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SOMALIA

SUCCESS STORY

Radio Program Changes Family's Life

Amid fighting, children turn to radio to continue with classroom lessons



Photo: USAID/Somalia

In war-torn Somalia, 8-year-old Najmo continues her education through daily, radio-based distance-learning programs.

“These programs don’t only influence the children in class, but also their families and the whole community in general,” said the father of 8-year-old Najmo, who listens to the Somalia Interactive Radio Instruction Program every morning.

Telling Our Story
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Eight-year-old Najmo lives with her parents in the Mogadishu's Hodan District. Najmo, who attends first grade at Al Imra School, is among the fortunate few Somali students who have access to school. In Somalia, only 20% of all children are enrolled in school, and public funding for primary education is among the lowest in the world.

When fighting erupted in Mogadishu, Najmo was forced to stay home. Schools were shut down and children were not allowed to go out, but fortunately Najmo's family has a radio at home, and she could continue with school through the USAID-sponsored Somalia Interactive Radio Instruction Program, which provides an alternative to regular classroom lessons.

Through distance-learning classes on the radio, up to 400,000 Somali school children are receiving daily lessons in reading, math and life skills. The lessons are developed for grades one through six, but also give access to those that have missed out on educational opportunities (particularly women and girls), those who have left their homes due to fighting, and illiterate street children.

Najmo, who knew the broadcasting hours at her school, started asking her parents to tune in to the radio lessons for her every morning, so she was able to listen to her lessons at home. Najmo said, “I like the radio lessons too much because I learnt many lessons without going to school. I am happy now, but I truly hate the fighting.”

According to Najmo's mother, “My daughter is busy all morning with the radio programs. She has great enthusiasm for these radio programs and made us also love the program. I really wondered how fast she memorized the lesson stories and songs.” Her father also said, “She asks me questions about her lessons and she required us to listen to the radio programs with her every day and answer her questions. We all thank those who prepared these effective radio programs for our kids. In fact, these programs don't only influence the children in class, but also their families and the whole community in general.”