are girls and 54.1 percent boys. The proportion of females enrolled in educational institutions increases with age, but parity is never reached. Of the population aged 10-14 who are enrolled, 97 percent are enrolled in primary school. But among the adolescents 15-19 years, almost 60 percent are still enrolled in primary school and only 40 percent in secondary school. Among

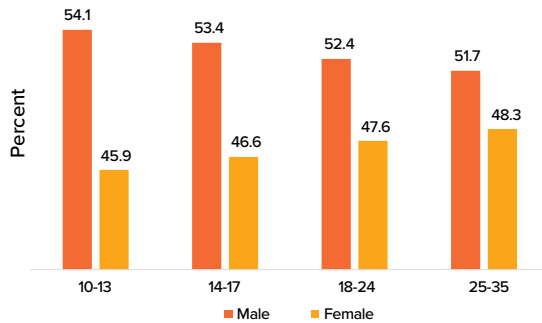
**Figure 19** Enrolment in educational institutions by age group, in percent, 2014



**Figure 20** Enrolment in educational institutions by level and by age group, in percent, 2014



**Figure 21** Enrolment of adolescents and youth in educational institutions by age and sex, in percent, 2014



the youth 20-24 years, the majority are still enrolled in secondary school while they should be pursuing post-secondary education (Figure 22).

In the discussion on the level of education attended completed, the analysis will focus on age group 20-35. Although the enrolment rates remain relatively low, the level of education completed is increasing in the younger generations. The youth (20-35 years) who have not completed any level of education make up 41.4 percent of the total population 20 and above with no level of education completed. Completed primary and secondary levels show the highest proportions of attainment with 46.7

and 45.9 percent respectively among youth of ages 20-24 (Figure 23).

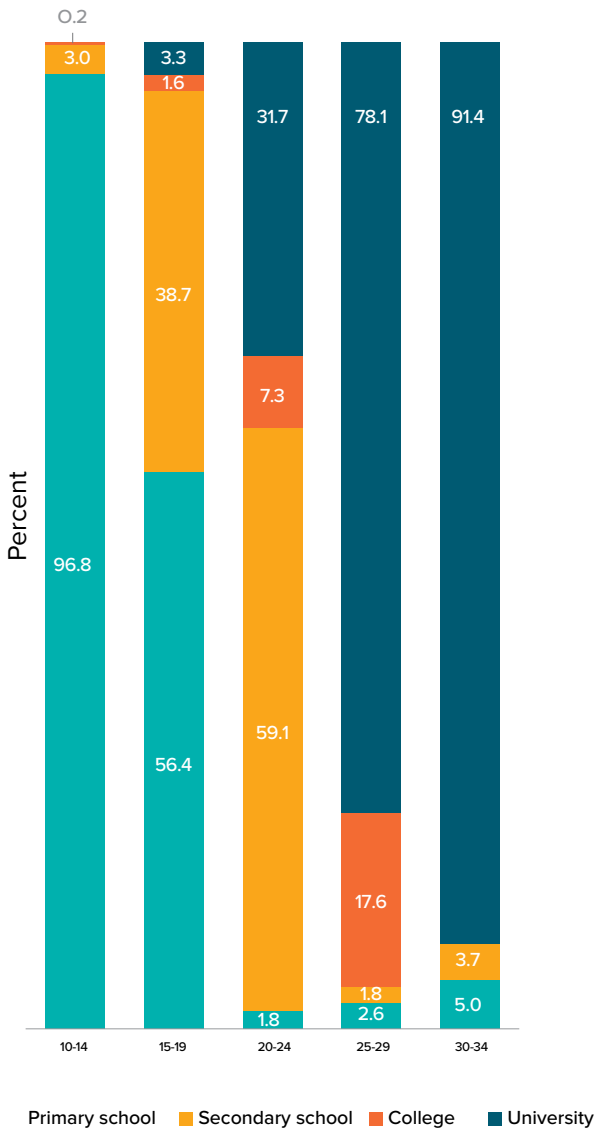
Youth from nomadic communities are the least likely to complete any level of education. The survey showed that only 4.1 percent of the nomadic youth had completed primary level of education, while 95 percent had not completed any level of education. The mobile nature of nomadic families makes it difficult to plan for the education of their children and to access adequate and necessary institutions. However, levels of educational attainment are also very low among rural populations and IDPs (Figure 24).

### 5.3 Gender disparities in education

Although education indicators are not good across all cohorts of adolescents and youth, women are more disadvantaged. Educational outcomes of males are much better than those of their female counterparts. In terms of literacy, there is gender parity only among the 15-19 year age group. Across all other age-groups, males are more literate. The female youth (15-35 years) is 15 percent less likely to be literate as compared to their male peers.



**Figure 22** Enrolled adolescents and youth by level and age, in percent, 2014



The gap between young males and females in terms of level of education attained increases with the level of education completed. Among those with no level of education completed and those with completed primary, the female proportions are higher while they are much lower for completed secondary and tertiary (Figure 26).

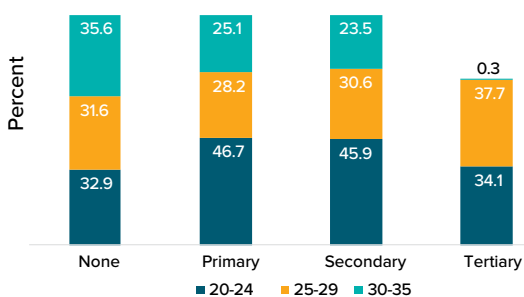
The findings of the qualitative study indicate that traditional/cultural gender roles and responsibilities are barriers to women’s access to social and economic opportunities, including education. Women’s roles and responsibilities remain strongly tied to the household and the raising of children.

Engendering education programs by eliminating barriers of access for girls and challenging traditional gender roles are essential to develop the full potential of girls and young women..

### 5.4 Challenges and opportunities

Education was identified as one of the key drivers of social, economic and political inclusion of the youth in the qualitative study. It was observed that currently, young people, especially those who have not left the country, are not able to get good employment opportunities due to the lack of or low levels of education.

**Figure 23** Educational attainment by age group and level, in percent, 2014



Barriers to schooling include socio-cultural barriers such as early marriages, a lack of adequate and accessible facilities, insufficient quality of courses and training of teachers, affordability of schooling, poverty of families and conflict. Geographical coverage is also deficient, with the urban areas being much more endowed. The formal school system, with its rigid timetable and set calendar, does not meet local needs and circumstances, especially for the large nomadic population. Innovative strategies informed by a proper understanding

Figure 24 Educational attainment of youth (20-35 years) by type of residence

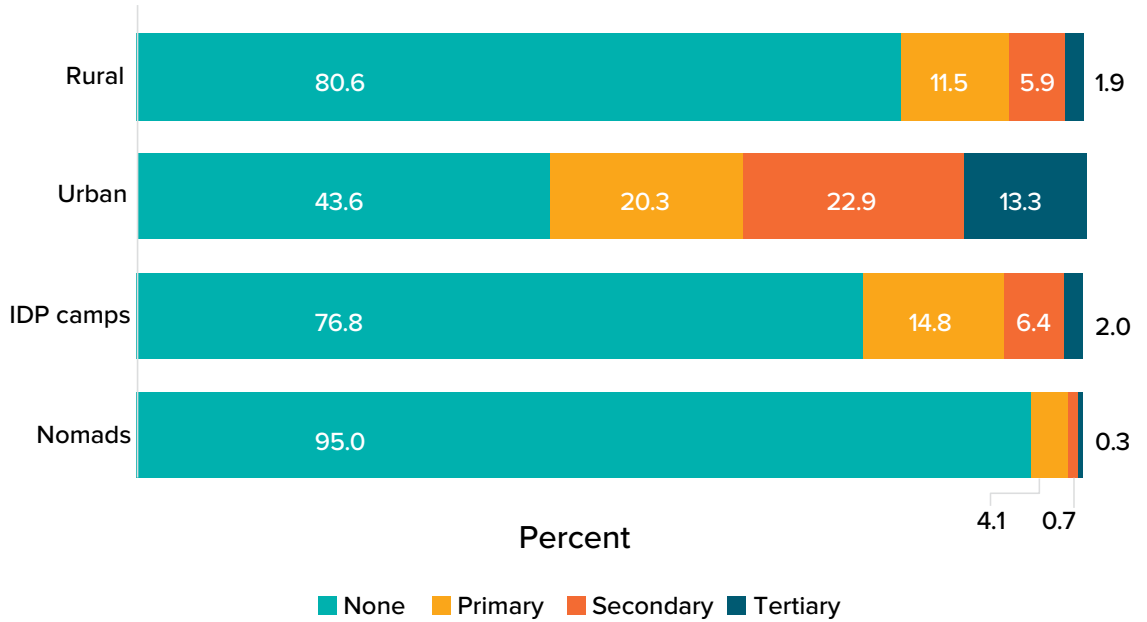


Figure 25 Literacy and gender parity by age groups, 2014

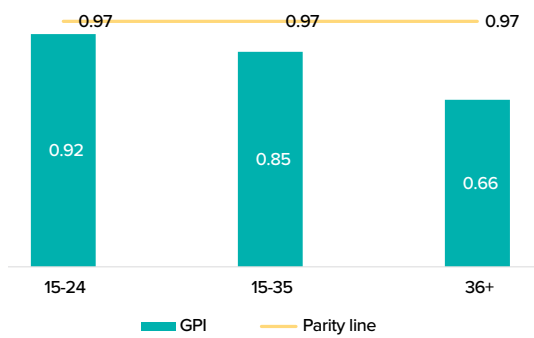
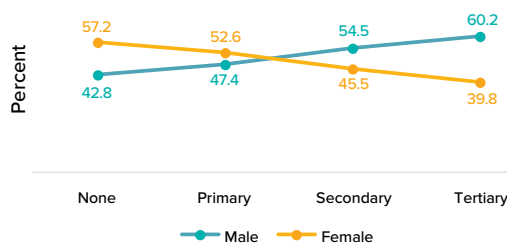


Figure 26 Educational attainment of youth (20-34 years) by level and sex, in percent, 2014



of mobility trends and patterns of the nomadic population are necessary. Consumption of khat was also identified as one to the reasons why young people are dropping out of school.

Repetition of school years and late entry into the education system remain a special challenge for Somalis. About 50 percent of the secondary school age youth who are currently enrolled, are enrolled in primary school. A similar proportion of those who should be in post-secondary institutions are enrolled in secondary school.

Judging from the current population trends, the slowly increasing literacy and educational attainment levels and the return of peace and normality in many parts of the country, much more children and youth will have increased access to education in the future.. The pressure on the existing education and training facilities will increase. A major concern is not only to expand educational opportunities and to include marginalized groups such as women



The gap between young males and females in terms of level of education attained increases with the level of education completed.

and girls, people with disabilities, nomads and IDPs, but also to ensure quality and relevance of education for the labor market and the transition to adulthood in a rapidly changing society.

Local and international NGOs, international organizations and the private sector are already investing in education, training and infrastructure. But their potential is not fully used. What is needed most of all is proper coordination and quality assurance.





# 06

## Adolescents, Youth and the Economy



## 6. Adolescents, youth and the economy

### 6.1 Country economic background

#### 6.1.1 Macroeconomic context

Estimates from the IMF and the World Bank put Somalia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at \$6.2 billion in 2016 (an increase of 5% compared to 2015). In the absence of regulations and functioning state institutions, a vibrant private sector has developed; boosted by approximately \$1.4 billion in annual remittances from the roughly one million Somalis living outside the country. But despite economic recovery, Somalia remains one of the poorest countries in the world. In 2014, GDP per capita was estimated at \$450 which made Somalia the fifth poorest country globally, followed only by Niger, Central African Republic, Burundi and Malawi (World Bank, 2016).

Public expenditure is increasing but remains extremely low with an estimated average of 3.4% of GDP between 2013 and 2015. In addition, government spending is still to a large degree dependent on multilateral and bilateral donor inflows. 85% of the Federal Government's spending went to the administrative and security sectors. Education and health combined received 1.8% or \$3.6 million per year, with only \$0.8 going to health (World Bank, Somalia Security and Justice Public Expenditure Review, January 2017). With a narrow tax base, the absence of legal and regulatory frameworks and a lack of full territorial control, domestic revenue does not allow the government to raise enough funds to deliver basic services to the citizens (World Bank, 2016).

Livestock and livestock products, going mostly to the Middle East, remain the key export goods and the main source of income for many Somalis. Sixty percent of the population generates 40% of GDP from livestock related production (FAO, 2012). Remittances are an additional lifeline to large segments of the population and play a pivotal role in buffering the impacts of abundant poverty. The World Bank estimates that over 50% of the Somali population is living below the poverty line, (but only one third of the people who receive remittances) (World Bank, 2016).

Inequality between regions, types of residence and livelihoods is high. Poverty rates are strikingly high in nomadic areas and in IDP settlements, followed by rural areas and urban settlements. They are also consistently higher in south central Somalia compared to Puntland and Somaliland, which reflects the impact of conflict on poverty and deprivation (UNDP, 2012).

The bulk of support for vulnerable and/or destitute people comes from multilateral and bilateral donors and NGOs. But this support is also limited in geographical and numerical coverage. Much of the population depends on informal community based systems for providing for the most vulnerable in times of need (reciprocal support between neighbors, circulation of animals and other assets etc.). However, these safety nets tend to be along kinship and clan lines, thus excluding those new to an area, minorities and the marginalized. When recurrent drought and famine, persistent war and conflict push more households to vulnerability and deprivation, the existing safety nets are stressed to the utmost and often not sustainable.

### 6.1.2 Employment generation and employability

The macroeconomic context and the absence of government economic, education and labor market policies put severe constraints on employment creation and employability of young people. Inadequate education to match labor market needs is a major obstacle to the employability of young people, particularly in urban areas and the emerging tertiary sector. The employment problem is further escalated by diminished demand for labor due to economic stagnation, lack of innovation and investment among others. With high unemployment, young people are forced to work for low wages and accept jobs that do not match their skills. Youth in the nomadic areas are particularly affected by drought, environmental degradation and the changes imposed on their traditional lifestyle (UNDP, 2012).

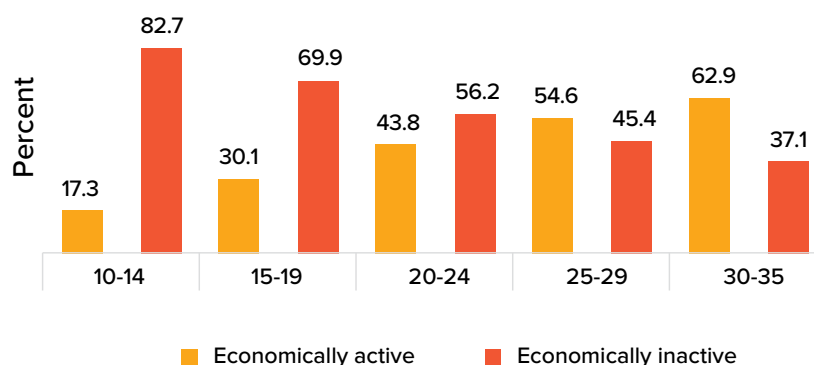
In the absence of public policies, government control over territory and weakened social institutions, competition for scarce resources has been a persistent factor in igniting and sustaining clashes among clans and militia groups. Resources that have provoked conflict comprise key cities, ports and airstrips, important checkpoints and foreign aid. Warlords were sometimes able to seize control of key resources by mobilizing alienated, unemployed youth. “Clannism” affects employability of youth in many ways, with the most affected being the

internally displaced youth who belong to other clans and have moved (or were forced to move) to another area (UNDP, 2012).

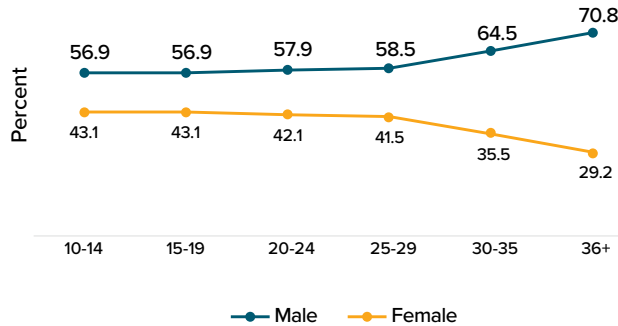
The 2012 Human Development Report for Somalia underlined that long-term solutions to youth unemployment will depend on the end of conflict, broad-based economic growth and viable employment opportunities in both the formal and informal sectors, supported by effective macroeconomic and labor market policies (UNDP, 2012).

Today, Somali youth have no voice in economic and labor market decision making bodies. The findings of the qualitative study indicate that youth receive some support from international and local NGOs. In certain places, youth have come together and formed youth groups which provide economic empowerment in the form of entrepreneurship training and loans. Sometimes, scholarships are offered to young people to pursue education both locally and abroad by the government and NGOs. The young people however felt that only a small proportion of adolescents and youth are benefiting from efforts to build resilience against shocks and prepare them adequately for the future, given the magnitude of the needs vis-à-vis the existing challenges and problems.

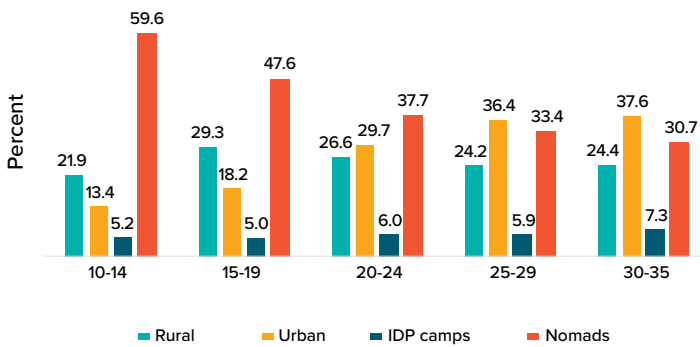
**Figure 27** Economic activity status of adolescents and youth by age group, in percent, 2014



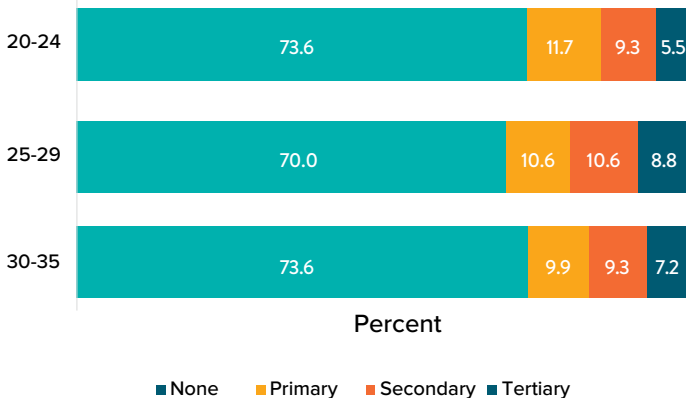
**Figure 28** Economically active adolescents and youth by age and sex, in percent, 2014



**Figure 29** Economically active adolescents and youth by age group and type of residence, in percent, 2014



**Figure 30** Level of education of economically active adolescents and youth by age group, in percent, 2014



## 6.2 Labor force participation, employment and unemployment

### 6.2.1 Active and inactive population

The active population (or labor force) consists of all adolescents and youth who either were employed or unemployed but actively seeking employment during the last 12 months. The inactive population is the sum of all young persons who are neither employed nor unemployed and not actively seeking work. This category includes students and housewives. The findings show that the Somali adolescents and youth make up 60 percent of the Somali labor force. Even among the 10-14 year olds, 17.3 percent are economically active. This age cohort are children who are not expected to be working, but should instead be enrolled in primary school. On the other hand, almost 50 percent of the working age youth 20-35 years are economically inactive.

An estimated 23.7 percent of the adolescents (10-19 years) are active, 43.8 percent are active among the 20-24 year olds and 54.6 percent among the age group 25-29 (Figure 27).

The gender gap widens as age increases (Figure 28). The active female population among the adolescent and youth (15-35 years) represents approximately 35.5 percent compared to 29.2 percent among the age group 36-64.

Figure 29 presents estimates of the economically active adolescent and youth disaggregated by type of residence. Nomads have by far the highest proportion of economically active adolescents and youth, with most adolescents aged 10-19 working in the livestock economy. The lowest activity rates are in IDP camps, followed by adolescents and youth in urban areas.



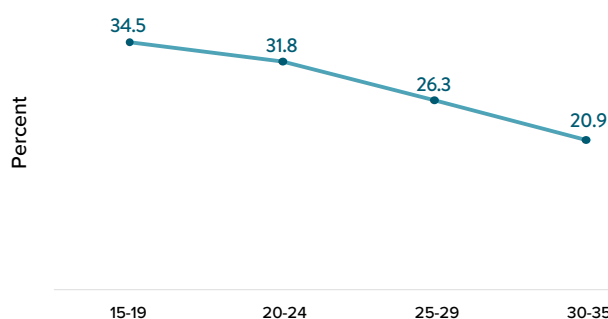
**Table 3:** Employment-to-population ratios of adolescents and youth by background characteristics

Background characteristics	Ratio
Sex	15-35 years
Male	42.3
Female	25.4
Location	15-35 years
Rural	36.6
Urban	19.3
IDP camps	24.5
Nomads	58.3
Education level attained	20-35 years
None	31.1
Primary	14.4
Secondary	20.0
Tertiary	34.4
Total	33.5

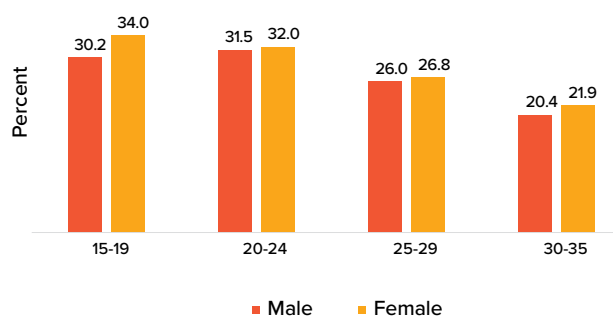
Figure 30 shows that most adolescents and youth who are economically active have not completed any level of education. Two combined factors contribute to this result: most of the jobs available to adolescents and youth are unskilled work in the livestock and agricultural economy or basic urban service jobs, while at the same time their economic activity leads to low school enrollment rates and school drop-outs. Low levels of education mean on the other hand that the labor force is insufficiently equipped for the modern service and industrial sectors and has a low capacity to compete successfully and sustainably in world markets and make efficient use of rapid technological advances.

The youth to population ratio is 33.5. The ratio

**Figure 31** Unemployment rates of adolescents and youth by age group, 2014



**Figure 32** Unemployment rates of adolescents and youth by age group and sex, 2014

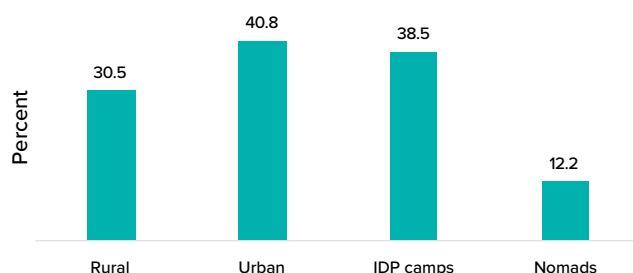


of the employed to the total youth population in Table 2 shows that there are more male youth in employment compared to females between the ages 15 and 35. By type of residence, the nomadic youths are more likely to be employed than youth from other types of residence. It is also of interest to note that the uneducated youths are more likely to be employed followed by those with tertiary level of education.

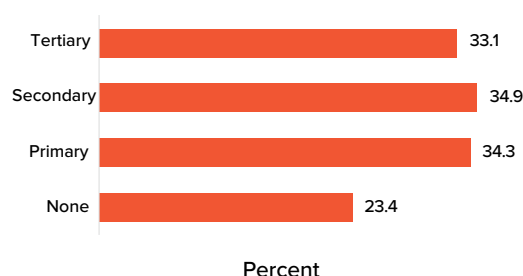
## 6.2.2 Unemployment

Young people tend to be disproportionately affected by challenges in the labor market compared to adults. The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that although 73 million new jobs were created in sub-Saharan

**Figure 33** Unemployment rates of adolescents and youth by type of residence, 2014



**Figure 34** Unemployment rates of adolescents and youth by level of education completed



Africa between 2000 and 2008, only one-fifth of those jobs went to young people (UNFPA & PRB, 2012). In addition, young people often have more difficulty securing a job than adults because of their limited experience and professional networks. Thus, many young people find themselves unemployed or underemployed in informal jobs with low pay.

The unemployment rate indicates the number of unemployed persons per 100 persons in the total labor force. Figure 31 shows that the Somali unemployment rate of adolescents and youth in the age group 15-19 is 34.5 percent and 31.8 percent among the 20-24 year olds. It declines with increasing age but is still over 20 percent in the age-group 30-35. Unemployment among youth of 15-24 years is 33 percent, 30.4 percent among the population aged 15-29 and 27.6 percent for the population 15–35 years.

Unemployment rates decrease with age (Figure 32). Among the adolescents 15-19 years, 30.2

**Table 4:** Occupation of employed adolescents and youth (15-35) by professional groups and by sex, in percent, 2014

Occupation (15-35)	Male	Female	Total
Managers	2.6	1.0	2.0
Professionals, associate professionals and technicians in health, education and other sectors	7.7	5.7	6.9
Clerical support workers	0.4	0.3	0.3
Service and Sales workers	12.6	12.6	12.6
Agricultural, livestock, forestry and fishery workers (primary sector)	61.2	69.3	64.3
Craft and related trades workers	5.5	3.3	4.7
Stationary and mobile plant and machine operators, and assemblers	7.0	1.0	4.7
Elementary occupations (Unskilled)	3.1	6.9	4.6
Total (percent)	100	100	100

percent of the economically active males are unemployed compared to 34 percent among their female counterparts. In the population between 15-35 years, an estimated 28 percent of the males are unemployed compared to 29 percent among females of the same age group.

There are big differences in unemployment between types of residence (Figure 33). The highest unemployment rates are found in urban areas and IDP camps.

Youth unemployment by level of education attained can indicate labor supply and demand-side mismatches. Surprisingly, unemployment is much higher among youths with tertiary level education than among all other groups. This could be both a result of a lack of jobs to match their qualifications and/or a lack of labor market relevance of tertiary level courses.

The difficulty of finding suitable employment for youth in developing countries is compounded by a host of other problems confronting young people, including illiteracy and insufficient training, and is worsened by periods of world economic slow-down and by overall changing economic trends. The ratio of youth-to-adult unemployment rates is important as it provides an indication of the lack of employment among youth compared with older jobseekers, which gives an idea of whether the economy is characterized more by demand deficiencies for first-time jobseekers (i.e. an inability to absorb labor market entrants) or to turnover and retrenchment of persons with jobs.

### 6.2.3 Occupation

**Findings of employed** persons by occupation confirm that most adolescents and youth are employed in the primary sector. This is particularly true for young women with almost 70 percent employment in the primary sector. Women are also more frequently than men employed in elementary and unskilled

occupations. Young men are more often than women employed in managerial positions, in technical professions, in craft and related trades and industrial jobs. Parity between the sexes exists however in clerical, services and sales work.

## 6.3 Challenges and opportunities

Entry into the labor market by children or adolescents can have devastating effects. The child is deprived of his/her education, of mental and physical development, and health complications may arise from the work environment and/or working conditions. Injuries are more common among young workers compared to adults. Children are more likely to be overworked and underpaid. In addition, due to lack of or low levels of education, they are destined to earn low wages in their entire working lives, thus subjecting them and their families to poverty.

The findings of the qualitative study indicate that lack of economic development, poor security, rising youth unemployment, particularly for university graduates, preference for graduates from the diaspora over local graduates (their competence in English language and foreign passports make them attractive to international organizations and top government jobs) and the feeling of hopelessness create barriers to youth's economic participation. In a shattered economy, many youth have no option but to remain idle or search for alternatives such as migration or illegal activities, some extend their education, delay marriage and raising families.

Young women face difficulties in securing livelihoods due to the lack of jobs, poorly developed skills, and limited access to credit and capital assets. Although the disparities in unemployment rates between males and females are relatively small, there are much fewer women participating in the labor force, more than two thirds of the employed women

are working in the primary sector and men dominate the managerial and technical positions. Not only does the lack of employment opportunities disadvantage women, culture and tradition play a key role in pushing them out of the labor market or limit them to specific activities. One of the youth participants during the qualitative study stated that:

**Female youth face even greater challenges, including stereotypes. There is a preference of men in the society and female youth are look-down on.**

More women come out of the house, seeking economic support for their families, because the husband may neglect duties and responsibilities and she becomes more exposed to gender based violence. On the other hand, when the mother is educated and she starts working in a higher position, the core of the community quickly demands the women to stay in her home; don't they see that men have irresponsibly neglected house duties?

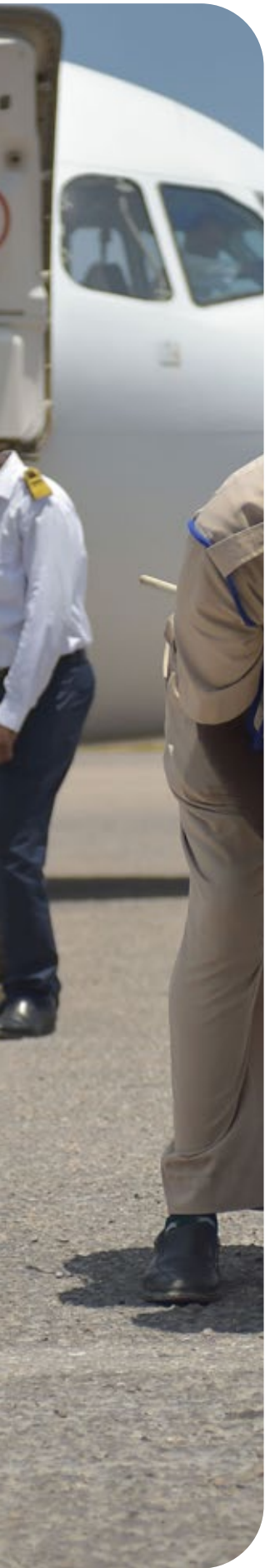
To reverse this situation, suggestions given during the qualitative study include: provision of technical and vocational training, creation of youth forums, engaging youth in politics and decision making, interactive programs such as sports, recreation centers, rewarding innovative ideas among youth, promoting youth entrepreneurship through business trainings and micro finance and encouraging youth, and especially women, to pursue higher levels of education. Below are some comments of young participants that address also the attitude of young people themselves:

**Everyone wants to get money easily, wants to wear suit and have a nice job - but it is not possible for everyone. Our grandparents used to migrate in a more traditional way, so this is a more modern way of migrating. Secondly, the level of national illiteracy is high, not only among young people but also older ones. When a person is illiterate, he/she can easily be affected by many things.**

Both literature and qualitative findings emphasize that the youth are a resource and there is a need to invest in them. The creation of opportunities available to adolescents and youth, the mobilization of assets and capabilities which they have accumulated, and the opening-up of spaces in which they are encouraged to function are effective ways to invest in youth. Investing in the adolescents and youth would not only lead to reduction in poverty levels but would also reduce inequality and lead to economic growth and development.







07

**Adolescents  
and Youth  
Mobility**

## 7. Adolescents and youth mobility

### 7.1 Introduction

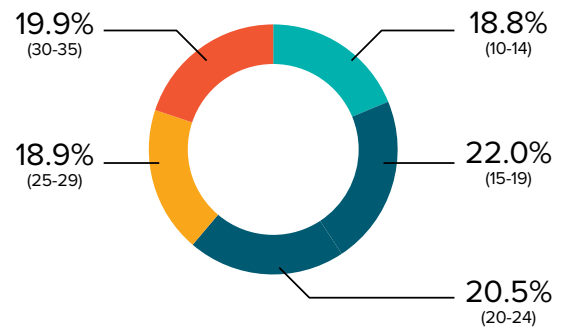
The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that over a million Somalis have migrated outside the country forcibly or otherwise and another 1.1 million were displaced internally since 1991 (IOM 2014). Traditionally, Somalis are known to have moved from one place to another (both within and outside the borders) in search of pasture and water. New trends have emerged with changing conditions, migration from rural and nomadic to urban areas in search of better livelihood opportunities, including jobs, internal displacement resulting from clan-based expulsions (particularly of minorities) and international migration both forced by the war and voluntary migration. Climatic changes have also fueled new waves of internal and international migration in search of water and greener pastures. After the establishment of peace in many parts of Somalia and the formation of the Federal Government, Somali migrants and displaced persons are returning.

### 7.2 Return migration

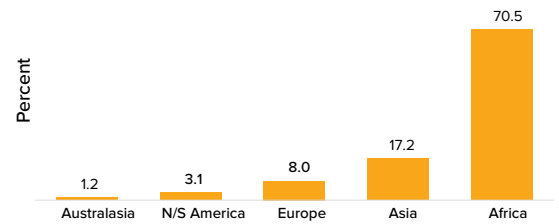
PESS data show that an estimated 59,849 Somalis returned to the country in the twelve months before the survey in 2013/14. Almost 54.9 percent of the returnees were Somali adolescents and youth and approximately 25 percent were over 35 years. The adolescents (10-19 years) form 22.3 percent, 15-24 year olds form 23.3 percent, 15-29 year olds form 33.7 percent while those of age 15-35 form 33.7 percent of the returning migrants.

Out of the Somali adolescents and youth who came to live in the country within the 12 months preceding the survey, 18.8 percent were aged

**Figure 35** Somali adolescents and youth returnees by age-group, between December 2012 and PESS 2014, in percent



**Figure 36** Distribution of Somali adolescent and youth return migrants 2012-2014 by region of origin, in percent



10-14, 22 percent aged 15-19, 20.5 percent aged 20-24 percent, 18.9 percent aged 25-29 and 19.9 percent aged 30-35 percent (Figure 35).

About 53 percent of the adolescents and youth who moved into the country were males and 47 percent females. Most of the young return migrants were coming from African countries, followed by Asia and Europe (Figure 36).



Why are young people in the diaspora choosing to return to their country? Peace and calm has been restored in many parts after decades of civil war, and after a long time, a functional government is in place. The qualitative study established the following additional aspects:

- Young people choose to return to their country because of employment opportunities (especially in international organizations, the private sector and top government jobs) for professionals and those who are well educated. They have an edge over the local Somalis due to their eloquence in English, skills and education levels plus they often hold foreign passports and citizenship which facilitates travel to any part of the world.
- Patriotism and love for the motherland make them want to take part in the reconstruction; playing a role in the country's development and taking advantage of emerging investment opportunities.
- Somalis from the diaspora have a high status as foreign passport holders, fluency in the English language and have access to good employment opportunities. People with a foreign passport are well respected among the government and international organizations. For instance they can travel easily to trainings abroad, and do not require a visa. Furthermore, the education abroad is more advanced.
- Despite the enthusiasm to come back home, things are not always as glossy and smooth as the returnees had imagined. They experience challenges reintegrating into the community and the society. Some of them are not able to speak the local language, while others find it difficult to identify with the local cultural practices. Others have difficulty adjusting to the security situation and lawlessness, having grown up in countries with peace and stable governments. Local youth discriminate against those who come in

from the diaspora with a comparative advantage in the job market, because they feel economically threatened by their return.

- They face multiple problems, starting with adapting to the country structure, since they come from countries with law and order. Sometimes they are humiliated and socially excluded, being referred to as 'DHAQANCELIS'. They are at times forced to learn bad habits such as clannism when it comes to resource distribution.

### 7.3 Out-migration

PESS findings indicate that an estimated 38,670 Somalis moved out of the country within the 12 months preceding the survey. Out of those who left the country within the above mentioned period, 29.7 percent are 10-35 years of age, of which 51.4 percent are males. The survey did not ask for the age of the persons who went to live abroad.

Young Somalis migrate for various reasons to other countries. Given the challenges of obtaining passports and visa, young people have often opted to use non-legal channels to fulfil their desire to migrate and reach other countries, particularly in Europe. "Tahriib" is mostly a youth phenomenon, with the age of the migrants and aspiring migrants falling between 18 and 21 years. Human smugglers (magafe) operating in the background usually facilitate the journey, with a loan advanced to the migrant. This type of arrangement appeals to the young generation and makes it relatively easy for them to take the decision to travel without informing the parents. However, all is not always smooth. Reports indicate that most young people on Tahriib are held for ransom at some point during their journey, often more than once. Demands are then placed on their families back home to pay for their release. The risks involved in Tahriib include the loss of life, as poorly equipped vehicles

and vessels are used to cross the Sahara and the Mediterranean. Some youth are tortured and killed by their kidnappers if the family fails to raise the ransom and female migrants risk being raped during the journey. Families left behind suffer anguish and despair not knowing the whereabouts and wellbeing of their relatives. (Ali, 2016).

A study commissioned by IOM shows that youth themselves perceive Tahriib to be very dangerous. They considered Saudi Arabia and Turkey as the least perilous destinations. The road to Europe through Libya was labelled as the most hazardous. In the eyes of the interviewed, the biggest risk of the journey, was kidnapping and the demand for hefty ransoms from their families. If they failed to pay, a family member would be killed (Samuel, 2016).

Forced returns are common; migrants find themselves deported from Saudi Arabia, expelled - and sometimes fined - from Kenya and Turkey, and they face unexpected conditions such as the war in Yemen or xenophobic attacks in South Africa.

Youth face a lot of challenges during travelling, starting with fear and uncertainty of being caught, for example in Ethiopia, and getting arrested in prison for crimes they did not commit. They also suffer morally due to harsh circumstances and when they encounter magafe they face torture and pressure to demand ransom from the parents which they can't avoid. It happened for example to a destitute mother whose son handed himself to magafe, however they did not have any money. She just owned a restaurant and a small house with one room which she had to sell in order to release him from magafe.

Young people are well informed about the dangers associated with Tahriib and the huge financial burden and anguish that kidnapping causes to a family. They however still venture

onto this long and dangerous journey. Why are young people taking this risk? The findings of our qualitative study indicate the following reasons:

- Employment opportunities and higher income: High levels of unemployment and low salaries in Somalia for both the educated and the uneducated push young people to search for a better life abroad and bet on Tahriib. In addition, the preference given to returnees in terms of employment makes many want to travel out of the country.
- Peace and security: Conflict and insecurity are also contributing factors that drive youth out of the country. They seek a better life in a secure and peaceful environment.
- The lure of a better life: Youth perceive life to be much easier, comfortable and better in the Western countries. The good social amenities also attract youth.
- Peer pressure: Those who have made it to Europe use digital avenues and social media to persuade their friends back home to leave also.

The first factor causing youth to migrate is instability and a lack of governance in their home country. Lately, youth have become a tool to use and manipulate to take part in the war and religious and militant groups. So many of them leave to avoid getting involved in violence and because of a lack of hope and unemployment. The youth are 75% of the population, but the majority are unemployed. There is no government putting in place policies for undergraduates and creating employment opportunities. The beautiful landscape, infrastructure and modern buildings of Europe are highly influential.

## 7.4 Internal movements of youth headed households

PESS includes information on households

who migrated internally before the survey. Households were asked-how many years they had lived in their current residence to indicate household mobility. Any household that indicated to have moved to the current location, irrespective of how long they had lived in their current residence, was considered an internal migrant. Those who indicated that they had always lived in their current residence were considered non-mobile households. Approximately 47 percent of the youth headed households had lived in their current residence between 1-4 years. Youth (15-35 years) headed households residing in urban areas were the most stable with 75 percent. The biggest outflow was from IDP camps with the majority

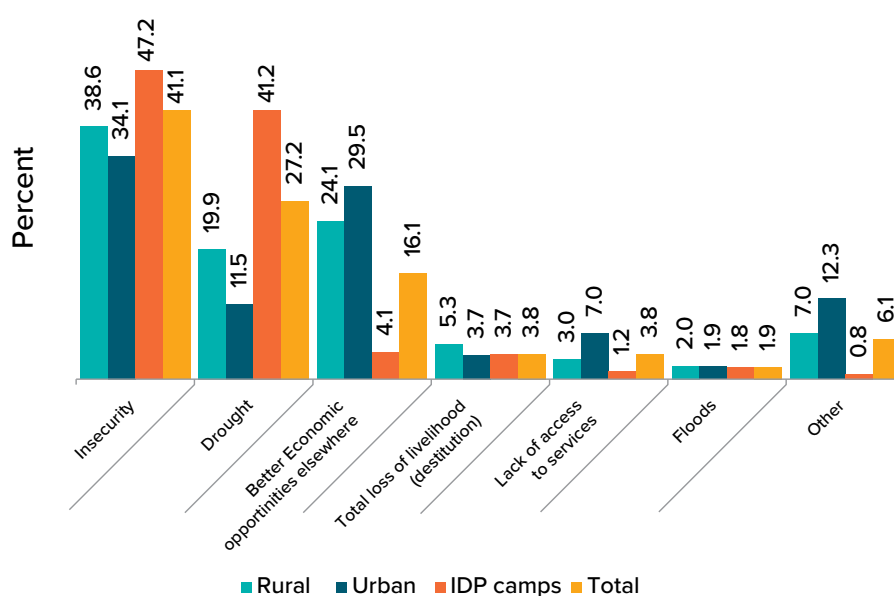
of households moving into the urban areas (57 percent), followed by rural households moving also to urban areas (50 percent). The smallest movements were observed from urban areas to nomadic areas and IDP camps (Table 5).

The major reason given for having left the previous type of residence was insecurity (41 percent). Drought came up as the second most frequent reason for moving (27 percent). Insecurity and drought were most often cited by those living in the IDP camps. Households in the urban and rural areas stated they mostly moved in search of better economic opportunities (Figure 37).

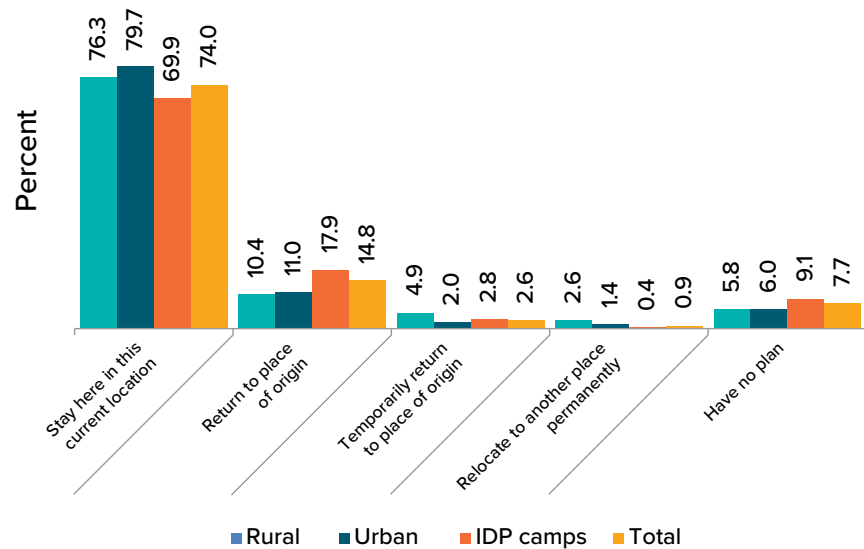
**Table 5:** Youth headed internal migrant households by type of residence four years before and at the time of the PESS 2014, in percent

Previous type of residence	Type of residence during survey			
	Rural	Urban	IDP	Nomadic
Rural	25.6	50.2	13.0	11.2
Urban	15.8	74.9	5.1	4.2
IDP camps	27.5	57.0	7.2	8.3
Total	22.4	64.2	6.7	6.7

**Figure 37** Reasons for relocation of youth headed households by type of residence, in percent, 2014



**Figure 38** Plans for future movements of youth headed households by current type of residence, in percent, 2014



Three quarters of the youth headed households stated that they didn't plan to move from their current location soon (including 70 percent of the youth in IDP camps), but 15 percent said that they wanted to return to their former place of residence and 8 percent reported no plans at all on their next residence.

### 7.5 Optimism for the future: Challenges and opportunities

The conditions that drive various forms of migration vary. Migration can be a brain drain or a brain gain, a burden or an opportunity, depending on the conditions and investments which a country is putting in place.

The integration of Somali youth returning from abroad into the economic, social and political system is critical in harnessing their potential for the country's development. For adolescents and youth who are still in refugee or IDP settlements, youth friendly policies can ensure the continuity of care and well-being until new opportunities emerge.

Peace and stability, investing in social development, education and employment creation will help counter the factors that are still driving young people to Tahriib.

In the light of the challenges which Somalia faces, managing broader assistance to migrants and mobile populations as well as mitigating risks of exploitation, exclusion and dependency are essential. This should go hand in hand with the identification and prediction of new mobility trends and related needs.







# 08

## Population Growth and the Demographic Dividend

## 8. Population growth and the demographic dividend

### 8.1 Theory of the demographic dividend

The demographic dividend is the accelerated economic growth that can result from shifts in a population's age structure, mainly when the working-age population (15 to 64) is growing more rapidly than the non-working-age population (0-14 and 65+) (David, et al., 2010). Changes in the population structure affect the age dependency ratios. By relating the groups of the population most likely to be economically dependent (net consumers) to the group most likely to be economically active (net producers), changes in the dependency ratios provide an indication of the potential economic support requirements resulting from changes in the age structure. In addition, the ratios highlight the potential dependency burden on the employed and indicate the shifts in dependency from a situation in which children are the dominant group to one in which the number of older persons increases as the demographic transition advances from high mortality and high fertility, to low mortality and low fertility.

As fertility levels decline, the child dependency ratio falls because the proportion of children decreases while the proportion of the population of working age increases. This period of declining child and total dependency ratios is known as the "window of opportunity" when a "demographic dividend" may be reaped because society has a growing number of potential net producers relative to the number of net consumers. However, as fertility levels continue to decline, the proportion of working age population starts eventually also to decline, while the proportion of older persons continues to increase. As populations grow

older, the old-age dependency ratios also rise and indicate added pressure to social security and public health systems due to the changing age structures (Bongaarts, 2009).

### 8.2 Population structure and dependency ratios

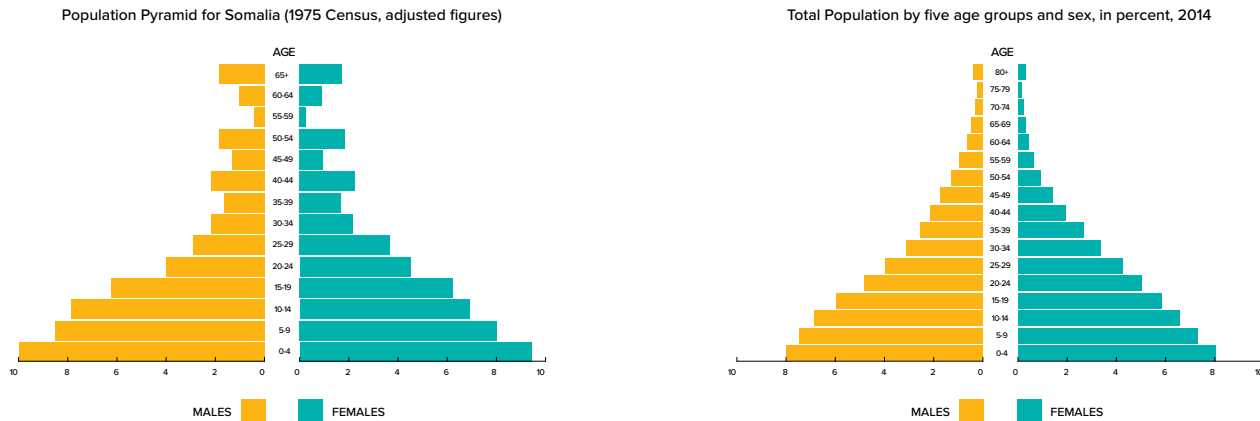
The population structure of Somalia is still characterized by high fertility and growing cohorts of children, adolescents and young people. The population structure by age has the shape of a broad-based population pyramid as seen in Figure 39. Although there is a slowly declining trend in total fertility rates, the levels remain very high (7.3 in the 1975 Census, 6.6 in the 1986 Census, 6.7 in MICS 2006 and an estimated 6.4 for urban and rural areas in 2019 (SHDS MMR Survey, 2018-2019)

Somalia's demographic profile shows that 45.6 percent of the population are children below the age of 15 (UNFPA, 2015). The corresponding child dependency ratio was 87.4 (ratio of population 0-14 per 100 population of working age), compared to an old-age dependency ratio of only 3.5 (ratio of population 65+ per 100 population of working age). This implies that there are in total over 90 dependents per 100 Somalis of age 15-64.

If the economic inactivity and unemployment rates of the population of working-age are considered, the number of dependents who need to be supported by one Somali worker almost quadruples. The so called "economic dependency ratio" was estimated in 2014 at 346 per 100, which translates to 100 persons of the working population having the burden of providing support to 346 not working persons. The economic dependency ratio for



**Figure 39** Somali population by age-groups and sex, in percent, 1975 and 2014 (smoothed data)



females (514) was almost double that of males (253), meaning there are many more female economic dependents in the entire population.

### 8.3 The challenges of rapid population growth

The UN Population Prospects estimate an annual natural population increase of 3 percent for Somalia until 2030 (2015 Medium Variant) (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015). The Somali population is expected to double in the coming 20-25 years from 12.3 million in 2014 to almost 25 million. The Somali population of working age is expected to increase even more rapidly than the total population. Most of them will be adolescents and youth. This means enormous pressure to provide for education, employment, income and health to meet the needs of the ever-growing young population.

Compared with the pressing challenges of coping with rapid population growth, the opportunities of reaping a demographic dividend seem limited. A demographic dividend can only be reaped in a reasonable time frame if the decline in fertility rates is accelerated and

sustained. But the reasons behind high fertility are complex, they include high infant and child mortality, early marriages among girls, lack of educational and economic opportunities for women, low contraceptive prevalence and limited contraceptive knowledge, restricted access, and reluctance to use modern contraceptive methods.

The Medium Variant of the 2015 Populations Prospects assumes a decline in the total fertility rate from 6.1 to 5.2 in 2029 and it assumes also that net out-migration of Somalis will continue, although with lower numbers than in the past (200'000 to 150'000 annually). But even under these conditions, the dependency ratios will drop only by a few percentage points and the big question mark remains how the growing numbers of working-age population can become productive members of society (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015).

The lack of investment in educational institutions and the labor markets to absorb youth, will result in their social and economic marginalization. The findings of the qualitative study show, that youth are not only unable

to secure employment, but they also lack support to venture into business and promote innovation. Many young people continue to depend economically on their parents.

Under-employed and disillusioned young people pose a great threat to the peace and stability of a society. They are more likely to breed unrest compared to those that are productively occupied. In Somalia, the UN Youth Employment Network, in collaboration with the World Bank and the International Labor Organization (ILO), has recommended four critical areas for national action: employability, equal opportunities, entrepreneurship and employment creation (UNDP, 2012). The package includes investments in youth capabilities, providing youth with alternatives of decent and productive jobs, and institutional space for youth to express their desires for social, economic and political change. The absence of such a package could escalate frustrations and spin into crime, conflict and a never-ending cycle of poverty.

#### 8.4 Opportunities for young people

Participants in the qualitative study saw in the youth bulge an opportunity, if the potential of youth is harnessed and the youth are given a chance to participate in decisions that affect them and their society. To effectively manage the youth bulge for the benefit of the Somali future the participants suggested the following:

**The best way to utilize the youth abundance is to acknowledge and appreciate their role in society and to make plans for their development such as educating them and preparing them for jobs with the purpose of giving the right direction to their future life. If the quality of the staff of the ministry of youth and sports is improved, we can ensure better policies related to youth; but at the moment we hire the officials of the ministries based on the clan system and that is not**

**good for the whole country. They must be selected based on the merit system, their qualifications and experience.**

**Secondly, we must start an effective sports system. Some youth will get busy watching and enjoying the national league, this is more important for many youth. On the other hand, the government must design a kind of education system and courses that the youth will get in schools and universities.**

**We must develop youth friendly policies, which can lobby for the youth's interest.**

**Secondly, the ministry of education must improve the schooling system and develop technical schools. Thirdly, we must help the youth with creativity and initiative to make use of their minds, thus they can create small businesses.**

**It would be nice if we could stop this kind of schooling system where we study only theories, we should create and go more to technical schools.**

Improving the coordination among youth by developing organizations that lobby for the interests of the youth and develop policies which reduce the obstacles that youth face when they try to participate in the political movements.

Investments in youth sexual and reproductive health (SRH), including birth spacing, is key to achieving the demographic transition. In addition to birth spacing, delaying the age at first birth could also slow the population growth rate substantially.

The demographic youth bulge - if approached positively and creatively - presents a window of opportunity for national growth and stability. The country needs to design and adopt the right macroeconomic, social and labor market policies and institutions to support youth in learning, going to work, avoiding health risks, and exercising good citizenship.







# 09

## Youth as Partners for Change

## 9. Youth as partners for change

### 9.1 Well-being and personal resilience

Prolonged conflict has long term physical and mental impacts on the health of individuals, as well as economic and social impacts on families and intergenerational relations. Despite this, young people can be extremely resilient and resourceful, out of their own initiative or due to pressure for survival.

Adolescents and youth are more affected by social, economic and political exclusion than older age cohorts as they lack the means to mobilize and influence social and economic protection based on clan and private networks. Somali youth face multiple structural obstacles built into the family, private and public organizations, local government and society at large. Age, education, gender roles, family structure, clan identity, community organization etc. represent barriers that exist at different levels, denying youth the opportunity to reach their full potential. Institutional frameworks such as oppressive laws and a lack of protective, human rights based legislation and insufficient individual and collective resources lead to powerlessness. Most young people don't have the knowledge and information that would enable them to participate fully in their communities. The existing clan system alienates young people from decision making. Other forms of discrimination, for instance of women, may operate alongside the exclusion based on age, making it a struggle for young people to simply survive, much less assert their identity. Whereas the stressors might not be the same for everybody, all youth face similar challenges relating to the different dimensions of exclusion, including poor education, a lack of access to livelihoods and no outlet for political participation.

Despite these challenges, Somali youth show a great sense of optimism when it comes to the future of their country. They want social and political inclusion, they want to have decent employment, quality education, be involved in decision making, and participate in the reconstruction of their nation. They have great potential to become drivers of change for peace and stability.

It is not all gloom; the first steps have been made. In December 2017, the second Somali National Youth Conference was held in Mogadishu where hundreds of youth representatives from around Somalia gathered for talks on the future development of young Somalis. During the conference, the National Youth Policy (2017-2021) was also launched. The overall goal of the policy is to promote youth participation in all spheres of development to ensure they attain their full potential as well as provide a framework that will guide youth activities and involvement in national development.

The youth have formed groups to advocate for their rights, and their inclusion in both social and political decision making processes. They remain optimistic that in a few years young people will be allowed to hold political positions.

Youth are claiming a stake in the reconstruction of the country. They are realizing that they are growing in numbers and that they will greatly influence the country's economy both as producers and consumers. Youth are innovative and circumventing the unemployment problem by starting their own small businesses through which they also create employment for other young people. Somali youth participants in the qualitative

study expressed the following opinions:

**Young people are the work force of any country. I believe the growing youth population will have a positive impact by taking part in peace building efforts and engaging as well in commerce and the overall development of the country.**

Some of the reasons why youth from the diaspora come to settle in Somalia is their pride and optimism for their country. They want to contribute towards economic development and peace building by introducing innovations and ideas that are working in the diaspora, especially young people from the USA, Canada and Europe. They use the education they acquired abroad to start businesses, thus creating employment and boosting the economy of their country.

## 9.2 Make youth partners for change

Overcoming the period of war, the ideology of terror and recovering the lost generations of Somalia depends on effective and well-coordinated national and international efforts, focusing on the urgent needs of the young generation in terms of security, livelihoods, education and employment.

Times of turmoil are not new but each time, the international community must find new tools to deal with new challenges that have emerged.

Our world today is more global and interconnected. It is characterized by a great number of connections and relationships between people, economies and governments of different nations. In this world, the line between 'national' and 'international' has been blurred. Almost any issue being debated at the domestic level has a regional or international dimension. Countries today find that they

cannot deliver stable prosperous societies at home without international cooperation. This is why we need international solutions more than ever. We need to create the space for constructive, open dialogue between UN Member States so that the right international solutions can be identified. The SDGs have at their core the principle of sustainability – sustainability in social, economic and environmental terms.

Fighting poverty and discrimination, advocating for equitable development and access to social services and economic opportunities are the fundamental basis upon which peaceful and prosperous societies are built and youth will be the forefront of this. Peace is possible when all of us, live up to our responsibilities to construct and promote a peace in our respective communities. And it is only with peaceful societies that we will realize our full potential as individuals or as nations.

The most critical actions to be taken to harness the potential of young people today as well as of future generations include:

**Improvements in the quantity and quality of education.** Efforts need to be geared towards increasing school enrolment—especially for girls. It is key to have policies and programs in place that advocate for and ensure that every child of school going age is also going to school. Quality of education is a driving force for improved quality of life, knowledge and skills development and future economic growth. Post primary institutions play a critical role in building the capacity of the young people for the labor market. Young people need to be equipped with relevant skills that are competitive.

**Capacity building for the labor market** will make economic sense if it is matched with investments in employment creation, both by the public and the private sectors to match the

supply. Barriers to youth employment such as 'clannism' need to be eliminated in the labor market chain. Support of youth innovation and entrepreneurship is critical for the creation of jobs for the young population.

**Legal and institutional frameworks** fighting discrimination based on age and gender and promoting social inclusion will contribute greatly towards empowering adolescents and youth and making them a part of the development process. Harmful cultural practices such as FGM/C increase the risk of alienation of the young females. Educational and community-based programs are needed to challenge traditional attitudes and practices that put males and females at risk of poor development outcomes.

**Improving knowledge of and access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH).** All young people should have access to programs that aim to ensure they are informed about their SRH, have knowledge of HIV/AIDs, birth spacing methods and gender based violence (including FGM/C) as well as how to address such cases

and access youth and gender friendly facilities. Knowledge is critical to enable youth make informed decisions and be in control of their lives. Equipped with knowledge about SRH, youth and especially females - tend to be more confident, assertive and able to negotiate for their rights.

**Age and sex-disaggregated** data are key in understanding the status of adolescents and youth, identifying adolescent and youth issues and addressing them in development policies and programs. Missed opportunities to adequately prepare, educate and invest in the young generation will be extremely costly, if not impossible to reverse for the young people themselves as well as for the entire country.

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United Nations Population Fund Somalia, Block P, Level 2,  
UN Complex, UN Avenue, Gigiri.  
P.O. Box 28832 – 00200, Nairobi, Kenya.  
Tel: (+254) (0) 207 625 742

[www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org)

