

YVP JUDGE – Aliza Abdullahi submitted a video in Somali. YVP Founder asked if she could translate her submission into English for others to understand her concern, challenge and solution. This below is her translated submission (unedited). If you're Somali, please watch her video submission on Instagram (@youthvoiceproject). Please note, Aliza is a student learning English.

As you already aware, for the past thirty years, we did not have a strong government that can support the issues of our communities. In 1991 When the Civil War broke out in Somalia, we lost many basic needs as a society including, food, shelter and education. ***In my video I talked about how education stopped us from developing as a nation and society.***

My main focus was girl's education. Even though education is such an important key of development, I believe that a nation can grow and prosper when there is equal education for its citizens. In Somalia There is no equal opportunity for boys and girls when it comes to education. Even some parents still think that girls education is such a waste of time, that they prefer to marry their daughters off instead of sending them to schools.

Whatever their reasons are, I think poverty is the main cause of why many girls are out of school today. In fact, many Somali parents live in extreme poverty (their daily income can be less than 1 dollar). Can you imagine the kind of life that families live? It is such a hurtful situation to even think about! Do you think those parents will dream or dare to send their children to school? I promise you, there are parents who dream to do so, and when life gives them the opportunity to send their children to school, they prefer to send boys instead of girls because they believe that at the end of they day "girls will become wives and will start cooking, whilst boys will start working for the family. It is such a backward thought, but that mentality does not only exist in poor families, but It exists in many Somali households.

For my topic, I suggest that building free schools and advocacy groups can help. Because, when you build free schools for the community, parents will be able to send their children without hesitating or discriminating their children's gender. In addition, if we are to build schools for children and girls, I suggest they make their locations close in proximity to their communities as parents will not send their daughters if they are not able to see them or call out to them. In the Somali community, girls are to be protected more than boys because they are softer and anything can happen to them such as rape.

In Conclusion, I believe "an educated girl means an educated society, and an educated society means a well developed society." In order to save our country and our community we need to advocate for girl's education! Our parents need to know what educated girls mean to their society even to their families.