



Somaliland Youth
Development Fund
(SLYDF)

PROGRESS REPORT

2024 - 2025



Somaliland Youth Development Fund (SLYDF)

Leading Party's Program for 2024-2029

The program of the Waddani Party, led by the President of the Republic of Somaliland, **H.E. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi (Cirro)**, includes a comprehensive pillar focused on youth and women. This demonstrates the President's strong commitment to economically empower young people and ensure their participation in decision-making and political processes.

Pillar 6: Youth and Women

6.2.2. Youth Commitments

WADDANI Party recognizes that the future of our nation lies in the hands of its youth. Therefore, to address the challenges facing young people, the government pledges to achieve the following goals within the next five years:

Youth Employment Creation

- ▶ Reduce youth unemployment by 25%.
- ▶ Establish six national youth enterprise centers across the country to provide young entrepreneurs with advisory services, training, resources, mentorship, and access to funding opportunities.
- ▶ It will provide job placements for 20% of university graduates.
- ▶ It will introduce an "Intern Protection Act" to safeguard the rights of youth engaged in internships.
- ▶ Strengthen access to international investment opportunities for youth-led businesses.



H.E. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi (Cirro)

The President of the Republic of Somaliland

Remarks by President Abdirahman Abdilahi Cirro of the Republic of Somaliland

At the 4th National Conference on Job Creation and Employment, held on 26 February 2025, the President of the Republic of Somaliland announced that the government will strengthen the Youth Development Fund in collaboration with youth, local and international financial institutions, and international organizations, with the aim of investing in youth-led business innovation and streamline loan processes, and empower young entrepreneurs to create job opportunities.

August 2025



Executive Director's Statement

Abdiqadir Jaylani, Executive Director – Somaliland Youth Development Fund (SLYDF)

On this year's Youth Day, I am proud to reflect on the progress the Somaliland Youth Development Fund (SLYDF) has made in empowering our young people. Over the past year (2024–2025), SLYDF has remained committed to building youth capacity through entrepreneurship training and financial support. We successfully trained 295 youth across the regions and invested \$500,000 in 154 youth-led businesses, with an additional 30 young entrepreneurs scheduled to receive support before the end of 2025. All investments were provided as interest-free loans, with monthly repayments currently progressing well. This achievement would not have been possible without our strong partnership with MicroDahab Bank, who co-financed the initiative and led the distribution and recovery process. As Executive Director, I call on international donors, NGOs, the Central Bank, and private financial institutions to join us in co-financing and supporting youth entrepreneurship. Together, we can scale up opportunities and create a more inclusive and economically vibrant future for Somaliland's youth.



Abdiqadir Ismail Ahmed (Jaylani)

Executive Director

Vision

The Somaliland Youth Development Fund envisions a future where young entrepreneurs are fully economically empowered and actively contributing to the socio-economic development of the nation. By equipping youth with the skills, resources, and opportunities needed to succeed in business and innovation, SLYDF aims to build a generation of self-reliant, job-creating leaders who drive inclusive growth, reduce unemployment, and foster long-term economic resilience across Somaliland.

Mission

The mission of the Somaliland Youth Development Fund (SLYDF) is to enhance employment opportunities for young people across Somaliland by unlocking their full potential. This is achieved through a comprehensive approach that includes building the capacity of youth through targeted training and mentorship, providing accessible and interest-free financing for entrepreneurial initiatives, and fostering an enabling environment that supports innovation, inclusion, and sustainable economic growth. SLYDF is committed to empowering youth to become active contributors to the nation's development and future prosperity.



Background

The **Somaliland Youth Development Fund (SYDF)** is a national economic initiative aimed at empowering youth entrepreneurs to start or expand small businesses. It supports job creation and economic growth through access to finance and skills development. The Fund was officially established by **Presidential Decree No. JSL/XM/WM/222-469/022020** on **17 February 2020** by the former President, **H.E. Muse Bihi Abdi**.

The Fund is overseen by a board of directors committee chaired by the Minister of Youth and Sports and has an Executive Director responsible for implementation and operations.

Given that more than 75% of Somaliland's population is under the age of 35, the Fund plays a critical role in harnessing youth potential and driving the nation's social and economic development.

Establishment and Governance

The office of the Fund was formally structured on **27 July 2022**, when a new executive director was appointed. The members of board of directors include:

- **Ministry of Youth and Sports (Chair)**
- **Ministry of Employment, Social and Family Affairs (Vice Chair)**
- **Executive Director of the Fund (Secretary)**
- **Director General of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development**
- **Director General of the Ministry of Education and Science.**
- **NAGAAD Women's Network**
- **Somaliland Youth Umbrella (SONYO)**

Executive Director

The Fund has an Executive Director, who is responsible for managing and implementing the Fund's strategies and programs. Since its establishment, SLYDF has had two Executive Directors.

Stakeholder Engagement

Upon the last year's progress, the Directors prioritized engaging key youth-focused stakeholders, including:

- **Local financial institutions**
- **International NGOs**
- **Government agencies**

Several high-level consultative meetings were held to align on shared objectives for youth development and entrepreneurship support.



Key Partnership Agreements

Agreement with the Somaliland Youth Development Fund (SLYDF) and MicroDahab

In July 2024, the SLYDF signed a partnership agreement with MicroDahab, a local subsidiary of Dahabshiil Group. The agreement focuses on a youth financing project worth \$500,000, where the SLYDF contributed 50% and responsible for selecting beneficiaries, while MicroDahab handles loan disbursement and recovery.

Partnership with the International Red Crescent

In February 2024, the SLYDF entered into a collaboration with the International Red Crescent's Somaliland office. The agreement aims to support youth development through education, skills training, and entrepreneurship programs.

Partnership with the Ethiopian Entrepreneurship Development Institute (EDI)

In January 2024, the SLYDF signed a memorandum of understanding with Ethiopia's Entrepreneurship Development Institute to share knowledge and best practices in fostering youth entrepreneurship.

Training and Capacity Building

Training of Trainers

On 21st July, 2024, the SLYDF conducted a five-day training program for 17 trainers selected from universities across Somaliland, including Amoud, Hargeisa, Berbera Maritime, Burao, and Erigavo. The training focused on business innovation, effective training delivery, and entrepreneurship skills.

Enhancing Youth Entrepreneurship Skills

From October 1–31, 2024, the SLYDF organized eight training sessions across all regions of Somaliland, benefiting 295 youth from Awdal, Maroodi-Jeh, Sahil, Togdheer, Sool, and Sanaag.

The sessions covered:

Developing viable business ideas.

- Effective business management.
- Business feasibility study .
- Innovation and startup business.



Youth Business Funding

On 17th August, 2024 the Somaliland Youth Development Fund (SLYDF) launched an online platform to allow youth across the country to apply for support—specifically targeting those with viable business ideas and a strong interest in entrepreneurship. To ensure a fair and transparent process, SLYDF developed a set of selection criteria to identify the most promising candidates. Out of a total of 1,100 applicants, 184 youth entrepreneurs were selected for investment and loan support.

Among those selected, 154 individuals have already received funding to launch or grow their businesses. To ensure inclusivity, 30 youth with disabilities — specifically youth with hearing impairments — were included among the recipients but they are in process of taking loans.

On Oct 2024, the investment were being started and the first round of funding were released.

Strategic Opportunities

The Fund aligns with Somaliland’s National Development Plan III (NDPIII), which prioritizes youth development as indicated on (NDPIII, pp. 124, 223, 2023). Key strengths include:

- The Third National Development Plan, which places increased emphasis on youth development.
- Financial institutions ready to co-finance youth projects.
- A strong pipeline of youth with viable business ideas.

Somaliland Youth Development Fund (SLYDF) – Assessment Report

Executive Summary

On 26th July 2025, the Somaliland Youth Development Fund (SLYDF) conducted a survey to assess the impact of its investment in youth-led businesses. The assessment employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the outcomes. The primary data collection tool was a structured phone interview survey.

Out of 154 youth entrepreneurs who received investment support from SLYDF, 152 responded to the survey, resulting in a high response rate of 99%. This report presents the findings and analysis of those 152 responses, offering insights into the effectiveness, outcomes, and challenges of the entrepreneurship support provided.

The data aims to measure the impact of SLYDF’s initiatives across different regions in Somaliland, focusing on areas such as business growth, job creation, market access, and youth empowerment.

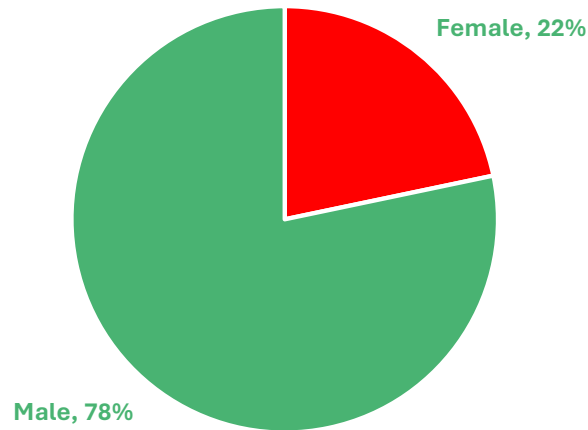
Key Findings

- 78% of recipients are male, while 22% are female.
- Marodijeh, Awdal, and Togdheer regions account for over 70% of responses.
- The most common sectors supported are shops and retailers, stores, agribusinesses, electronics and restaurants.
- 44% were used their loan on existing business, while 56% were used as new business startup.
- Most beneficiaries received support in the range of \$2,000–\$5,000.
- 88% of businesses created 1–3 jobs after support including the owner of the business.
- 78% reported increased income or customers.
- 28% expanded into new markets beyond their district.
- 45% of supported businesses are legally registered.



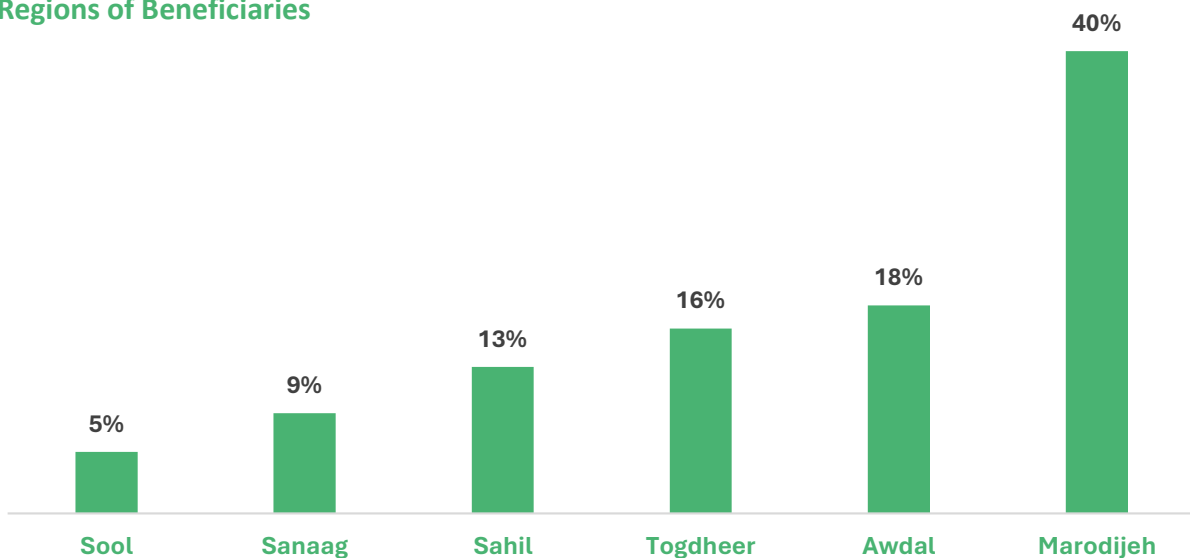
Gender and Regional Distribution

Gender Distribution



There is a significant gender imbalance. This shows that male youth are more likely to access or benefit from the fund, which highlights a need for more gender-targeted outreach and support for women entrepreneurs.

Regions of Beneficiaries



The Fund has strong reach in densely populated and urban areas. However, second of investment will be targeting eastern regions like Sool and Sanaag.



Sectoral Overview

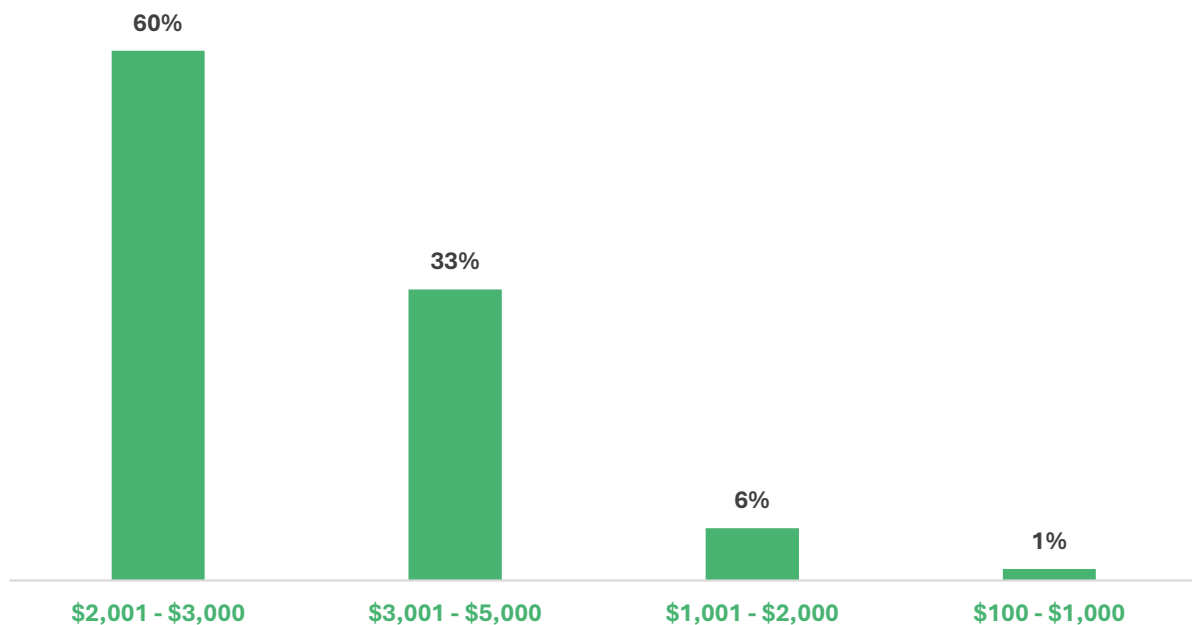
Business Sectors invested

Business Sector	%
Shops and Retailers	27%
Store	22%
Agribusiness (Livestock, Beeking and Agriculture crops)	20%
Electronics	10%
Restaurant and cafeteria	9%
Transportation (Vitz/Bajaaj)	7%
Other Services (Puncture repair, Beauty Salon and Berber shop)	5%
Total	100%

Most supported businesses are in low-barrier, informal sectors like shops, services, and agribusiness. These sectors are popular among youth due to lower capital needs. However, there is room to diversify into technology, digital, and value-added sectors for greater long-term impact.

Financial Support and Job Creation

Support Amount Distributed

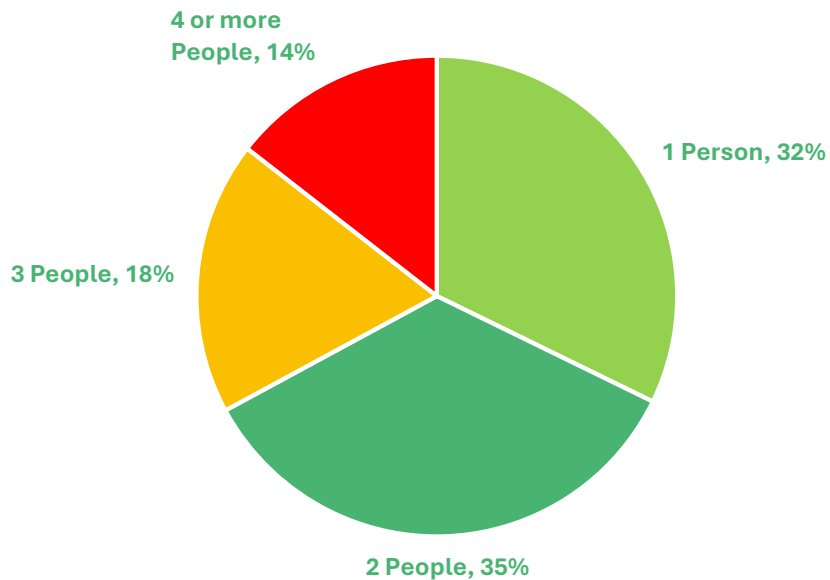


93% of recipients received between \$2,000 and \$5,000, reflecting a standardized funding model that likely aligns with program budgets and business plans. Only a few 7% received smaller amounts which they requested.



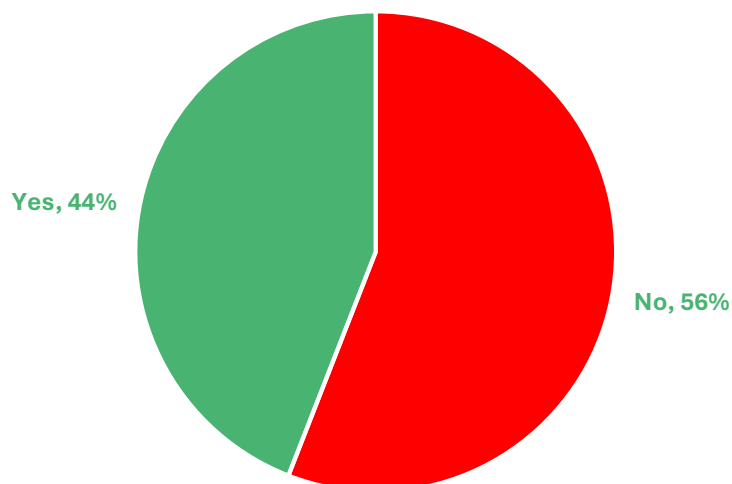
Jobs Created per Business

Most businesses created 1–3 jobs including the owner of the business, which shows a direct but modest employment impact. It also confirms that the Fund supports micro and small enterprises, often run by the youth themselves and a few employees.



Business Operation Before Support

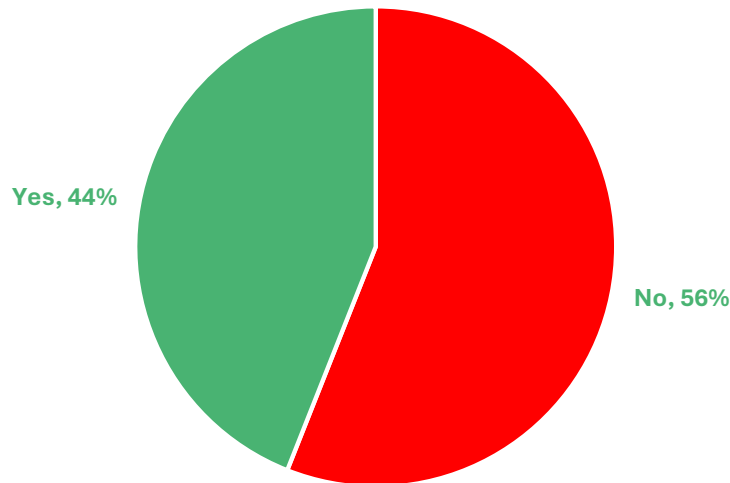
44% of beneficiaries used the funding to expand existing businesses, while 56% launched entirely new startups with the support. This highlights that SLYDF funding not only reinforces established enterprises but also plays a key role in supporting the growth of new business ventures—an essential step toward reducing youth unemployment.



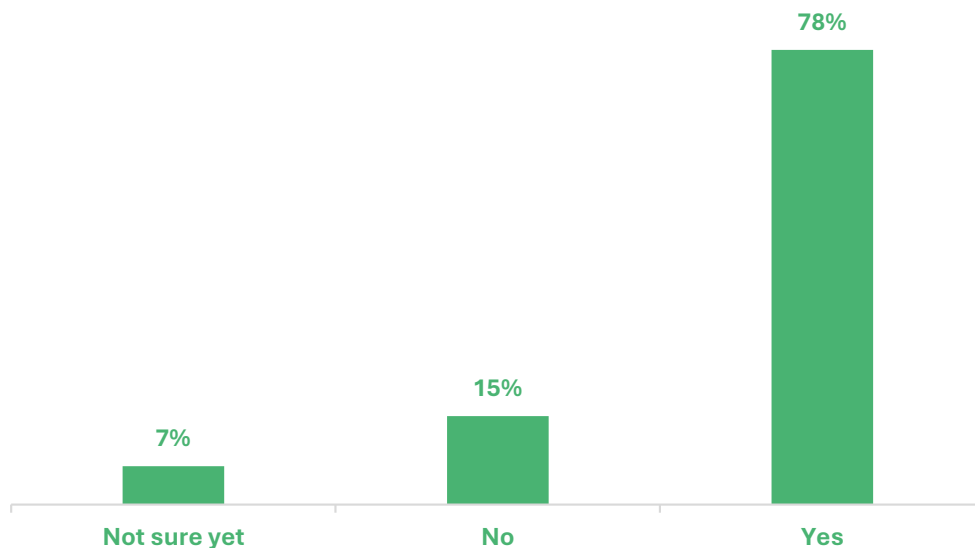


Legal Registration

The graph shows that 56% of youth-led businesses are unregistered, while 44% are formally registered—a promising sign for mostly new or small enterprises. However, the unregistered are all startups. To boost registration, SLYDF is advised to engage city mayors to reduce registration fees for youth entrepreneurs.



Business Growth & Market Expansion Reported Income/Customer Growth

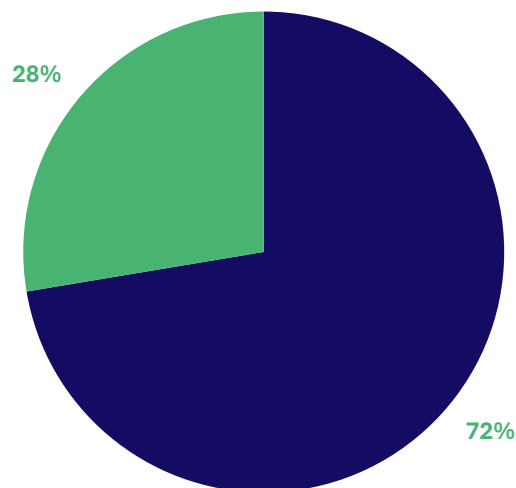


A strong majority (78%) reported positive business growth, indicating that the funding was effective in boosting both customer numbers and revenue. The 7% who responded “not sure” may represent newly established businesses that have not yet had sufficient time to evaluate their progress, or recipients who did not attend or benefit from the financial literacy training provided before the investment.



Market Expansion

While growth in revenue and customer numbers is high, only a small portion (28%) expanded beyond their local markets. This may point to challenges such as limited transportation, weak marketing skills, or a lack of resources to reach wider customers.



Voices from the Field – Impact Statements

Here are selected insights from the qualitative impact responses:

- “My income has increased, and now I employ two young people from my family.” – Retail shop owner, Berbera.
- “We registered the business after the grant and now supply computer software to schools in Borama and now we expanded and targeting schools in the capital city Hargeisa.” – Service provider, Borama.
- “It helped me restock and rebrand my toiler shop, which attracted more clients.” – Tailor, Borama.

These stories emphasize the transformative nature of the investment, especially when paired with business training and follow-up support.



Conclusion and Recommendations

Key Findings

- The program reached youth across multiple regions and sectors.
- Significant job creation occurred, mainly at the micro-enterprise level.
- Most businesses remain informal but profitable.
- High rates of income improvement were reported.
- Female participation was limited, and market expansion remains a challenge.

Recommendations

1. Gender Targeting: Increase support for female-led businesses.
2. Monitoring: Continue using simple impact metrics to assess the progress of their business.
3. Sector Diversification: Encourage support for tech, digital, and value-added sectors.
4. Regional Balance: Improve outreach in underserved eastern regions.
5. Provide financial literature in every 6 months to improve their financial knowledge.
6. SLYDF will engage city mayors to lower business registration fee to increase youth-led business.



SLYDF Work Plan: August – December 2025

No	Activities	Responsible	Months				
			Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	Launch Grand Investment Program in Awdal and Togdheer to support 20 youth-led businesses.	SYLDF					
2	Conduct trainings on financial literacy, business planning, feasibility studies, and marketing.	SYLDF					
3	Hold monthly Youth development Coordination meetings with all youth development focused actors.	SYLDF					
4	Monitor funded businesses, track progress, and document success stories.	SYLDF					
5	Host end-of-year Youth Entrepreneurship Forum to showcase results and lessons learned.	SYLDF					
6	Conduct a market analysis to identify technical skills that are in high demand as well as those skills that are widely available in the market but face low job opportunities due to oversaturation.	SYLDF					



Photos



SLYDF and MicroDahab supervised business invested on 14th July 2025



SLYDF Director and MicroDahab supervise business invested on 14th July.



On 25th June, handover ceremony with Abdiqadir Jaylani and Khadar Ibrahim



Photos



Ayaan's Greenhouse in Hargeisa, Somaliland



Ayaan was in her greenhouse harvesting tomatoes



Abdirasak's software office in Borama, Somaliland



Gouled's toiler in Borama, Somaliland



Somaliland Youth Development Fund (SLYDF)

Story of Change

Ayaan Rashiid Cumar – Growing a Brighter Future with SLYDF Support.

Ayaan Rashiid Cumar, a mother of three children living in Hargeisa, Somaliland, Ayaan is one of the many youth who have transformed their lives through the Somaliland Youth Development Fund (SLYDF). With limited resources but a strong desire to build a better future for her family, Ayaan and her husband seized the opportunity to benefit from a zero-interest loan provided by SLYDF.

In early 2025, Ayaan received a \$3,500 investment from the fund to establish a greenhouse farming business although she had some cost, focusing on cash crops such as tomatoes and other high-value vegetables.

With the support of one skilled agricultural technician, Ayaan and her husband began cultivating their crops using modern farming methods.

“Since we received the investment, our income has increased significantly,” Ayaan shared. “We harvested and sold our crops over the past two months, and the market prices have been very favorable. Our family is now more financially stable.”

Thanks to the interest-free support of SLYDF, Ayaan's household has moved toward economic self-reliance. The greenhouse continues to flourish, and their farming venture now serves as a model for other youth-led agribusinesses in the community.

This success story highlights the real impact of youth-focused investments – not only in improving livelihoods but also in strengthening families and building resilient communities.



Somaliland Youth Development Fund (SLYDF)

Story of Change

Abdirazak Farah Khayre – Building a Tech Future for Somaliland’s Youth Abdirazak Farah Khayre, an ambitious IT expert living in Borama, Somaliland, has turned his passion for technology into a thriving business that is now creating opportunities for others. With a strong background in software and website development, Abdirazak always dreamed of expanding his services to a wider market—but lacked the capital to grow his business.

In 2025, Abdirazak received a free loan of \$3,500 from the Somaliland Youth Development Fund (SLYDF). This investment became the turning point in his entrepreneurial journey.

Using the funds, Abdirazak expanded his company while hired two young professionals, allowing him to increase productivity and scale his services. His company began offering IT solutions to educational institutions across the region.

“Since the investment, I’ve been able to reach over 40 schools in Borama, providing software support and systems maintenance,” Abdirazak shared. “We’ve improved the digital infrastructure of many schools, and our services continue to grow in demand.”

What started as a solo initiative has now become a growing tech enterprise. With his dedicated team, Abdirazak has expanded operations across Borama and is on track to reach other regions in Somaliland. “I want to thank SLYDF for supporting Somaliland’s youth to create jobs,” said Abdirazak. “I now request more funding to help us cover all schools across Somaliland—so we can continue empowering education through technology.

“Abdirazak’s journey is a shining example of how strategic youth investment can foster innovation, create jobs, and strengthen the local economy. With continued support, his vision of transforming Somaliland’s education system through digital solutions is well within reach.



Somaliland Youth Development Fund (SLYDF)

