

DECEMBER  
2021

# PILLARS OF HOPE

BACK-TO-SCHOOL  
REPORT

## Somali Hope Foundation



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# A NEW ERA FOR THE SOMALI HOPE FOUNDATION

Dear Friends,

It is an exciting time for the Somali Hope Foundation: we have been making tremendous progress towards our mission of providing free, high quality and equitable education to girls and boys in rural Somalia. We have created the Pillars of Hope Newsletter to share our news with you, at the beginning and end of each school year.

For this "Back-to-School" edition, we have gathered news from Bursalah, Somalia, about the students and the school. We hope you enjoy it and are as inspired and hopeful as we all are!

We also have exciting news to share from Canada. This Summer, we welcomed a new Executive Director. The Board is pleased to announce that our Co-Founder, Amoune Omer, will be taking on this role. Mahamud Elmi has taken a next step in his career in a new position with the Ontario Government. As a Co-Founder, he will continue to work closely with the Foundation. We also welcome a new Board Member, Istar Ahmed, who has a long track record of work in Africa. We look forward to working with her. I want to thank Ali Abdi Nassar for his many years of service and the contributions he made to help us achieve our mission.

As you can see, there have been some changes at the Foundation, but we always remain committed to our mission and excited about our future.

Sincerely,

Mike Sanford  
President

“ It is very exciting to take on this leadership role at a time when so much progress is being made.

- Amoune Omer  
Executive Director

Greetings, Somali Hope Foundation family!

It is an honour for me to take on the role of Executive Director. As a Co-Founder of the Somali Hope Foundation, I have served in many different roles within the organization over the years. It is very exciting to take on this leadership role at a time when so much progress is being made.

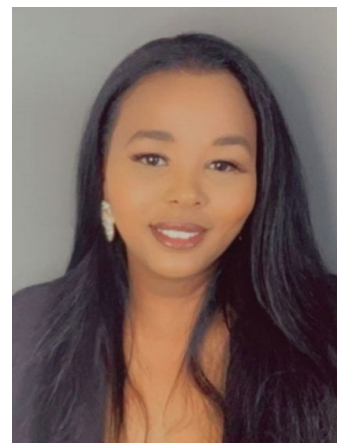
I would like to thank Mahamud Elmi for all his hard work and dedication. Through his leadership, the Somali Hope Foundation has grown from a fledgling organization in 2008 to the vibrant one that it is today. Credibility, visibility, innovation, strategic thinking, and steadfast pursuit of excellence are the hallmarks of his contribution. I look forward to building on these achievements.

Additionally, I would like to thank the Somali Hope Foundation Board of Directors and the Community Education Committee for allowing me to take on this important role. As the new Executive Director, I hope to further the organization's mission and goals by establishing and maintaining a trusting relationship with devoted supporters and partners of the Somali Hope Foundation.

Let me conclude by thanking you for believing in this worthy cause and for giving many children the chance to receive a free education of the highest quality. I thank you all for making a huge difference in the lives of each of our students with your contribution and your support. It is my hope that we can continue to count on you, and I look forward to meeting you in person at our next gala.

Sincerely,

Amoune Omer  
Executive Director

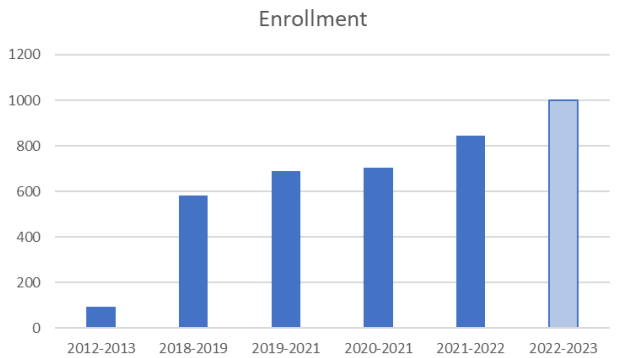


# A SUCCESSFUL BACK-TO-SCHOOL

## Enrolment has Soared

Enrollment at the school has grown to 845 students for the 2021-2022 school year. This is 140 students more than last year, and represents a tremendous increase from the 93 students we welcomed in 2012, our first year of operations.

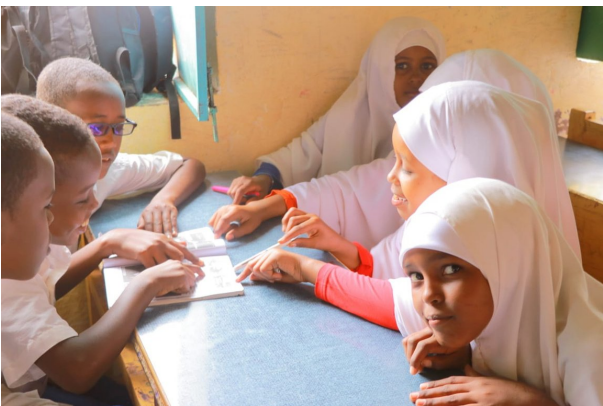
Enrollment has been growing by an annual average of close to 27% each year since the school opened. At this rate, we anticipate that 1,000 students will be enrolled at Hope Academy for the 2022-2023 school year.



## Reaching All Children

The school serves young people facing very challenging circumstances:

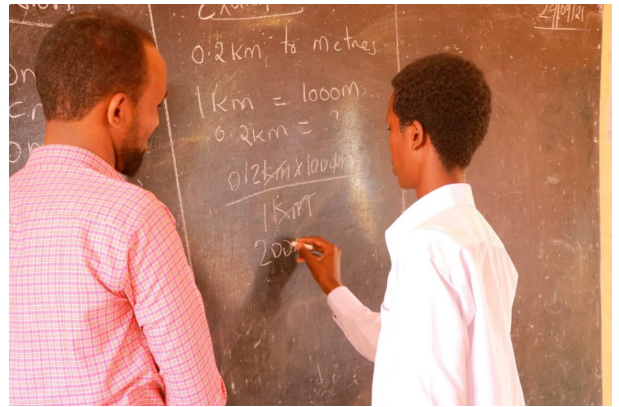
- 41% of the students are from internally displaced families.
- 39% of the students are from poor families.
- 18% of the students are orphaned, and live without a mother, father, or both.
- 2 % of the students have a disability.



We are anticipating 1,000 students will be enrolled at Hope Academy for the 2022-2023 school year.

## Academic Performance is Tops

The students of the Somali Hope Academy continue to be strong academic performers. Last year's Grade 8 and Grade 12 classes both had a 100% pass rate in the national exams. We congratulate the students, their teachers, their families, and their community for this great achievement and demonstration of their efforts!



## Girls Make Up Half of Our Students

Once again, we are proud to say that this year, girls represent half of the students enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program. Last year, there were 78 students in total in the program and 42 were girls. This year, there are 178 students in total in that class and 90 of them are girls; that's over a 100% increase in the number of girls enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program!

This year, 7 young women graduated from Grade 12. When this year's ECE class graduates in the next decade, there could be as many as 90 young women at the Grad Ceremony. This is concrete proof of the progress that we are making towards providing equitable education.



# WHAT'S NEW AT THE SCHOOL

## A New School Bus for Hope Academy

When school started in Bursalah this August, students of the Hope Academy were greeted by one of the most familiar sights around the world... the arrival of a school bus near their home!

The school bus service was launched this Fall and is a game-changer for the Hope Academy. It helps to eliminate distance as a barrier to education, enables more children to attend school, facilitates regular attendance, and improves student safety.

The barrier of distance cannot be underestimated in the rural areas of Somalia, where pastoral and nomadic existences prevail. The bus is a hit with students, teachers, and parents.

Getting to school is now much easier for many children, who often walked an hour to get to school and another hour to return home. Teachers are able to manage classes with more predictable attendance. Parents are pleased that their children have more time to devote to their studies and are still able to help with chores that assist the family. It's a win-win for all!

A successful fundraising campaign in the Spring generated the \$10,000 USD funds needed to purchase the bus. The Community Education Committee in Bursalah and the Somali Hope Foundation Board in Canada each raised half. Many thanks are owed to the donors who supported the campaign.



If the bus proves to be successful in helping increase school enrollment and regular attendance, the campaign for School Bus No.2 could well be underway in the coming months.

## Science Lab

Each year we want to enrich and expand the Somali Hope Academy curriculum and facilities, and create more learning opportunities for our students. The Community Education Committee has identified a science lab as a top priority.

Our goal is to have the new lab up and running in 2022. With the help of a volunteer in Dubai, the science equipment has been ordered and shipping is being arranged. The classroom, which will hold 34 students, is currently being built.

We are actively fundraising for the final pieces (desks, benches, and cabinets) which are needed to complete the science lab.

By exposing them to science as they grow up, Somalia's young women have a chance to play an important role in helping their economy and society move forward.



# WHAT'S NEW AT THE SCHOOL

## University and Career Preparation Course

The school is also launching a new program this year aimed at helping students prepare for university and a future career. Starting in Grade 11 and continuing into Grade 12, students will explore personal career interests, research career options, and begin the preparatory work required for successful university and scholarship applications.

The need for the Course is a direct outcome of the lessons learned from the most recent class of Grade 12 graduates (May 2021). Those students learned that the university application process is a long one, with many different stages and a wide range of requirements. To succeed, students, teachers, and parents need to begin preparations many months in advance. Access to online resources and expert guidance are also critical success factors.

The program is an addition to the regular academic curriculum, with students attending classes one evening per week. Access to technology will be key to the program's success. University application processes are completely online, as is language testing and follow-up interviews.



To make all of this possible:

- A new building that holds about 30 students is currently being built to support the University and Career Preparation Course.
- Projection equipment and desktop computers will be arriving on-site in the coming months.
- Teachers are starting to put the curriculum together.

There is hope in the air, as we all work towards creating as many opportunities as possible for the students of Hope Academy. The Somali Hope Foundation Board is actively fundraising for the final desks and benches which are needed to complete the facilities.

These resources are being sourced by the Somali Hope Foundation Board, along with grant funding, with the goal of creating a classroom / lab space for the students to learn and work in. The Grade 12 class has close to 50 students this year. It is an exciting time for them as many are keen to continue their learning at the university level.



# OUR ALUMNI WILL CHANGE THE WORLD!

## 100% of the Inaugural Class Are Off to University!

We are thrilled to share that all 14 of our Grade 12 grads are on their way to university! We recognize and congratulate them for their hard work and dedication. They are an inspiration to us all, and especially to the students who will follow them. We are so proud of each of them.

We also congratulate the Community Education Committee, the parents and families of the graduates, and the whole Bursalah community. Your commitment to educating and supporting youth has made this possible. To the parents and families, you are alumni too; you are the first families of the first graduates from Hope Academy!

Students are registered in universities across Somalia, in Somaliland, and in Uganda. The ambitious graduates are pursuing their studies in the following areas: Business Administration, Computer Science, Information Technology, Laboratory Technology, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Public Health.

## Laptops As Tools for Success

We announced at the Gala that each of our Grade 12 graduates would receive a laptop as a gift from the Foundation. It is a way to recognize their achievement and at the same time support the path of our recent graduates with a business tool. Thanks to our hardworking volunteer Amina in Dubai, laptops will soon be on their way to our graduates.

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It is my honour to be the first to virtually present the graduates with a gift, which is an important tool for them to succeed in the future. I know from first hand business experience, even though we had great talent, we still needed good equipment and technology to maximize their abilities and skill.

-Eli Tannis  
Entrepreneur and Philanthropist



# WATER IS LIFE

## The Well Project

Earlier this year the Community Education Committee launched an ambitious project to build a well. This well will serve as the primary water source for the school... and it's located about 350 metres from the Hope Academy! It will replace the trucked-in water which is currently used to supply the school.

We know how important it is to have safe and healthy learning environments, where young minds can grow and thrive. Access to clean drinking water is an important part of creating such environments. With an enrollment that keeps growing each year, it's even more important to have a reliable source of water.



This project has been founded and driven by the Community Education Committee. They identified the need and were first to invest in the project. The Community Education Committee will take on the responsibility of operating the new water system.

A future goal is to share excess water capacity with the community on a cost-plus recovery basis. This kind of innovative thinking could create a future revenue source for the school and lead to its financial sustainability.

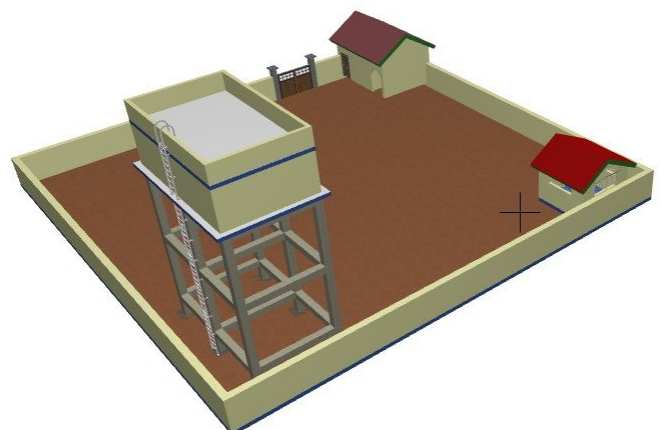
“ This project will create ongoing funding for Hope Academy, enabling future generations of Bursalah’s children to receive an education, while continuing to support the community.

*-Hon. Ali H. Warsame  
Former Minister of Education, Puntland State  
MBA CPA CGMA CIPFA & Licensed Auditor*

Phase 1 of the well project was completed last Summer. A generous African donor with ties to the Bursalah area provided the Community Education Committee with approximately \$50,000 USD to dig the well, which reaches a depth of 275 metres. The water it produces has been tested and is safe to drink.

The plans are already complete for Phase 2 (creating a storage tank) and Phase 3 (creating the infrastructure that brings water from the well to the user).

The Somali Hope Foundation Board in Canada is in the process of raising the funds for Phase 2 and Phase 3, estimated at \$112,000 CAD.



# SECOND VIRTUAL GALA IS A HIT!

## Another Successful Virtual Gala

The 11th Annual Somali Hope Foundation Fundraising Gala took place on Saturday June 19, 2021. This year's theme was "GRADUATING WITH HOPE", as we celebrated the first graduating class of 2021. The inspiring evening was filled with hope.

The event once again had a global audience. This year, there were participants who joined us from 10 countries across 6 continents. Over 800 people across our various virtual platforms tuned in.

Together, we raised \$55,000 CAD to support free, high quality and equitable education for girls and boys in rural Somalia. Thank you to all the donors, sponsors, speakers, volunteers, and guests!



## An Inspiring Program Full of Hope

Members of the Somali Hope Foundation Board and Team shared important updates about the progress and success of the school, the foundation, the students, and the community.

Guests shared in the hopeful and congratulatory spirit of well-wishers, which included a letter from Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P., Prime Minister of Canada and a video greeting from H.E. Hassan Dahir Dimbil, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Somalia to Canada.

Our Grade 12 graduates were the highlight of the evening! We were honoured to watch the speeches delivered by Hope Academy's first valedictorians!



## Gala-at-Home:

### Somali Meal Delivered to Your Door!

Once again, our local meal delivery was a delicious addition to the Gala. The Ottawa Police Hoopstars delivered delicious Somali meals from Safia Restaurant and cheesecakes from Velvety Sweets.



In another first, we announced gifts for the grads - a new laptop for each of them! This announcement was followed by wishes from the Ottawa Community. Our three keynotes followed with inspiring stories of hope, given by Roda Muse, Anisa Hajimumin, and Ali Haji Warsame.

The night ended with a message from Sabrina Dhowre Elba. The Somali Hope Foundation was selected as one of four charities to receive support from Christian Louboutin's joint campaign with Sabrina and Idris Elba: "Walk A Mile In My Shoes".



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# HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP

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## PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION TO HELP US CONTINUE DOING THIS IMPORTANT WORK

- \$50 funds the salary for the school bus driver for one week
- \$100 upgrades 4 desks and benches in a classroom
- \$150 provides a year of free education
- \$300 funds a teacher's salary for one month
- \$900 provides a desktop computer for our students
- \$1000 provides a laptop for a graduate



To learn more about the Somali Hope Foundation, visit us at <https://somalihopefoundation.ca/> or email us at [info@somalihopefoundation.ca](mailto:info@somalihopefoundation.ca)

You can also follow us on social media:

- Facebook: @SomaliHopeFoundation
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