

2020 YOUTH VOICES PROJECT (YVP) SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

Name: Abdikarem Khalif Maruf

Age: 19 year

Location: Mogadishu

Concern: Poorly built and not maintained roads in Mogadishu

Problem: After the civil war, roads throughout Somalia were neglected. In Mogadishu, most roads were not maintained until Turkey started to reconstruct roads in 2013, but still there are many roads that need to be reconstructed. Jazeera, Ex-Afgooye and Ex-Balcad are the three main roads that enter Mogadishu. In my experience, it is always very uncomfortable traveling on the roads because they are uneven, with many potholes. On my trip to Jazeera beach, the roads were very rough and I saw many cars were stuck in the middle of Jazeera road.

There is a lot of wreckage on roads in Mogadishu due to unorganized roads and lack of space on the roads. Life-ending accidents are common and caused by big vehicles like trucks that come from the port that sometimes collapse in the middle of the road. One day, on my way to the university, I saw a huge truck carrying wood that collapsed on Warshada Canaha road and ended a civilian's life.

The lack of drainage on roads is a big problem. When it rains, vehicles cannot cross the road because they become mini-rivers due to the sitting water, and also very muddy and Bajaj's get stuck in the road. Sometimes it is so bad that I have to walk to the university, or even can't go because there is no way to get through the roads because of the water. Also, trash is a huge problem because you see a lot of plastic trash and garbage in the middle of the road.

Solution: It is the government responsibility to repair and maintain the roads. One way the government can help is to require people to pay taxes and use that money to rebuild communities, pay government workers, and towards improving and building roads.

The government should make rules and regulations that guide vehicles and trucks on weight requirements for driving on the roads, what roads to use, and build highways that are safe and allow a smooth and efficient flow of traffic.

The government should build drainage systems that will serve as conduit for rain water, unwanted water, and waste liquids so they don't turn roads into

2020 YOUTH VOICES PROJECT (YVP) SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

mini-rivers. They can also hire young people to work on these projects in paving more roads and improving the current ones to look clean and beautiful.

Youth engagement: The bad roads affect the ability of the youth to go work, school or even play with the neighborhood. We don't have a voice or freedom of speech to share our concerns, but once they give us a voice to speak, we will not speak for ourselves, but also become a voice for those who can't speak.

As a youth we can't reach government officials to tell our problems, we need to have a platform to speak to our representatives or parliaments.

One of the best way to make a difference is to give us a chance to make decisions. This will not only teach us, but build us to become future leaders of this country. I shared photos of unpaved, muddy roads near my neighborhood where both big trucks and little Bajaj's drive.

