



BRAINGAIN

SOMALIA

Abdifatah Dahir

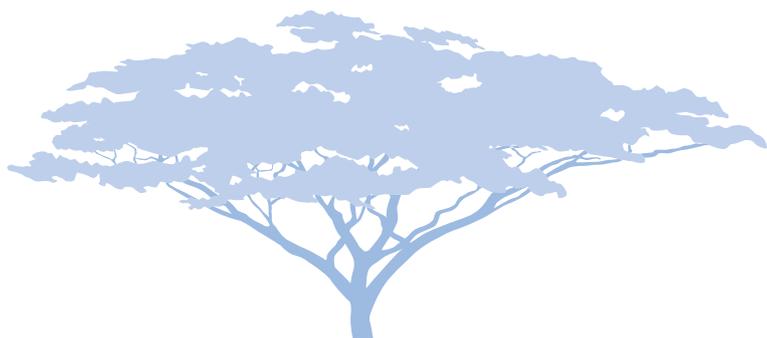
Teacher at Al Nur School for the Blind
(Mogadishu, Somalia)

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Being visually disabled for some years, Mr Dahir has experienced the difficulties of being blind in a war torn country such as Somalia at first hand. Moreover, since people who are visually impaired are even more vulnerable than most of their peers, education and self-reliance are extremely important factors for this group. Mr Dahir has a background in teaching and has worked at this school prior to moving to the Netherlands as a teacher and principal.



Through the Brain Gain program Mr Dahir was able to obtain a placement for the duration of 6 months at the Al Nur School for the Blind. His duties amongst others consist of teaching in the subject of computer skills. Also, he teaches the students how use technical devices such as computers and mobiles to the fullest by using the existing technology (e.g. how to enable speech programmes on a computer in order to send emails or surf on the web). A great deal of the time is used to make the students as independent as possible.

What was the reason for you to go and work in Somalia? What was the trigger for you?

I wanted to work in Somalia for the following reasons:

- There is a great need of blind people on multiple levels (for instance training, materials and equipment). Without these factors the progress for this group will be unsustainable.
- I would like to transfer the knowledge that I have gained in the Netherlands so it can become beneficial for the people in Somalia.

What has your experience been so far both professionally and on a personal level?

There is a great change of my experience of both professionally and persona level.

I have been able to transfer my knowledge to people who are one of the most vulnerable in the society. I'm also engaged in a lot of discussions with my fellow colleagues with regards to the students and their education.



What are your thoughts about reducing the Brain Drain of Somalia in relation to establishing a good educational system?

It's vital for the population to establish a good educational system in Somalia. Education is one of the pillars of a society and it has detrimental effect on those who do not have it. This makes programs such as Brain Gain very important. However, it would advise to extend the placement of the candidates. There's little difference you can make if you are in Somalia for just a couple of months.

Would you consider staying in Somalia despite the lack of safety in some regions?

At the moment the situation remains relatively stable. However this can change in the future. If the situation should worsen then this will also have a negative impact on this specific group.

What kind of advice would you give to fellow Dutch – Somali's who are interested in taking part of rebuilding Somalia?

I would like to tell the Dutch Somalis the following:

Somalia is a nation that is under construction and coming from a civil war over the last two decades. There are many countries that are involved in rebuilding the nation in one way or another. If you really feel you want to contribute then this is the time to do so.

