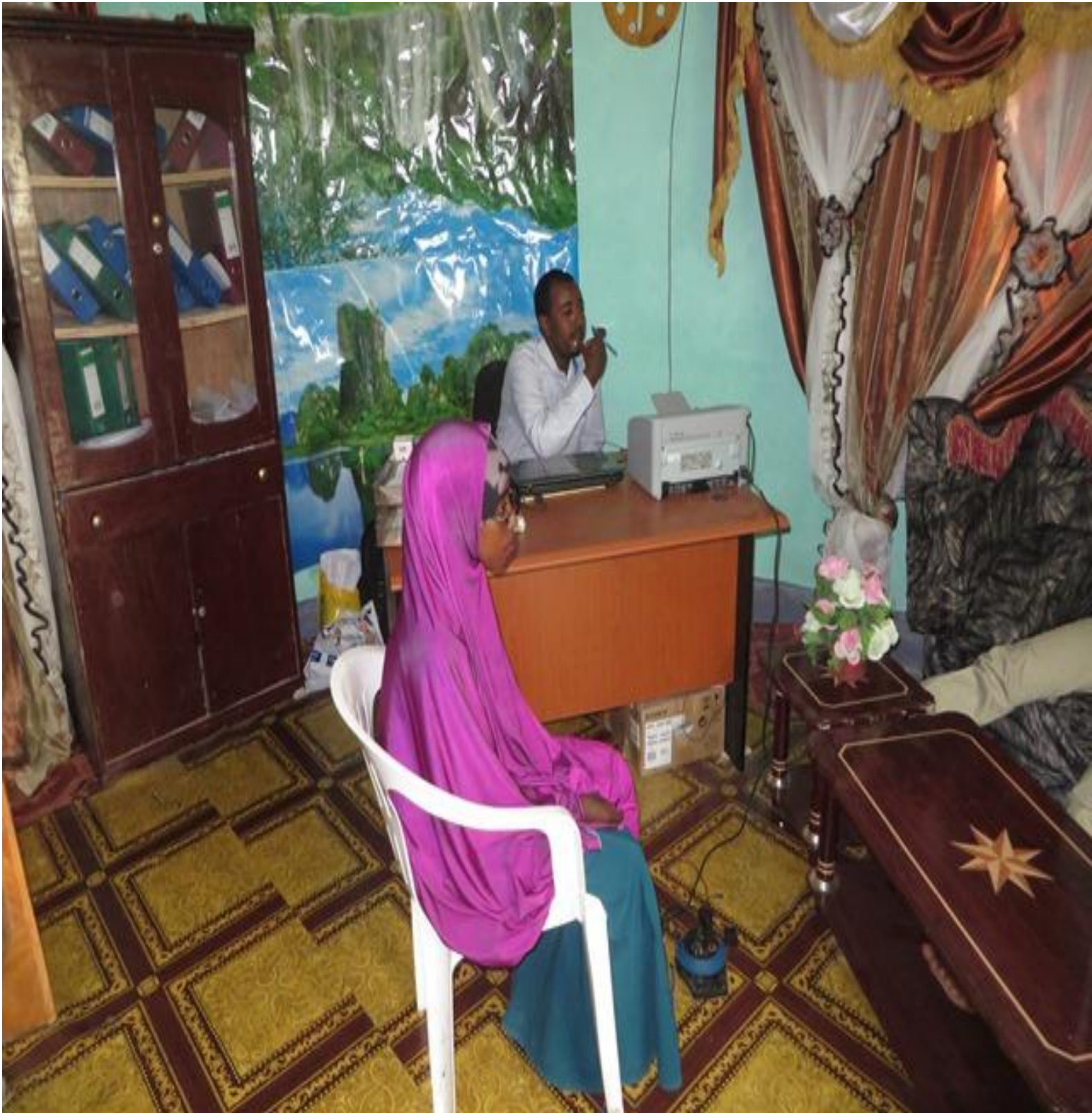


THE PROBLEM IS NOT IN THE SCHOOL BUT IT IS NEGATIVE PERCEPTION OF THE COMMUNITY AGAINST DISABLED CHILDREN: MARIA'S STORY



Disability is one of the fundamental challenges that prevent equity and access in education. Although disability is impairment caused by different problems resulted in diseases, natural disasters or evil acts of human beings, but in some countries it is a cursed symptom that leads to discriminate the person who characterized in that case. Maria Mohamud Kahiye is just 17 years old. She lives in Mogadishu, Somalia with her parents. She suffered from disability caused by polio in one of her legs when she was 3 years old. Maria is the second oldest child of her family. She was not sent to school until the age of 16. Her parents sent other children to school while Maria used to care younger siblings in the house because she was disabled and could not walk to school perfectly. Furthermore, her mother felt quite ashamed to send her limping daughter to school because she might had been insulted by the people when to or from school. One day a school assessment team of Formal Education Network (FENPS) knew from school principal that the sister of two students in the school doesn't go to school and stays without learning because her parents remained at home since is limping and they afraid to be abused by other children. The school principal told the team that he contacted the parents of the girl and discussed with them how to send the girl to the school and requested FENPS to give moral and material support to this girl and other children with such difficulties.

The assessment team of FENPS reported the case to the office and FENPS assigned mentor to the situation to give parents counselling and advice to persuade to send the girl to school immediately. The mentor was also assigned to integrate the girl into education and trained teachers in the school in equity, inclusiveness and access approaches in education. Maria was enrolled in Alternative Basic Education Class in the school since she cannot catch with normal formal classes in the school. She learns with other students of her age who themselves passed the normal school age and never participated in school for other reasons not disability.

### **Expectation of Maria Mohamud Kahiye**

Maria expects bright future and has great ambition to education. She says that she would like to specialize in engineering

### **FENPS Recommendations:**

There are many children who missed education in Somalia because of impairment of parts of their bodies and insufficient community awareness on the importance of schooling disabled children, so FENPS suggests:

1. Create programmes that providing disabled children with opportunity to education
2. Create community awareness campaigns
3. Make schools inclusive, equitable, accessible and friendly environment for all including disabled children



**Maria is among formal school girls at special room in the school for mentoring students with psychological stresses. She is learning how to draw angle with computer**



**Maria with her Classmates in the school compound**