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PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND THIRD LEVEL EDUCATION IN  
SOMALIA

Introduction

It is generally accepted that education, science and technology play major roles in the development of a country. This concept also reflects in the statement made by Major General Mohamed Siyad Barre, the President of the Somali Democratic Republic:

"A nation's brain, prosperity, self-respect and dignity depend upon the level of the educated people in that country. If a nation wants to tap its natural resources how does it do? By having qualified men to do the job and proper education provides such a personnel. The way we can wipe out hunger, disease and ignorance is to have the personnel who are qualified in teaching agriculture, medicine, mining, politics, geology and in every other fields that is to benefit our nation. Since the masses have made sacrifices in order to make funds available for education, there should be that type of education which is geared towards finding solutions to the problems of the society."

The new government after the revolution in October 1969 inherited a society of lowest education and of ignorance in culture, economics and politics. The problems in developing the educational system of Somalia were numerous: General adult illiteracy, lack of primary, secondary and university educational systems, lack of appreciation of science and technology, acute shortage in skilled, technical and scientific trained personnel or qualified teachers, instructors, professors, etc. Up to 1969 no university training was possible in the country. Two post-secondary institutions offered a two year's program in economics, law and education. The final studies in these subjects were usually performed by the stu-



dents in Italy or other industrialized countries. The revolutionary government had, without any doubt, the greatest impact on the education in Somalia by introducing the following programs:

- I. expansion of enrolments and facilities at primary and secondary levels;
2. provision of free primary, secondary and university education;
3. compulsory education up to the primary level;
4. minimizing the wastage of drop-outs at all educational levels;
5. training teachers by specially-initiated programs;
6. reducing the teacher : student ratio;
7. upgrading the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers;
8. improvement of the curricula and syllabi and adaptation to the Somali environment;
9. special promotion of instruction in the natural sciences;
10. introduction of Somali as official language for instruction in primary and secondary schools;
- II. equipment of schools with laboratories, libraries, and workshops;
12. providing of mass literacy;
13. introduction of vocational and technical subjects at the secondary level;
14. establishment of technical and vocational institutions (Lafoole Vocational Training Centre, National Telecommunication Training Institute, Aeronautical Radio Technicians Training Institute, Mogadishu Health Personnel Training Institute, Nursing Schools, Mogadishu Polytechnic, Mogadishu Maritime and Fisheries Institute, Agricultural Secondary School, Farmer Training Centres);
15. improvement of women's education;
16. establishment of a national university.

### Primary and secondary education

Already before 1972 the new government after the revolution in October 1969 initiated literacy campaigns first among government employees then in urban and finally in rural areas. However, only after the introduction of the Somali orthography in 1972 the results of these literacy campaigns became a full success in the cities as well as in the country-side of Somalia. With the idea in mind the language being the soul and life-breath of a nation and the most powerful instrument for exchange of thought and ideas the Supreme Revolutionary Council declared Somali as official language in Somalia in 1972. Before that time Somali was used widely as an oral language but also English, Italian and Arabic were and are in use for communication.

The figures in table I demonstrate the rapid development of primary and secondary education in Somalia after the introduction of the Somali script:

Table I. Comparison of numbers of primary and secondary schools, classrooms and teachers in Somalia in 1969 and 1976

	1969	1976	growth rate
Primary schools	231	844	265%
Secondary schools	26	39	50%
Classrooms	1431	4368	257%
Teachers	1873	6824	264%

Besides 2777 classrooms were built by self-help programs which means that the overall growth rate of rooms for instruction



was up to 1976 496%.

This enormous upswing in primary and secondary education could be achieved only by increasing the share of education in the national development budget by a rate of 25% annually.

After the introduction of the Somali script in 1972 and the following intense literacy campaign a shortage in teaching staff was caused by a tremendous increase in enrolment. This shortage could be overcome only by reduction of the secondary school teacher training program from four to two years; an extension to three years will most probably be realized by 1984. The compulsory time attending the primary school had also to be reduced temporarily from eight to six years. The following secondary school facilities are right now available in Somalia: general (four years), technical (three or four years), vocational (two years) and primary school teacher (two years). After passing the secondary school level the students are obliged to do a one-year's National Service mostly as teaching in primary schools. The primary schools, secondary schools and the National Service are surveyed by the Ministry of Education.

#### Third level education

##### 1. Technical Teacher Training College (TTTC) in Mogadishu:

In 1976 the Ministry of Education opened the TTTC in assistance with the UNESCO for 200 students per year. In a two year's program the students are trained for teaching at technical secondary schools.

##### 2. Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics (ISAE):

The ISAE is affiliated to the Ministry of National Planning and offers a two year part-time course.

##### 3. Somali Institute of Development, Administration and Management (SIDAM):

The SIDAM was initiated by the Ministry of Labour and offers two courses, Accountancy and Industrial Management, of

third level education. Industrial management is the only post-graduate course so far offered in the country.

##### 4. Somali National University (SNU):

The SNU, the only university in the country, was founded in 1968 and started at that time with three faculties: Law, Economics and Education. At present time the following faculties are open for enrolment:

Education	2 years of 3 semesters each
Languages	4 years of 2 semesters each
Law	4 years of 2 semesters each
Economics	4 years of 2 semesters each
Political Science	2 years of 2 semesters each
Journalism	2 years of 2 semesters each
Geology	4 years of 2 semesters each
Industrial Chemistry	4 years of 2 semesters each
Medicine	4 years of 2 semesters each
Engineering	4 years of 2 semesters each
Agriculture	4 years of 2 semesters each
Veterinary	4 years of 2 semesters each

Students are admitted after passing the University Entrance Exam (UEE), taking place in July each year. In 1982 from 2000 applicants 800 were accepted. Besides 50 - 100 in-service civil servants and few in-service primary school teachers are accepted. Only those students passing the UEE with the best grades are allowed to study the subject of their choice.

In table 2 figures for student distributions by faculty and sex enrolled at SNU on 1 November 1982 are collected:



Table 2. Student distribution by faculty and sex on  
I November 1982 at SNU

Faculty	Male	Female	both sexes	% female
Education	753	278	1031	27.0
Languages	106	89	195	45.6
Law	126	31	157	19.7
Economics	144	65	209	31.1
Political Sciences	80	9	89	10.1
Journalism	58	29	87	33.3
Geology	87	9	96	9.4
Industrial Chemistry	90	12	102	11.8
Medicine	202	56	258	21.7
Engineering	236	5	241	2.1
Agriculture	176	19	195	9.7
Veterinary	163	35	198	17.7
Total	2221	637	2858	22.3

Table 3 gives a survey of the distribution of students by age as percentage of total enrolment at SNU at I November 1982.

Table 3. Distribution of students by age as percentage of total enrolment at SNU at I November 1982

Age (years)	Male %	Female %	Male + Female %
18	0.1	0.1	0.2
19	1.1	0.9	2.0
20	3.3	2.9	6.2
21	4.4	1.3	5.7
22	12.9	4.3	17.2
23	10.6	4.4	15.0
24	12.3	2.9	15.2
25	9.3	1.4	10.7

Table 3. Continued

Age (years)	Male %	Female %	Male + Female %
26	7.4	0.9	8.3
27	4.2	0.6	4.8
28	3.7	0.9	4.6
29	1.7	0.3	2.0
30 and over	6.7	1.4	8.1
Total	77.7	22.3	100.0

From tables 2 and 3 it becomes obvious that the three largest faculties are Education, followed by Medicine and Engineering and that the studies of Languages are the most preferred ones by females; almost half of the students are less than 24 years old and about 10% are 30 years of age or older.

In the academic year 1981/1982 669 students completed successfully their studies at SNU. The distribution by faculty is given in table 4.

Table 4. Distribution of students, graduated at SNU in 1982 by faculty

Faculty	Number of graduates
Education, Journalism	239
Law	41
Economics	52
Political Sciences	124
Geology	18
Industrial Chemistry	11
Medicine	50
Engineering	34
Agriculture	37
Veterinary	63



A considerable number of the teaching staff members are expatriate teachers (see table 5). In some faculties like Geology (63%), Engineering (59%) or Industrial Chemistry (56%) the percentage of expatriate teachers surmounts 50%. The Faculty of Education has the largest number of Somali teachers. In some faculties the full-time equivalent of the teaching staff is extremely low, below 20% (Languages, Engineering, see table 6). In all faculties the student / teacher ratio is reasonable, varying from 1.5 to about 10 and needs no improvement

Table 5. Distribution of teaching staff by faculty in 1981/1982 at SNU

Faculty	Total staff	Expatriates	Expatriates %
Education / Journalism	106	18	17.0
Law	31	--	--
Languages	26	11	42.3
Economics	32	--	--
Political Sciences	30	--	--
Geology	54	34	63.0
Industrial Chemistry	50	28	56.0
Medicine	125	51	40.8
Engineering	34	20	58.8
Agriculture	56	26	46.4
Veterinary	64	30	46.9
Total	608	218	35.9

Except for the faculties of Education, Journalism and Languages and Political Sciences the languages of instruction are Italian and Somali. With the exception for the studies of Political Sciences the students have to pass a language course of one semester duration in English for Education, Languages and Journalism and in Italian for the rest of the studies,

because most of the faculties are run in cooperation with Italian universities. The faculties of Agriculture, Engineering, Medicine, Geology, Veterinary and Industrial Chemistry are supported since years, each, by an annual \$ 500.000 grant of the Italian government. The money is spent for buying equipment and text books and employment of expatriate professors and technicians. Though in most faculties the Italian language is still the medium of instruction, plan are discussed to switch to Somali and use also English text-books.

Table 6. Full-time equivalents of teaching staff and students / instructor ratio by faculty in 1981/1982 at SNU

Faculty	Teaching staff (full-time equivalent)	Student / Teacher ratio
Education / Journalism	92.7	8.7
Law	25.0	4.3
Languages	15.8	6.7
Economics	25.2	6.2
Political Sciences	24.5	3.6
Geology	35.5	1.5
Industrial Chemistry	36.0	1.6
Medicine	68.3	2.7
Engineering	19.0	9.2
Agriculture	52.5	2.5
Veterinary	47.5	2.5
	442.0	

As most of the faculties do not yet offer post-graduate training and research programs possibilities for post-graduate studies are planned to be established in the following decade



in different fields at SNU. Joint ventures with Italian, English, Canadian, American or German universities should speed up the process of establishing the post-graduate courses.

In 1982 a linkage agreement between the Somali National University and the University of Saskatchewan to establish post-graduate training and research programs at SNU in the disciplines of Agriculture, Education, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine were signed. This project was identified in the Somali Democratic Republic as the "highest priority" in the post-secondary education and research program with the following objectives:

1. to promote higher education and research in Somalia in conformity with national goals;
2. to contribute to the policy of Somalization of the national higher education system in order to become self-sufficient in the on-going production of the required number of personnel needed to help accelerate the development of various aspects of life in the country;
3. to train the required number of university teachers, research workers for the various research centers and other technical manpower to man the various development projects of the government and its agencies;
4. to initiate research activities in different branches of science and humanities which will help in developing low-cost, location-specific technology suited to the social, economic and topographical development of the nation;
5. to pave the way for development and expansion of the post-graduate program in the National University so as to meet the needs of the growing agricultural and industrial capacities of Somalia;
6. to lay foundations for a post-graduate and research program which could effectively continue after the project has concluded.

A budget of S 7 mill. is provided for the joint Somali - Canadian three year's project. The program covers graduate training of Somali students, visits of SNU faculty advisors and technicians in Canada and training periods of US supervisors in Mogadishu. The students are examined in Mogadishu and will receive a degree of SNU after having passed their post-graduate studies. Up-to-date text-books and scientific journals are provided for the libraries at SNU and the laboratories in Mogadishu are equipped with instrumentation necessary for the different fields of research. Discussion on a similar Somali - German project establishing post-graduate studies for the faculties of Industrial Chemistry, Geology and Law are under way between the SNU and the University of Tübingen.