



# UNISO SPECTRUM

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# Editorial Note

Dear readers,

Welcome to the third edition of the biannual magazine of University of Somalia (UNISO Spectrum). I am very excited to announce that this April Issue 03, 2025 of UNISO Spectrum is now out in a new and colorful design. It contains 18 articles covering a wide range of topics, including education, business and economics, health sciences, humanities, agriculture and technology.

Among the pressing and timely issues discussed in this issue are the noticeable phenomenon of breakup of business companies, the importance of critical thinking as a compulsory subject in the foundation year for university students, the reasons for severe anemia in pregnant women, the controversial amendment of the Provisional Constitution, the impact of food aid on local production, using fake names on Facebook by Somali youth, and many more. Four selected articles are featured here:

**Company Split-Ups: What Has Gone Wrong in Somalia?** In this article, Dr. Hussein compares the breakup of business companies in Somalia and other countries. He presents seven possible scenarios behind the split-up of Somali business entities. Although split-ups are the norm in many business environments and can have a positive impact, in Somalia they are always negative. These new businesses do not have the blessing of their parent companies and are the result of shrewd, cunning, and reckless business practices. The author believes that government intervention is needed to reduce the effect of aggressive competition in small market areas.

**Why Do Somali Women Have Severe Anemia in Pregnancy?** In this article, Dr. Basra highlights the fact that too many pregnant women are severely anemic. She examines the key reasons for the prevalence of anemia among pregnant women in Somalia. There are four key reasons for anemia: rare pre-natal checkups in the first trimester, underestimation of the importance of diet and its relation to anemia, lack of iron and folic supplements, and limited public awareness of anemia during pregnancy. To reduce the rate of anemia cases among expecting mothers she recommends that they take supplements, consume iron-rich foods, and plan regular visits to their health center to receive support and advice.

**Impact of Food Aid on Local Production.** In this article, Dr. Mohamed Ali Yusuf argues that foreign food aid supply to displaced persons supported many Somali communities, but it has also discouraged local food production and made the rural population dependent on them. This dependency and lack of productivity has led to lower local food production and profit, thus undercutting the income in the rural areas. He recommends that NGOs and other entities involved in distributing food assistance should prioritize procuring food from local farmers to support vulnerable communities. This would serve as an incentive for local farmers to increase their production rates.

**Critical Thinking as a Foundation Subject: The Right Decision for Our Universities?** In this article, Mr. Rajab Noah highlights the importance of critical thinking and its relevance to our daily life. He welcomes the introduction of critical thinking in the foundation year at university. He also argues that the study of logic is deeply rooted in Islamic thought. The Muslim scholars of the past often relied on critical thinking and analysis to derive their independent judgments when they were not readily available in the Qur'an, hadith and ijmā'. However, he indicates that proper preparation and planning together with the right attitude can turn this ambitious program into a success.

This July Issue 03 also includes many more interesting, timely and relevant articles that offer valuable insights and proposed solutions to the pressing issues and challenges facing our country. Hopefully, they will inspire our readers to learn more about these issues. Finally, we are proud to announce that we have decided to digitize our content. Now UNISO Spectrum is available in print and online. Our goal is to make our magazine reach our readers anytime, anywhere. Enjoy and learn reading our articles!

Disclaimer

A Disclaimer

Authors bear responsibility for their contributions. Statements of fact or opinion appearing in UNISO Spectrum are solely those of the authors and don't imply endorsement by the Magazine.

**Best regards,**

**Dr. Mohamed Hassan**

**Editor-in-Chief**

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# Articles

# COMPANY SPLIT-UPS: WHAT HAS GONE WRONG IN SOMALIA?

Dr. Hussein Osman Ahmed

Deputy Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance

University of Somalia (UNISO)

[dvcfa@uniso.edu.so](mailto:dvcfa@uniso.edu.so)



More than three decades have passed since the collapse of the Central Government of Somalia in 1991. A lot of events and changes have taken place since then, among them the disintegration of political, economic, social, and religious organizations. These events have led to the total division of Somali society, both politically and geographically. At this point, allow me draw your attention to the collapse of businesses and commercial companies that were providing the Somali public with basic goods and services.

To begin with, an organization is a group of people joined for a purpose of working together to achieve a common goal. There is a strong mutual interest that binding this group of people together and provides a strong foundation for the enterprise to succeed. On the other hand, a split-up occurs when the group disassociates, disjoins, and separates. For example, a group of five business partners start a company together and then decide to establish rival companies, this is called a split-up in Somalia. There are a number of companies currently operating in our country that split from their mother company and focus on different market segments. These companies can be service providers in education, communication, transportation, finance, or construction.

Most company break-ups are agreed by the parties concerned; however, some break-ups leave a lot of pain, resentment and anger in their wake, followed by a period of strong enmity and business rivalry. Recently, there numerous new companies have been formed following split-ups. They have created names and brands that are very similar to the names and brands of the companies they left behind. This shows the degree of fragmentation and rivalry between the owners and managers of the old and new companies.

Organizational split-up is a common phenomenon everywhere in the world; however, it is different from Somalia. It is noted that organizational split-up can be a positive step taken by a company in order to create subsidiaries with a different management. Shares and assets can then be distributed among the successor companies, taking into account the wishes and preferences of the shareholders.

There are a number of reasons for the good organizational split up, including:

**Government Regulation:** The government has the absolute power to issue regulations to interfere with the operations of private companies in order to prevent a company from becoming too strong and monopolistic in a particular market. This regulation forces the company to divide itself into two divisions (i.e., companies) to become competitors in that market, so as to protect the interests of consumers, and to ensure that the market remains healthy.

**Strategic Interest:** Some companies decide to divide to restructure their business operations. This type is often done by companies with various business lines. Each part of the business is assigned to a separate company descending from the parent company. This strategy is aimed at reducing business risks, ensuring good performance, and increasing profit for the company's shareholders.

**Debt and Bankruptcy:** The third reason why a company may split-up is that some of its business lines are nearing bankruptcy, while other parts of the company are doing well and make profit. However, when a company's expenses exceed its income, or it cannot pay its debt, it becomes insolvent. To avoid insolvency, the bankrupt divisions may take advantage of other profitable divisions. In this case the company divides into independent subsidiaries. This strategy aims to prevent the entire company from being registered as insolvent or bankrupt.

The above-mentioned reasons are common factors causing a company to make a good organizational split-up. However, the types that exist in Somalia are different from those that exist elsewhere. The organizational split-up in Somalia is not due to the reasons mentioned above, such as government regulations, strategic purpose and fear of bankruptcy. In our country, split-ups are the direct consequence of political instability and intense rivalry.

So, the question that deserves to be asked is: what are the main reasons for the split-up of Somali companies? I have gathered information from several experts with extensive knowledge and experience in the local business activities. In their view, the main reasons for the split-up of Somali companies can be summarized as follows:

**Lack of regulation or legal basis:** Most companies are established without any regulations defining the rights, duties and roles of the founding members or owners. Companies are built on trust. However, lack of regulation makes it difficult to manage disputes arising from fraud and unfair distribution of benefits as well as the problems arising from the company's operations.

**Conflict between managers and employees:** If there is a conflict between employees and managers, and there is no quick and effective solution, it will lead to the company's disintegration.

**Mismanagement:** When a company is led by unqualified or incompetent personnel lacking knowledge, experience and ethics. Professional and fair handling of employees,

customers, and shareholders motivates them to continue supporting the company. However, negative behavior such as willfulness, abuse of power, selfishness, and lack of consideration for others may cause the split-up from the parent company. Greed among the members in the organization: This scenario is common where members of the organization or employees connive to establish a rival company to increase their benefits. For example, managers or company owners complain that some employees leave the company after completing their training. They use their knowledge and experience not to the benefit of their mother company by to engage in direct competition.

Absence of restrictions for market entry: Most Somalian companies are active in the service sector. The restrictions to enter this market are either minimal or completely absent. Therefore, it is easy for members of an organization to establish a new company, enter the service market and make quick profit.

Lack of copy right restrictions: Government authorities concerned with the protection of creative rights and business ideas do not perform their duties adequately, especially when it comes to protecting the rights of the citizens. In this environment, innovation and business ideas can easily be copied and used by others to open other competitive companies.

Considering the above, I offer the following recommendations to protect the existence of commercial organizations and companies and prevent unnecessary split-ups:

- Good governance/management based on good values such as justice, equality, integrity, diligence, knowledge, ability, consideration, care, and protection of public interest.
- Employee consideration and development to support the core employees and ensure that they are satisfied and remain with the company.
- To encourage innovation and business ideas and protect the existence of companies the relevant government authorities must protect the rights of innovation and business ideas. Violations must be subjected to appropriate penalties.
- Company founders and shareholders must have a set of strict rules and regulations that defines their positions, roles, duties, and rights to prevent fraud and abuse of power, greed, selfishness, and conflicts.
- 

In a nutshell, the breakup of business entities is a norm acceptable in many different environments; however, the negative impact can frustrate many business owners and entrepreneurs. The case of Somalia is a striking example showing the ill effects of businesses operating without the blessing of their parent companies. They have been established through shrewd and cunning business practices. Maybe it is time for the government to intervene and diversify the economy so as to reduce the effect of competition within a small market area. Otherwise, business sanity in our country remains a tall order.

# ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL COUNCIL IN SOMALIA: WAS IT LONG OVERDUE

Ahmed Yasin Nur

Assistant Editor in Chief

Lecturer at University of Somalia (UNISO)

Ahmed.yasin.anur@gmail.com



Every functioning nation has its own independent national health regulator whose job is to ensure public health. A trusted health regulator not only strives to offer better health services but also more health awareness. For too long, Somalia's health providers have been unregulated and could—more or less—do as they pleased. In an environment where hospitals were popping up overnight like market stalls, medical staff could call themselves 'doctors,' unqualified workers were free to administer treatments, and pharmacists could sell the strongest drugs over the counter, without any questions asked.

Therefore, a strong regulator was urgently needed.

However, health care covers a wide range of services, and this challenge might be too much a newly established organization to handle, especially when there is little foundation to build upon. Therefore, to effectively regulate healthcare, the following three main areas have been targeted for regulation in Somalia:

- Health service facilities (where healthcare is offered).
- Health professionals (the people who provide healthcare).
- Health training institutions (the universities and institutions that train and educate health professionals).

Medication and medical equipment are areas that also need to be controlled; however, most countries have a separate regulatory body for them. This will also be the case in Somalia. In short, by regulating health service facilities, health professionals, and health institutions, Somalia will be able to provide a better health service for all citizens.

The start of the journey for individuals who suffer from ailments is to go to their nearest healthcare facility, either the local pharmacy, hospital, or specialist. It is, therefore, important that all these healthcare facilities are registered with the Ministry of Health and have a license to operate. Ideally, a healthcare facility should first acquire a license before going operational, but with many healthcare facilities already running, a top-down approach is taken. Special care must be taken that health facilities stay within the limits of their license. For instance, a pharmacy that only has permission to sell over-the-counter medication cannot function as a surgery. These health facilities also require routine inspections to ensure that they comply with all regulatory requirements and employ appropriate staff to carry out their operations

using appropriate equipment. It is hoped that gone will be the days where a hospital has patients with breathing problems but no respirators.

Upon visiting the health facility, individual patients see a health professional who takes their medical history, diagnoses their ailments, and decide a treatment plan. With the establishment of a National Health Professional Council, all health professionals—including nurses, pharmacists, lab technicians, dentists, pathologists, and surgeons—will have to be registered and licensed. Patients should feel confident that the person who is treating them is qualified to do so and has the relevant skills and expertise. However, it is often reported that in the absence of proper regulation, Somali health professionals have started to call themselves dermatologists and pediatricians without the necessary specialist qualification. Not only do these ‘professionals’ potentially cause harm to their patients, they are also eroding the public confidence in our healthcare system. Proper licensing regulations will put a stop to this alarming trend and also prevent health professionals who have had their licenses revoked in other countries from working in Somalia. These undesirables are a blight to the medical field and ought to be removed from our health system.

All health professionals have studied at university and received their medical training. The upcoming regulator must ensure that the future generation of health professionals has received the best available level of education. They can do this by working together with the Ministry of Education by approving only a select number of universities to teach health education, and by approving the curricula. Most medical students complete their hospital internships in their final year; however, from my own experience, many students who are just loitering around in the facilities and remain idle, while others choose inactive facilities where days go by without any patients. This is not how internships are supposed to work. Internships should give future health professionals plenty of experience, exposure and challenges, so that they can adjust to the demands of their profession and are ready to play their role in the future. The regulator should strictly monitor the medical programs offered by the universities, ensure that the curriculum is being followed closely, and keep annual data of internships.

The regulator should know how many new professionals are entering the job market, and how many health professionals are required. Besides regulating the training of the next batch of health professionals, the regulator should also encourage current health professional to update their knowledge and skills through continuous professional development programs. The medical field is growing fast, and every day there is new research that develops new procedures, products, and equipment. Without Continuing Professional Development (CPD), our quality of healthcare will always be lagging behind other countries.

The National Health Professional Council (NHPC) as a regulator is inevitably closely associated with the legal system. Non-compliance of minor offences can be resolved by imposing fines for non-compliance. More serious cases such as malpractice will not only result in revoking the license to practice but also imprisonment. However, before any laws can be applied the regulator must work hand-in-hand with the Justice Department to establish rigorous laws that are consistent, fair, and enforceable. The regulator should inform the affected parties of what is and what is not acceptable under the law and give sufficient time for corrections and adjustments. Furthermore, knowing that they are being monitored will force health professionals to behave ethically and act within the limits of their scope. For those who break the rules, whistle blowers should be allowed to submit reports of alleged non-compliance or malpractice, anonymously. These individuals should be protected by the law as they serve the public interest. Finally, none of the above can work without affording independence to the regulator.

A health regulator was long overdue, but now that it has been established it is important to give this public institution the space and time it needs to assume its function. With health facilities, health professionals, and health training institutions being regulated, our public health system can only improve. It is my hope that the regulator can improve not only the state of public health in Somalia but also the public perception of it, so that medical tourism will become a thing of the past. No Somali should feel forced to travel abroad to receive adequate medical treatment from qualified medical staff.



# IMPACT OF FOOD AID ON LOCAL PRODUCTION IN SOMALIA

Dr. Mohamed Ali Yusuf

Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Science

University of Somalia (UNISO)

E-mail: [m.aliyusuf@uniso.edu.so](mailto:m.aliyusuf@uniso.edu.so)



Somalia is abundantly blessed with resources in sectors like livestock, agriculture, and the blue economy, which encompasses fishing and maritime activities. In the past, a significant portion of the rural population relied on livestock keeping, adopting a nomadic lifestyle to seek out new pastures and water for their cattle. In certain towns like Mogadishu, Baraawe, and Marka, a small proportion of the population is engaged in fishing, while the rest are focused on farming in areas near the Shabelle and Jubba rivers. Since gaining independence, successive governments have actively promoted and supported the growth of agriculture, livestock, and fishing sectors.

In the aftermath of its independence, Somalia has experienced gradual economic and social development. However, in 1974, the country was hit by a severe drought (Abaartii Dabadheer). This drought posed a significant threat to the lives of many Somalis residing in the northern and central regions. In response, the Somali military government implemented measures to assist the affected population. More than 15,000 rural residents affected by the drought were relocated to the coastal towns like Ayl, Addale, Eel-Ahmed, and Baraawe.

The government not only provided shelter but also initiated training programs to educate rural residents in fishing and farming techniques, which allowed them to produce fish and crops, contributing to the country's domestic production. Instead of relying on external food aid from other countries or NGOs, the government utilized local resources, civil servants, and military personnel to combat the drought crisis. They successfully evacuated people from the affected regions and trained rural residents to sustain their lives through farming or fishing.

During the civil war, the country faced a tumultuous blend of internal conflict, recurring crises, and environmental calamities such as floods and droughts. These hardships profoundly affected Somali society, particularly the rural populace who depended on livestock and small-scale farming for their sustenance. Given that approximately 70 per cent of the population resided in rural areas, a significant portion of the people became extremely vulnerable to the repercussions of both ongoing conflicts and natural disasters. This vulnerability periodically placed millions at risk of experiencing severe famine and its devastating consequences.

Following the collapse of the military government, numerous NGOs and UN agencies

stepped in to assist the Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in Somalia and provided essential food aid as part of humanitarian assistance. While this support helped many families in dire need, it also had unintended consequences that profoundly impacted Somalia's way of life and led to the abandonment of traditional farming practices.

One of the primary factors contributing to this shift was the lack of robust institutions to effectively manage and oversee the distribution of humanitarian assistance and the types of food provided to vulnerable populations. Without proper guidance and coordination, the aid distributed may not have aligned with the local culture and dietary preferences, leading to a disconnection between the assistance provided and the needs of the people.

Furthermore, the reliance on food aid undermined the traditional farming practices that had been central to Somalia's culture and livelihood. The availability of free food reduced incentives for farming, as families became increasingly dependent on external assistance rather than engaging in agricultural activities.

It is noted that small-scale farmers in Somalia encounter numerous obstacles throughout the entire agricultural process, spanning from planting to the harvesting of crops. These challenges revolve around various factors, such as access to essential resources and inputs. Farm inputs crucial for these operations encompass land, labor, financial resources, and mechanical equipment. The farmers managed to survive under these challenging conditions, yet they faced even more severe challenges in selling their produce. During the harvest and distribution period, humanitarian aid organizations provided the same crops as free assistance, resulting in significant losses for both farmers and the local economy because the crops were supplied in surplus and at very low prices, causing the local farmers' own produce to become comparatively expensive. This situation had a detrimental impact on the farmers' profits and posed a challenge to the sustainability of their agricultural production.

Faced with these challenges, many farmers have since then made the difficult decision to abandon farming altogether. Instead, they either became unemployed or resorted to relying on humanitarian aid by settling in internally displaced persons (IDP) areas to receive food assistance. This shift from productivity to unproductivity has resulted in a significant number of farmers becoming perpetual aid recipients, leading to a decline in domestic production and the loss of valuable food producers for the country.

Furthermore, the influx of food imports from foreign countries has had a negative impact on local production. The same crops and livestock products that are produced within the country are being exported and made available at lower prices than what local producers can offer. This has created a limited market and added distress to local production. Even items such as poultry eggs and bananas for daily consumption are now

exported from foreign countries.

The following recommendations are offered to remedy this current situation:

1. NGOs and other entities involved in distributing food assistance should prioritize procuring food from local farmers and providing aid to vulnerable groups. This approach serves as an incentive for local farmers to increase their production levels.
2. Government and NGOs should invest in local production projects that give farmers access to quality seeds, fertilizers, and agricultural training. By strengthening local agriculture communities will become more resilient to future food crises and less reliant on external food aid.
3. To stimulate the local agricultural industry and provide market opportunities for local farmers it is advisable to impose a ban on the exportation of food that is produced locally. This measure will not only create a favorable environment for farmers but also serve as an incentive to increase their production levels and contribute to the local economy.
4. The adoption of climate-smart agriculture, agroforestry, and water conservation practices should be encouraged. This will help small-scale farmers adapt to climate change, improve soil fertility, and reduce reliance on chemical inputs.

In summary, the foreign food aid supply that has been the source of survival for many Somali communities has brought more harm than good in the long run. It created an agricultural economy that is heavily dependent on foreign resources. Food aid has played a destructive role as it sowed the seeds of laziness and dependence, which syndrome has led to decline of the prices of local food production, and thus undercut the income of the rural people. Consequently, the country has been put at the risk of food scarcity and food insecurity. Indeed, it is now the norm that the villagers carry with them an ID card from the NGOs to draw food or cash aid. Most of the poorer segments of society live in the rural areas, the farmland being left fallow and inactive. To this date, Somalia is still waiting for its farmers to resume their work and produce food.

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# ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN PEACE BUILDING IN SOMALIA: IS THERE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

Abshir Omar Ali Jama

Public Relations Officer, University Of Somalia

Abshir.Shigoow@Gmail.Com



A civil society organization (CSO) is a non-governmental organization (NGO), nonprofit, voluntary citizen's group organized at a local, national, or international level. CSOs are not a new phenomenon and have been active in Somalia after the outbreak of the civil war, due to the intervention of international donors to pacify the country. There are approximately 2,000 civil society organizations currently operating in Somalia, engaged in promoting peace, offering mediation, supporting conflict management, promoting human rights, and improving state-society relations.

Since the mid-1980s, CSOs and their actors have played an important role in developing channels of cooperation, resulting in an increased involvement of NGOs. In the beginning, CSO activities were triggered by neo-liberal attitudes against the state policy of nationalization and favored the privatization of state welfare and infrastructure in Somalia. Thus, NGOs have since been actively operational in line with efforts to reduce the role of the state or cover those areas where state weakness is pervasive.

This early trend was reinforced by a series of UN world conferences in the 1990s that gave substantial incentives to found new NGOs or to enlarge the scope of the existing ones. NGOs were especially presented as alternative implementers of development assistance when states or governments of Somalia's partner countries were weak or performed poorly. The preference for NGOs was due to their perceived political independence, flexibility, and effectiveness in reaching beneficiaries, in contrast with the bureaucratic state apparatus. Funding of official development assistance channeled through NGOs has increased substantially, from an average of USD3.1 billion from Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries in 1985/86 to USD7.2 billion in 2001. Other sources even mention even higher figures.

The changed nature of armed conflict and the consequent intensification of peace-building efforts in Somalia over the past decades have broadened the role of CSOs (including NGOs) and the nature of their working relationship with the United Nations (UN). Similarly, the Somali people have developed a certain degree of resilience in the face of armed attacks. Long recognized as leaders in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, the ability of CSOs to influence peace-building at the policy and operational level is also increasingly recognized.

The importance of supporting peace-building efforts is now understood more broadly in Somalia. Peace-building covers all activities related to preventing outbreaks of violence, transforming armed conflicts, finding peaceful ways to manage conflict, and creating the socio-economic and political pre-conditions for sustainable development and peace.

One important element is the link between peace-building and economic development, which includes poverty reduction efforts. The civil war has already caused enough suffering for the Somali people, including hunger and starvation, while the loss of property and displacement of a once vibrant communities into internally displacement camps raised a lot of tension, leading to more insecurity. Thus, the NGOs focused on revitalizing the economic capacity of the communities by providing humanitarian aid like food, shelter and startup capital. These and similar efforts have created a conducive environment for peace.

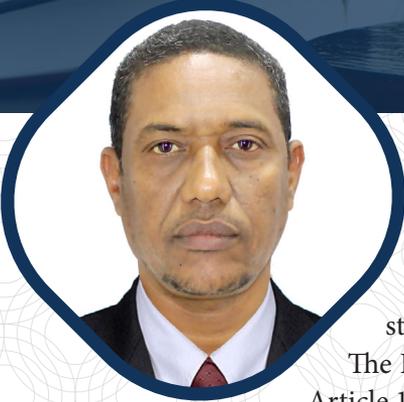
Another symbolic attempt at peace-building in Somalia was the new direction indicated at the Somali Constitutional Conference at Garowe in 1998, which lasted for three months. In this conference, Puntland was recognized as a federal state that would deliver security to the population, offer services, facilitate trade and interact with both domestic and international partners. This conference was attended by the Somali elites, political actors, religious and clan leaders, businessmen, and SCOs. The Garowe Constitutional Conference was, therefore, an attempt by the civil society to bring peace in the country.

In addition, SCOs have been able to fund peace initiatives in Somalia. A case in point is the Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative, (GYPI) which is part of the UN peace-building initiative in Somalia. It is designed to empower women and youth and help promote peace through self-help projects. Targeting the Somali youth in this initiative was an effective way of deterring them from being used as weapons of war and protecting the Somali women who had suffered greatly during the war.

In conclusion, the SCOs have delivered a coherent and strategic plan to fulfil the humanitarian needs of the Somali people. Their strategy in distributing aid and uplifting the economic livelihood of the people were the tenets of the peace-building efforts. After all, the foundation for peace lies with fulfilling the people's basic needs. Other advocacy programs like promotion of democracy and literacy are all binding to this same principle.

# THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT: IS THIS PROCESS TOO POLITICIZED

Dr. Osman Mohamed Ismail  
Lecturer at Postgraduate Studies  
University of Somalia  
osmannotary@gmail.com



The Federal Government of Somalia has called for a process to finalize the Provisional Constitution. However, this move is criticized as a concealed effort to draft an entirely new Constitution to replace the existing one. This has led to an uproar among the Somali politicians and increased the already strong opposition against the amendment process.

The Federal Government is arguing that its position is supported by Article 132, Clause Two of the Provisional Constitution, which states:

- The Federal Government or a Federal Member State government, a member of the Federal
- Parliament or a petition signed by at least 40,000 citizens may initiate the amendment process.
- A House of Parliament may take a final vote only three (3) months or more after the report of the Joint Committee in terms of Clause.
- If the Parliament approves one or more proposed amendments in terms of this Article and Article 136 concerning the Review of the Final Constitution, it shall conduct a referendum on the Revised Constitution as amended.
- 

Constitutional articles are also being cited by the opposition actors, notably Puntland State, as support for its claims. For example, Article one, Clause 2 of the Provisional Constitution states:

After Allah the Almighty, all power is vested in the people and can only be exercised in accordance with the Constitution and the law and through the relevant institutions. It is prohibited for a person or a section of the public to claim the sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Somalia or to use it for their personal interest.

In addition, Puntland State is citing Article 142 that encapsulates the role of the existing Federal Member States in the finalization of the Provisional Constitution, which states:

1. Until such time that all the Federal Member States of Somalia are established and the adopted Federal Member State Constitutions are harmonized with the Somali Federal Constitution, the Federal Member States existing prior to the provisional adoption of this Provisional Constitution by a National Constituent Assembly shall retain and exercise powers endowed by their own State Constitution.
2. Existing Federal Member States must be consulted in the decision-making process regarding the federal system, and security arrangements.

The Provisional Constitution was approved by over 800 delegates in 2012. Several sensitive issues were forwarded to be discussed and agreed upon by political stakeholders, including power sharing, resource sharing, revenue sharing, status of the capital city, and a written modus operandi before a popular referendum.

However, the backbone of the disagreement stems from provisions being introduced like changing the structure of the state and switching from a parliamentary system to a presidential system as proposed by the government. In this proposal, the government would be accountable to the presidency, giving the president the power to appoint and dismiss the prime minister.

It should be noted that Somalia has been practicing a parliamentarian system since the independence. From the look of things, this type of democratic system has proven to suit the Somali public owing to their egalitarian customs and traditional norms. However, this controversial process was ignited by a communiqué from the National Consultative Council (NCC), which excluded Puntland State from the process. This unexpected move startled many, seemingly coming out of nowhere. Most aggravating is the term 'extension' awarded to the leaders of the Federal Member States, which caused much suspicion about the legitimacy of the process.

It is clear that this process lacks the broader consensus of the political stakeholders, given that the political parties are looking forward to the coming 2026 campaign. Assuming these changes pave the way for the government, how will Somalia look like in 2026? Will the president retain his position until the general elections?

A fragile country like Somalia, which is just recovering from decades of political violence and instability, needs to protect her sovereignty by working closely with regional political establishments. The constitutional amendment issue requires a broader political settlement and co-governance. The question is how the move to abolish power-sharing offices will improve this situation. Some of

the NCC proposals included holding local municipalities and regional states elections in June and November of 2024, respectively. However, are these proposed elections viable?

In conflict-affected countries like Somalia, the constitutional review process is accepted as part of an all-inclusive peace process that involves all actors. The important point is that negotiation over the process of drafting the constitution can be as contentious as the drafting itself. It is, therefore, important that the forum for these decisions is inclusive and truly representative of the key stakeholders.

Another key issue is the elections. The modus operandi to hold elections in the newly proposed system is very risky, because this gives Villa Somalia the authority to determine who will be the candidates for the presidency of the Federal Member States, as the electoral commission appointment can be influenced by the president. This means that

the parliament will automatically lose the mandate to elect the president. In addition, universal adult suffrage requires serious civic education that creates the awareness of the electoral process on the part of the people. This will ultimately put a check on potential outbreaks of political violence among the contenders and their supporters.

### **The Way Forward**

On a cautionary note, this process may not materialize as expected due to the absence of the commission's legal basis and lack of impartiality, in addition to the questionable move to extend the tenures of the members of Parliament and Federal Members in exchange for their support of the amendment. This may be the call for acknowledged political experts to analyze the current situation characterized by relentless politicking and offer some much-needed perspective.

The process of forming a commission of experts is influenced by many factors, depending on the legal, political, social, and security context.

However, it can be agreed that the root cause for the current political crisis in Somalia lies in way of governance. The previous regimes attempted to take a unilateral move at the expense of our statehood but ended up plunging Somalia into a sea of misery and destruction. We should learn from the past and decide to act wisely rather than rashly, so that we can preserve what unites us as a people and steer away from that which may divide us.

However, for this to happen the Somali people must receive civic education, so that they are more informed of the political processes and more aware of the importance of elections. Notwithstanding, the Somali public is well-advised to protect and defend the power of parliament to elect the head of state. The authority bestowed upon the president to appoint and fire the prime minister is a double-edged sword; it may ensure stability but it may also weaken his role and prevent him from executing his mandate.

In conclusion, our own history has taught us that unilateral decisions are often short-sighted, ultimately compelling the stakeholders to draft a unified agreement. There is no significant victory to celebrate, because the Constitution is far more than a symbolic document of statehood. The Constitution requires a referendum; otherwise, it will remain provisional. The process led by Villa Somalia can be effective if the opposing actors, notably Puntland, either concede or agree in a consensus to conduct credible elections within a timeframe accepted by all stakeholders. Yet, if the president fails to persuade the opposition, the victories being celebrated may be too early to take home.

# WHY DO SOMALI WOMEN HAVE SEVERE ANEMIA IN PREGNANCY?

Dr. Basra Daud Salad  
nalkanuurto065@gmail.com



A person is anemic when low oxygen levels are present, carrying hemoglobin proteins that are found in the red blood cells. Hemoglobin proteins have an iron molecule in their core. Low hemoglobin levels cause difficulties in breathing, and people with anemia experience shortness of breath, tiredness, headaches, and fatigue. For women, hemoglobin levels between 12.3 and 15.3 g/dl and above are normal. The diagnosis criteria of anemia change depending on the stage of pregnancy. Pregnancy stages are broken down into three trimesters of 13 to 14 weeks. In the first trimester, hemoglobin levels lower than 11 g/dl are considered anemic, while 10.5g/dl is the threshold for the second and third trimesters. Moderate anemia is diagnosed when the hemoglobin levels are between 9-10g /dl, and severe anemia below 8g /dl.

In Somalia, the rate of severe anemia among pregnant women is considerably high, mainly due to their ignorance of its causes and the generally poor health conditions in the country. Given these reasons, it is rather the exception than the norm for a pregnant Somali woman not to suffer from anemia. In fact, one in every four pregnant patients who visit health care centers have anemia, which is not counting all those women who do undergo regular checkups during pregnancy.

The main cause for severe anemia is that patients do not understand that it is likely to occur during pregnancy due to iron deficiency. Every pregnant woman should take iron supplements, which is also recommended for other individuals. Most Somalis assume that eating red meat is sufficient to avoid iron deficiency and do not consider taking food supplements when they feel fit and healthy.

However, every normal pregnancy causes a relative anemia in the woman, due to an increase in plasma volume. The red blood cells in the plasma carry oxygen, while white blood cells fight infections, and platelets help blood clotting. During every pregnancy, the blood volume increases, which results in a concomitant hemodilution. This means that although the red blood cell mass increases, the plasma even further increases, which results in a lowered hemoglobin level.

The data collected during my research in Mukkaramah Specialist Hospital 2022–2023 showed that most pregnant women have hemoglobin levels below 10 and thus either have

moderate or severe anemia. The data shows that for every 5 anemic pregnant women in the third trimester, 3 of them (60%) have moderate anemia and 2 of them (40%) have severe anemia. In the second trimester, for every 5 anemic women, 1 of them (20%) has moderate anemia and 4 of them (80%) have severe anemia. In the first trimester, for every 5 anemic pregnant women, 1 woman (20%) has severe anemia, 2 women (40%) have moderate anemia, and 2 women (40%) have mild anemia.

The data also showed that most anemic Somali women do not want to take blood transfusion and/or oral supplements. Intake of oral supplements is low especially for pregnant women with severe anemia in the 35th to 40th week of gestation

There are several key reasons why anemia is prevalent among so many pregnant women in Somalia. First, pregnant women rarely visit a health center during their first trimester. They see no reason to visit a doctor unless they have a medical condition or experience symptoms. However, all pregnant women are best-advised to do monthly checkups for the first six months even when they are fine.

Second, many people underestimate the importance of diet and its relation to anemia. An often-heard argument is, 'How can someone who eats well can have anemia?' Health workers often find it very challenging to convince their patients that their diet is the cause. Eating regular meals does not prevent an expectant mother from developing anemia due to a lack of iron and folic acid. Pregnant women need to eat more iron-rich foods such as meat, fish, eggs, dried beans, and grain.

Third, many pregnant women do not consider taking iron and folic supplements, especially in the first trimester, which is common medical practice in all parts of the world. In Somalia, most pregnant women fail to take this vital supplement in the first trimester and only start their antenatal visits to the doctor in the second or third trimester.

Fourth, there is limited public awareness of anemia during pregnancy. In my medical practice, I have had numerous cases of women with such severe anemia that they required immediate blood transfusions to correct their iron deficiency, even though they had not experienced any blood loss. These severe cases could have been prevented had there been better health education in the community and more awareness.

To reduce the rate of anemia cases amongst pregnant women a full team of dedicated doctors and health workers are needed. They should ensure that all members of the community, especially the affected women, are aware of the risk of iron deficiency and anemia. Most importantly, women who know they are pregnant must visit the nearest health center to ensure that they receive the necessary supplements and guidance in their first trimester.

# *Welcome to* Uniso



# WHY SOMALI YOUTH USE FAKE NAMES ON FACEBOOK: EXPLORING MOTIVATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

Dr. Mohamed Adam Isak

Assistant Professor at University of Somalia (UNISO)

Mohamed.Isak@uniso.edu.so



In today's digitally connected world, over 5.4 billion people accessed the internet in 2023, accounting for an incredible 67% of the global population. Here, Somalian internet users are not far behind. In early 2023, Somalia showcased significant progresses in digital adoption and usage. The country boasted 1.76 million internet users, marking an internet penetration rate of 9.8%. Social media usage was also notable, with 1.95 million users (10.9%) of the total population. Additionally, the increase of cellular mobile connections was remarkable, totaling 7.99 million (44.7%) active connections. These statistics underscore Somalia's increasing integration into the digital landscape, reflecting a growing reliance on internet and mobile technologies for communication, information access, and connectivity [Source: datareportal.com]. For social media, Facebook leads social networks with more than 3 billion monthly active users. From staying in touch with loved ones to sharing ideas, finding entertainment, and even purchasing online, the internet has become an irrefutable force in influencing our world. Facebook has become a popular platform for Somali youth to communicate with friends, family, and the larger online community.

However, a common practice among the young users is to use false names in their Facebook profiles and hide their true identity. In this respect, Facebook is actively working to combat fake accounts. In the fourth quarter of 2023, they took action and closed 691 million fake Facebook accounts, compared to 827 million in the previous quarter. This demonstrates their ongoing commitment to creating a more authentic online experience for all users [according to a report by Stacy Jo Dixon, 20 March 2024]. Despite these efforts, fake accounts remain an issue on this popular social media platform.

This paper examines the common practice of using false identities on Facebook among Somali youth. It examines the underlying causes of this negative behavior, including cultural pressures and privacy concerns. This paper investigates the incentives driving this phenomenon as well as the obstacles and risks connected with it.

Privacy concerns stand out as a major motivator for Somali youth adopting fake identities on Facebook. In a society where personal information can be sensitive and privacy is valued, many youth feel compelled to protect themselves from undesirable attention. By using fake names, they want to maintain secrecy and control over their online presence, protecting

themselves from any threats and avoiding unwarranted attention.

Many Somali youth hide their true identity on Facebook because they feel pressured to conform with societal norms and expectations. In Somali culture, a person's reputation is important. Therefore, young people might feel like they have to act a certain way online to be accepted. Using fake names gives them the freedom to create an image of themselves that they think others will like or matches the image they wish to have. This helps them feel they are accepted by the other members of their online groups.

Somali youth may perceive several benefits from using fake names on Facebook. One advantage is the freedom to explore various aspects of their identity or express themselves without fear of being judged or punished. This sense of independence and self-discovery can empower young people, who are engaged in increasingly complex social interactions, by allowing them to experiment with alternative identities through the use of pseudonyms or nicknames, as well as conversations or behaviors that they may be hesitant to have or exhibit under their real names.

However, the use of fake names on Facebook also poses significant risks and challenges for Somali youth. One prominent concern is the risk of identity theft and internet fraud. With the prevalence of hostile actors targeting social media platforms, fake profiles are easy to exploit. Somali youth may find themselves in difficulties as their fake identities are discovered, resulting in reputational damage and personal security risks.

Furthermore, Facebook's verification policies create further obstacles to this popular practice. Since the platform requires users to be verified with official documents such as passports, discrepancies between a name on the document and the name on the account can result in account suspension or loss of access. Many Somali youth regret not using their real names from the beginning in the face of these verification challenges.

Thus, this paper suggests that Somali young people should use their real names on Facebook and be themselves, show who they really are, and being honest and responsible in their online interactions. Here are the key suggestions outlined:

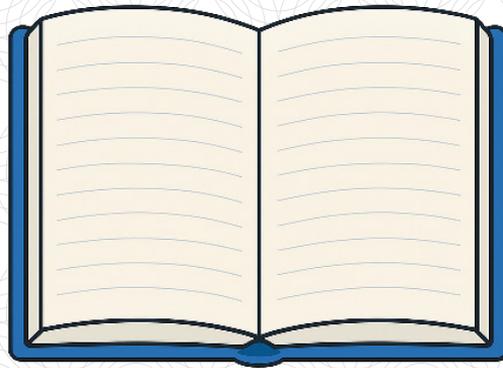
1. **Embrace the Benefits of Authenticity:** Facebook can serve as a forum for genuine connection and personal expression. Building a more significant online presence and fostering trust are two benefits of using actual names.
2. **Privacy Settings are Your Friend:** Facebook users can manage who sees their information and posts on Facebook by selecting from a variety of privacy settings. Somali youth can use these options to share their information comfortably while retaining their privacy.
3. **Develop a Positive Online Identity:** It is important to use caution when posting anything online. Somali youth can build a strong online reputation by showcasing

their abilities, passions, and positive aspects of their life on Facebook.

4. **Critical Thinking is Key:** When interacting online, especially with strangers, some caution must be exercised. Somali youth should be wary of requests for personal information and avoid sharing anything that could compromise their safety.
5. **Report Fake Accounts:** Facebook provides tools to report fake accounts. Somali youth can actively participate in creating a safer online environment by reporting suspicious profiles.

In conclusion, the use of fake names on Facebook accounts is to be discouraged as it goes against our moral values. It normalizes deceit and pretense. Social media users must not be allowed to abuse these platforms from the safety of their assumed identities which protect their anonymity. They must be forced to own up to their own actions and not be allowed to remain hidden behind their fake names, which only facilitates deceitful behavior. Hopefully, Facebook will be closed to anyone who still has to learn how to be their authentic self.

# UNISO SPECTRUM MAGAZINE



# EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION IN SOMALI SCHOOLS

Muse Omar Nur

Lecturer at Faculty of Education and Humanities

University of Somalia

muusecn@gmail.com



Educational supervision is one of the means of improving the quality of teaching and learning process. Its goal is to monitor all academic activities in schools, in coordination with the parties in charge of the teaching process (principals, teachers, and students). Since 2015, the Ministry of Education has taken a more active role in education. The Ministry has trained teachers, recruited supervisors, and standardized curriculum and examinations. Educational supervisors are thus essential to monitor these activities.

The educational supervisor is a technical expert whose main job is to help teachers grow professionally and solve any issues they face, thereby improving teacher performance. In addition, supervisors provide technical services to improve teaching methods and guide the educational processes.

The development of educational supervision has taken different forms. The oldest form is inspectional supervision which is based on the use of punishment as a means of reform due to the autocratic, social conditions and principles at the time. However, as governance was becoming more democratic, this traditional perspective changed and was reformed.

Educational supervision underwent six changes. The first type of supervision emphasized on the personality of the teacher and personal initiative. This was followed by scientific supervision where the scientific method was used to identify the most effective methods in the supervisory process. Third, creative supervision was developed as a combination of the democratic and scientific types. Next was the corrective supervision style where the supervisory methods were diversified to maximize results and increase efficiency. Following the preventive supervision style was the constructive style, soon superseded by clinical supervision concerned with improving classroom work by visiting the classrooms, observing the teaching and learning processes, identifying weaknesses, and making recommendations. The modern concept of educational supervision focuses on the interaction between the supervisor and the teacher, which requires the former to use an appropriate supervisory style that has the greatest impact on the teacher's positive attitude towards improving student learning.

In the current educational system the supervisor's role is of great importance in all stages of school education, whether in the elementary or the secondary stage. Other than supervising teachers, the supervisor inspects academic tools such as attendance reports, class schedules, registry, assessments and extra-curricular activities. It is the duty of the supervisor to report

on the current progress and ensure that the goals set by the Ministry of Education are achieved.

In summary, the role of educational supervision is indispensable because every academic activity needs supervision to maintain a high educational standard and build a better generation. In this case, the education administration relies on educational supervisors to take corrective actions and ensure that the educational process unfolds as required.

However, the educational supervisory process is difficult and complex in a country like Somalia which has suffered more than a quarter of a century of wars and the absence of a governmental administrative structure to monitor the educational process and implement the pedagogical process in schools. In the late 1990s, private educational umbrella organizations were established to coordinate the activities of their associated schools in terms of unifying the educational curriculum, educational supervision, and teacher training. These umbrella organizations were formed by a group of educational associations and institutions based in Mogadishu. Some of these umbrellas adopted the Arab system (6, 3, 3) where a student spends six years in the first stage, 3 years in middle school, and three years in high school, while others used the educational systems of the neighboring countries. Both systems included a progressive assessment system of monthly and mid-year tests, and end-of-year exams. The educational associations achieved tangible achievements and soon replaced the Ministry of Education by issuing a secondary certificate recognized in many Arab and neighboring countries. The educational association had its own system of supervision.

In 2015, the Ministry of Education unified the secondary school certificate exams for all states in the central and southern regions of Somalia, which is still in force today. In the intermediate stage, each region has a uniform set of core subjects and examinations, although there is no effective teacher training and educational supervision in place. Therefore, the supervisory process in schools must be developed and training courses must be conducted to raise the performance of the teachers at the regional level.

In conclusion, teacher professionalism needs to be continuously improved by educational supervisors. Such improvement is carried out by supervisors through educational supervision techniques including class visits, class observations and clinical supervision. To perform their duties efficiently, supervisors need to renew, improve and advance their supervisory practices. Improvement of teacher The supervisor's role is to renew, improve, and advance his supervisory, thus enabling the teachers and school administrators to follow suit and achieve the set goals, in a coordinated and effective manner.

# ESTABLISHING WRITING CENTERS IN SOMALI UNIVERSITIES: BASIC GUIDELINES

Dr. Mohamed Hassan

Senior Advisor to the Vice Chancellor

University of Somalia

Mohamed\_hassan@uniso.edu.so



This article is one of a series of articles in which I have explored the concept of writing centers. In my first article, I focused on the poor writing skills among university students, which are a concern for both higher education institutions and employers in Somalia. I briefly discussed some of the factors behind students' poor writing skills. In my second article, I presented some solutions to this challenge, indicating the importance of establishing writing centers in Somali universities to provide writing support to students.

In this third article, I will attempt to answer a series of key questions that a university must consider when setting up a writing center. These questions include: What will be the writing center's goals? Who benefits from the center? Where will the center be located? Who will direct the center? Who will staff the center? What will the center offer? How will the staff be trained and paid? What resources are needed? How will records be kept? How will the staff and services be evaluated? Answering these questions will help shape our idea of the center's future structure and services. In this attempt, I will make every effort to provide useful and practical advice. However, it should be stated here that context is very important. Therefore, I do not intend to be prescriptive; rather, I hope that this article can serve as a guide for institutions willing to set up their own writing center.

First of all, the establishment of a writing center stems from the institution's efforts to help students improve their writing skills. Therefore, the institution must define its goals that will guide the activities and services offered, such as providing students with more individualized and collaborative writing assistance as well as creating a campus-wide culture where writing is valued, practiced, and celebrated by staff and students. It goes without saying that the goals of each institution will be different. However, it is important for the institution to clarify these goals before moving on to the practical issues. This will help clarify the center's priorities and its stakeholders.

The next question to be answered is the target group. Determining whom the center will serve is essential to other key decisions, including selection of location and recruitment of staff. In general, many writing centers work exclusively with undergraduate and graduate students. They work with students across a range of disciplines and at all levels, especially students who use English as a second language. However, some centers may work directly with staff who

wish to improve their own writing skills. This may take the form of group teaching with staff or developing writing programs. This article will be addressed to writing centers that provide support to students to improve their writing skills.

Selecting the right location for the writing center is another important issue. The institution may consider university buildings or areas that students most often frequent. It would be a good idea if one could visit a few centers in different institutions to see what different models look like. Many writing centers are located in the university library. This model seems to work well because of its visibility and easy accessibility for students and staff who will be aware of the center's existence and require less extensive advertising. The location must be chosen carefully.

The fourth issue to consider is staff recruitment. It has to be decided who will manage the center and select the staff. The director of the center must be someone who is willing to take on administrative responsibilities, is able to train the tutors, and is ready to give individual writing lessons. The tutors may be students, graduate students, part-time teachers, professionals, or faculty members. Student tutors may qualify for work/study stipends, paid on an hourly basis, or receive course credits in exchange for their involvement. Trainee teachers may also be compensated for practicum hours, graduate students, and faculty instructors as part of their teaching responsibilities.

In my view, the success of a writing center is based on the quality of the tutors. Therefore, hiring the right individuals is essential to the establishment, continuity, and reputation of the center. Tutors are the interface between the management and the clients; therefore, a positive professional experience is essential for all involved. The institution needs to search for tutors who are:

- Excellent writers, learner-centered in their approach.
- Excellent communicators.
- Capable of working within a team and independently.
- In possession of excellent interpersonal and organizational skills.
- Sensitive to students' writing interests and mindful of maintaining trust and confidentiality (where appropriate).
- Committed to creating a safe and engaging learning environment.

Training and development are also essential for new tutors. Such training and development may comprise pre-employment training and continuing professional development (CPD). The number of tutors employed will depend largely on the level of support provided, student numbers, and practical issues such as deadlines for college-wide assignments. Another major issue for tutors is communication among the staff. Tutors need to work as

a team and hold regular team meetings to establish rapport and support as well as a way to provide a safe space to express difficulties.

Daily activity – The center may provide a range of writing-related support and services. However, the main part of the daily activity will be individual consultation sessions between students and tutors. Depending on the institution, these consultations should be booked in advance. The center may also offer some of the following:

- Drop-in writing help.
- Individual tutoring by appointment.
- Discipline specific work with individual departments.
- Referral to other services/support on campus.
- Group work space.
- Access to relevant materials and publications.

The extent to which any of the above is provided depends on the institution. It is advisable to start with individual bookable appointments. This can be done online, and there are software packages that can help coordinate the time slots. However, an email address and a shared web-based calendar can also be used.

Resources – The heart of the writing center is the interaction between the tutors and the students, and the ready availability of references such as dictionaries and grammar books. Since many of these resources are now available online, access to a personal computer or laptop is essential. The resources can be grouped under topics useful to students, such as essay writing, writing processes, test writing, grammar and punctuation, references and citations. The center may also have discipline-specific materials that can be collected from different departments. It is probably best to start small and build up the scope of what can be offered, as it can be difficult to forecast demand in advance. Because the focus of a writing center is on the individual, the center must also provide materials that suit a variety of learning styles, including games and videos.

Records – The center will need to keep a record of the students attending. When students are referred by their teachers, records should be kept of every visit for future reference. The student record is also needed to confirm how many students visit the center, how often they visit, what services they use, and the progress they make. Typically, these data are compiled in yearly reports sent to the department heads of the university. In addition to informing administrators of the center's activities, such reports also help the administrators to understand more fully what writing centers do and why their function is. The writing centers currently in operation will be happy to share report samples upon request.



Evaluation – Evaluating the services of a writing center is good practice and can be vital in terms of quality assurance and institutional support. Apart from identifying the challenges associated with its services and opportunities for improvement, the evaluation helps the center to identify its strengths and acknowledge its success, which is motivating for the entire team. Part of the evaluation is done in team meetings to discuss what is working, what is not working, and what actions need to be taken. Students who attend individual appointments can be followed up via email. At the end of each semester, an online survey can be conducted to obtain feedback on a range of aspects. The data collected, along with other evaluative measures throughout the year, are compiled into the annual report. Also identified can be usage patterns that will affect the ongoing operation of the services provided. They will also have an impact on future staffing, funding, resources and possibly location.

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# THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF DECLINING BANANA EXPORTS

Dr. Mohammed Ahmed Kullane

Dean of Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary

Kulane21dr@uniso.edu.so



In most African countries, agriculture has taken the center stage as the backbone of the national economy. In this kind of economy cultivation of crops and rearing of animals are the main economic activities, with varying levels of production, small scale or large-scale farming. The traditional type of farming system was subsistence farming until the mid-nineteenth century. European colonial powers took control of the African nations and established their own economic policies, thus reducing the whole

African continent to being a ready source of raw materials for European manufacturing industries and fulfill the increasing demand brought about by the industrial revolution.

In Somalia, a large segment of population depends on agriculture for their livelihood. Indeed, about 75 percent of arable land is owned and managed by small farmers, 25 percent is owned by large scale farmers. 66 percent of the population is employed in primary production, according to the report by the African Development Bank published on 20 February 2023.

The Somali farmers can be categorized into two groups; they are either herders who rear animals like camels, cattle, goats, and sheep or land cultivators. The herders live mainly in semi-arid areas where rainfall is scarce, while the fertile areas are inhabited by the land cultivators. These two climatic differences are one of the reasons for the endless conflicts that have ravaged this country, with people fighting for the scarce resources.

Somalia used to be a major exporter of bananas which brought a lot of benefits to the farmers and the country at large. To begin with, the land offered the farmers job security as well as a sense of belonging to their ancestral land. They enjoyed a high level of socio-economic stability through banana cultivation.

In addition, banana production offered the farmers and the sellers a lot of profit, which enabled them to own assets like houses, vehicles, machinery and send their children to school. The profits accrued from banana cultivation encouraged the farmers growing other crops to work harder and gain entry into the market. This boosted and diversified Somalia's agricultural sector, contributing to domestic and foreign earnings. While livestock farming topped the domestic and foreign earning, banana production was always in second place in terms of earnings in both domestic and export markets. This trend, however, has declined in recent years for a number of reasons which will be explained below.

The Somali civil war in the 1990s caused a great deal of security instability. This led to the displacement of banana farmers who were forced to flee to the safer areas in the cities where most of the camps for the internally displaced persons were situated. This large-scale displacement of the civil population affected all Somalis, but the displacement of the banana farmers it cost the national economy millions of dollars in export profits.

As a consequence, there was rampant unemployment, especially in the sectors connected with banana production. This sector used to employ a chain of thousands of workers along its production lines, from machine operators, drivers, to water engineers. At the tail end of production were the market vendors who were cut off from the production chain. All this dealt a big blow to the economy.

Further, the collapse of the main irrigation supply canals for banana production also affected the small-scale farmers for other crops like sweet potatoes, tomatoes, sesame, mangoes, and lemon. They had used the water that was channeled to their farms through smaller canals. The sudden lack of water supplies spelt doom for all farmers in the region, leading to food scarcity and famine.

The insecurity generated from the civil war further led to looting of farm machinery like tractors, excavators, ploughing machines, irrigation machines and other equipment, which worsened the already bad situation for banana farmers. On top of this, many young Somalis expected to be employed in those farms were lured to dangerous activities like piracy and rebellion during the civil war. This escalated an already bad situation. On the one hand, the farms lost able-bodied men in the war and on the other hand, the same war turned them into destructive, vicious monsters. This state of lawlessness struck a heavy blow to the economy, especially to banana farming.

Probably the worst effect to our economy was the devaluation of the Somali shilling. The shilling had always stood as a symbol of Somali pride, national identity and national sovereignty, competing with the world economies. However, all this shining glory turned into gloom the day the Somali shilling lost its value and was replaced with the US dollar. The small farmers found it difficult to manage their affairs using this foreign, unknown currency, and continued using the devalued currency, even if it meant they hardly made any profit. This situation forced many banana farmers out of business.

Despite the abovementioned challenges, banana crops have continued to trickle into the market; however, on a vastly diminished scale. As the main diet for the Somali population and the region, the banana crop has proved to be very resilient. There is hope, however, because plenty of bananas still fill the vendors' stalls, and there is every sign that the good old days of banana farming will return in the near future. However, before the banana farmers can smile again, they will have to embrace modern technology, stop relying on harmful fertilizers and pesticides, and grow healthy, organic bananas of superior quality. They will also have to have access to modern storage facilities and conquer their place in the overseas markets.

# IMPACT OF PESTICIDE ON HUMAN HEALTH IN SOMALIA

Ahmed Abdulkadir

Ahmeddhoore2020@gmail.com



A pesticide is any substance that is used to kill, or repel pests namely insects and other organisms that are harmful to agricultural produce. A pesticide includes herbicides, insecticides, nematicides and fungicides. Pesticides protect the crops from parasites, and every farmer using them can expect good yields. This is why the local farmers have resorted to using pesticides to avert losses to their farm produce. However, pesticides have a dark side. Recent research found that mycotoxins contaminated sorghum and maize in Somalia, which affected the health of the Somali consumers. Responsible use of pesticides reduces the presence of fungi producing mycotoxins; however, the chemicals are sprayed directly on the crops that will be ingested by the end consumer and are bound to jeopardize our health. The extent of this harmful effect depends on the specific pesticide used and the level of exposure.

South Somalia has a thriving agricultural industry which involves the cultivation of crops, such as maize and beans, which need a lot of pesticide application to grow. As such, all individuals who work in agriculture or pest control are at immediate risk of pesticide exposure. Without proper safety precautions and protective equipment, they may experience higher levels of exposure, leading to an increased risk of acute poisoning and chronic health effects.

Depending on the level of exposure, these health effects vary. High levels of exposure to certain pesticides can lead to acute poisoning, resulting in short-term symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, dizziness, headaches, and even seizures or loss of consciousness in severe cases. On the other hand, long-term cases—even at low levels—have been associated with various chronic health effects including cancer (leukemia, lymphoma, prostate cancer), reproductive disorders, neurological disorders, respiratory problems, and endocrine disruptions. Pesticide exposure has higher risks for certain individuals. For example, pesticide exposure during pregnancy or early childhood can cause developmental issues in children. It has been linked to birth defects, impaired cognitive development, behavioral abnormalities, and compromised immune function. Other individuals may experience allergic reactions to specific pesticides, resulting in skin rashes, itching, swelling, or respiratory symptoms such as wheezing and difficulty in breathing.

All exposed individuals can develop neurological, hormonal and respiratory disorders. Exposure to certain pesticides, such as organophosphates and organochlorines, can negatively affect the nervous system. Prolonged or high-level exposure to these pesticides has been associated with neurotoxicity, leading to symptoms like tremors, memory loss, confusion, and impaired coordination. Other pesticides can disrupt the endocrine system which regulates hormone production and other functions in the body. Endocrine-disrupting pesticides may interfere with the normal hormonal balance and can lead to reproductive disorders, developmental abnormalities, and hormonal imbalances. Finally, inhalation of pesticide fumes or particles can irritate the respiratory system and exacerbate pre-existing respiratory conditions such as asthma. These pesticides may cause symptoms like coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, and—in severe cases—respiratory failure.

One way through which humans can be exposed to high levels of pesticides is through water and food contamination. The application of pesticides on farms that are close to main rivers and freshwater ponds can contaminate these water sources through runoff from agricultural fields, posing a risk to residents who rely on these water sources for domestic consumption. The increasing rate of floods can spread pesticide-affected waters across a larger area. Similarly, the consumption of the livestock that feed on pesticide-contaminated vegetation will cause a double tragedy as both animals and humans are exposed to the poison. Food and water contamination contribute to long-term cumulative exposure.

Pesticides are a necessary evil that must be used correctly to safeguard public health. First, only the minimum necessary amount must be used. It is a fatal assumption that twice the amount of pesticide will do twice the job. Second, safety gear must be worn while applying pesticides and working on farms. The gear includes impermeable gloves, long trousers and long-sleeved shirts which must be changed and washed after every use. The hands must be also be rinsed and cleaned after working around pesticides. Finally, pesticides must not be sprayed on windy and rainy days, and care must be taken to prevent runoff from agricultural fields. Lastly, it is prudent to read the instructions on the labels carefully before applying the pesticide.

In conclusion, it shall be noted that the specific health effects of pesticides can vary depending on various factors such as the type of pesticide, concentration, duration of exposure, and individual susceptibility. Proper handling, storage, and following safety guidelines when using pesticides can help minimize potential risks to human health.

# FACTORS INFLUENCING LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT IN THE SERVICE SECTOR IN MOGADISHU

Dahir Mohamed Abdullahi

Lecturer at Faculty of Management and Economics

University of Somalia

dahir.m.abdullahi71@gmail.com



Logistics management is a part of supply chain management. It involves planning, implementing, and controlling the efficient, effective forward and reverse flow storage of goods, services, and related information. Logistics entails managing the flow of goods between the point of origin and the point of consumption to meet certain requirements set by customers or corporations. The resources managed in logistics can include physical items, such as food, materials, equipment and liquids, as well as abstract items, such as time, information, particles, and energy. The logistics of physical items usually involves the integration of information flow, material handling, production, packaging, inventory, transportation, warehousing, and security. The complexity of logistics can be modeled, analyzed, visualized, and optimized by dedicated simulation software. Minimizing the use of resources is a common motivation in logistics for import and export.



Mogadishu, the capital city of Somalia, has experienced notable growth and development in recent years. The city has seen increased construction and real estate development,

reflecting the positive economic and social changes occurring in the region. Regarding the key points of the development boom and new model construction in Mogadishu, infrastructure development has witnessed significant investment, including the construction and rehabilitation of roads, and public facilities. These improvements have enhanced connectivity, accessibility, and quality of life for residents and businesses. One of such developments is observed in the real estate sector which has witnessed the construction of residential, commercial, and mixed-use/multipurpose buildings. This construction boom has created economic opportunities and employment prospects, including generating jobs in various sectors, thus contributing to local economic growth and poverty reduction.

Logistics management in the service sector in Mogadishu, Somalia, has been influenced by various factors. First, local companies offer a wide range of services such as transportation, warehousing, and distribution thereby playing a crucial role in facilitating the movement of goods within the city. Furthermore, they ensure that services are accessible to the target population. Road transport is the primary mode of transportation for service delivery within Mogadishu and includes various types of vehicles, such as vans, motorcycles, and bicycles, depending on the nature and scale of the delivery.

Many businesses in Mogadishu's main market, Bakaaro, deal in wholesale trade. This covers a wide range of products including food items, consumer goods, clothing, and electronics. These distributors often have their own logistics operations to transport goods from the market to various retailers and businesses across Mogadishu, including retail stores, restaurants, and hotels, and logistics companies. They rely on road transport to deliver products and services to their customers, which involves strategically locating service centers, offices, or branches in areas that are easily reachable for customers.

In addition, logistics management also involves arranging transportation and distribution networks to deliver services to customers. This could include managing fleets of vehicles, coordinating routes, and optimizing delivery schedules to multiple retailers operating within Bakaaro. These retailers rely on service delivery logistics to restock their inventory. They often engage with local logistics providers or have in-house delivery personnel to transport goods from the market to their respective stores or customer locations.

The service sector encompasses a wide range of activities, including transportation, healthcare, telecommunications, banking, and hospitality. Effective logistics management ensures the smooth and efficient flow of goods, information, and services within and between these sectors. Therefore, efficient transportation is crucial for logistics management.

Mogadishu has several trade zones that serve as important hubs for importing and exporting goods. For instance, the sea port plays a significant role in facilitating cargo and passenger movements. Additionally, road networks connecting Mogadishu to other regions are being developed and rehabilitated to improve the movement of goods. Rikaab is Mogadishu's only 'super app' that provides a range of on-demand services such as taxi, market, delivery, gas,

supermarket, food, quick deliveries and e-commerce. Rikaab has acquired thousands of clients based in Mogadishu, who use the service on a daily basis. For the Somali community, Rikaab has provided jobs to more than 5,000 individuals who work on their own time as drivers or delivery men. It is, therefore, believed that in the near future, Rikaab will continue building and innovating new technological infrastructure that will positively impact the region and improve the livelihood of the Somali people.

However, it is noted that service providers are only effective when they align their logistics operations with customer expectations.

In conclusion, logistics management in Mogadishu will be successful when it ensures optimal and efficient movement of goods from suppliers to end-users. This efficiency translates into cost saving for businesses, as they can minimize inventory holding costs, transportation, warehousing, and distribution. These companies play a crucial role in facilitating the movement of goods within the city. The aim is to make the company's logistics service in Mogadishu, provide fast and reliable delivery service, which will consequently improve logistics service efficiency. This will benefit consumers by increasing product availability, reducing prices and improve customer satisfaction.



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# CRITICAL THINKING AS A FOUNDATION SUBJECT: THE RIGHT DECISION FOR OUR UNIVERSITIES?

Rajab Noah

Head of English Language, UNISO Postgraduate Centre

A Member of the Editorial Team

Rajabnasrah93@gmail.com



At the start of the academic year 2023/2024, the Ministry of Education announced the implementation of a new foundation year in the local universities. This move has been welcomed by the Somali public. The foundation year curriculum focuses on important subjects such as English language, Somali language, and critical thinking. This discussion will center on critical thinking as a subject.

To begin with, critical thinking is the ability to question, analyze, interpret, evaluate, and make a judgement about a fact or an idea. The word 'critical' comes from the Greek word *kritikos* which means able to judge or discern. Most of us are familiar with the word 'criticism' as an expression of disapproval; however, being critical can have positive as well as negative connotations.

With the introduction of the foundation year, university teachers have been tasked with the big responsibility of preparing a curriculum that will support students' skills development in observation, analysis, inference, communication, and problem-solving. However, some of my students have told me smugly that all they needed to do was to memorize a list definitions and concepts to pass their exams. They were absolutely confident that learning the lessons by heart was enough, rather than actually understanding them. As a dedicated and passionate educationist, I was appalled and very disappointed. However, my students seem to be much like any other student, whether in Somalia or elsewhere. Students all over the world seem to have the same plan when preparing for their exams, namely to condense and summarize their learning material, take all available short-cuts, and keep on 'cramming' until the morning of the exam. The teachers' learning objectives and desired outcomes do not seem to be of any relevance to the students at all. This should be food for thought for those teachers of the critical thinking subject...

The question that needs to be asked is how to conduct a productive critical thinking lesson, so that students forget all about their 'smart' revision notes. The more ambitious teachers can,

for example, conduct a research project where the students have to use various sources of information to support their arguments and findings. This may involve reviewing a report or a proposal and checking whether the report is valid, reliable, and relevant to the subject. This approach is similar to the one taken by mathematics teachers who ask their students to solve a math problem and explain the steps and reasoning behind it.

In comparison, for example, Uganda has a two-year advanced level curriculum, which is incumbent upon every new student wishing to enroll in an undergraduate program. All students who have passed the national examinations at the end of the four-year secondary level must complete this advanced level before attending their first year of undergraduate studies, which consists of one general paper as a subject. In Somalia, the general paper is on the subject of critical thinking, where students must assess, evaluate, account, elucidate, discuss, and examine a topic to answer the questions. In preparation, the curriculum includes several case studies to develop the students' critical thinking skills, so that they can examine, assess, analyze and making judgements on a particular problem.

One of the greatest critical thinkers of modern times, Albert Einstein, once said, "The value of a college education is not the learning of many facts but the training of the mind to think." Critical thinking is a very useful intellectual ability, and it is certainly not meant to be 'memorized' for the exam and then discarded. Critical thinking is only useful when we apply it in our daily life, in every situation and in every sphere, whether on social, economic, or political issues.

Let me say a word about logic, which is the very basis of critical thinking. It is the study of correct reasoning, which examines the given information and making an inference based on that data. Given its importance, all Muslim scholars of the past were well-trained in logic as part of philosophy.

Somali culture is a Muslim culture based on Islamic principles and values. It might surprise many, but one branch of Islamic jurisprudence cannot be practiced without critical thinking. Islamic law is derived from the four sources of the Qur'an, hadith, *ijmā* (legal consensus) and *qiyās* (analogy). *Ijmā* is derived from the shared opinions of the early Muslim community, while *qiyās* requires the scholar to exercise independent reasoning to make a judgement, because no direct reference is available. Similarly, when a court judge decide on sentencing a criminal, each case is different and the references of previous cases may not apply. Therefore, the judge must apply critical thinking to

determine what sentence is justified and lawful, in line with the legal principles and rules.

In the context of Islamic history and tradition, there is the famous narration of the Companion Mu'adh ibn Jabal (605–639 CE). The Prophet Muhammad (saw) had sent him to Yemen as a governor. Before Mu'adh ibn Jabal set off to Yemen, the Prophet asked him how he would judge his cases there. Muadh ibn Jabal replied that he would refer to the Qur'an. The Prophet asked him what he would do in case he failed to find a reference in the Qur'an. His answer was that he would resort to the hadith. The Prophet then asked what he would do if no hadith would give him a definite answer. Mu'adh ibn Jabal replied that he would refer to the *ijmā* (consensus) of the previous generation, and if that also failed, then he would use *qiyās* (analogy). In other words, he would use his own reasoning in line with all known legal principles to make his judgment. Therefore, the application of law requires critical thinking, and no judge can issue a fair and adequate sentence without recourse to his or her own ability to reason. Given that Somalia applies the Shari'ah, it is, therefore, highly relevant to all Muslims working in the legal professions.

The role of critical thinking is equally important in commerce and trade. Critical judgement is necessary for selecting the type of business and the location—whether in the Bakaaro Market area or along the Makkah Mukkaram street. Proper market research is necessary; however, in the end it is through individual reasoning that an answer is found. The same applies to selecting the type of banking services for your business, the number of your employees, and many other issues that need to be resolved. Life is full with problems that need to be resolved, decisions that need to be made, and questions that need to be answered, which cannot be memorized from a revision sheet.

The civil service of Somalia also needs critical thinkers in its different government departments. For instance, the Department of National Planning needs public policy planners. Before a policy is released to the public domain, it goes through a mechanism of analysis, evaluation, and examination before it can be implemented. A good policy has to be workable, fair, useful, and cost-effective. Therefore, public policy planners must be people with excellent thinking skills and experience in analogical reasoning, who can manage such an immense task. To put things into perspective, national planning projects cover an area of more than 600,000 square kilometers and a population of more than 18 million people.

Critical thinking has five main characteristics:

- Truth-seeking, where we ask questions and follow evidence.
- Judicious, where we make judgements amid uncertainty.
- Inquisitive, where we gather information on a wide range of topics.
- Confident, where we trust in our own reasoning and judgement.

When we ponder the characteristics above, we begin to realize that critical thinking is not an ability that is easily picked up. It needs adequate training and has not development and grow over time, requiring much practice and experience. Therefore, we welcome the government's decision to offer critical thinking as a foundation course at university, which gives students enough time to develop this skill. Now it is up to the teachers to make it work.

When considering the above point, it is noted that the schools should prepare the students for this stage with essay writing lessons. Third-year secondary students should learn to compose properly structured essays that include a problem statement, arguments, and a conclusion. This will help students to organize their ideas, present them in a clear and concise fashion, and follow a logical sequence of ideas and lay a strong foundation for more advanced thinking skills required at the university level.

The implementation of the critical thinking course is already into the last quarter of its first year. It should however be noted that it has roles it can play for our country:

- A well-developed set of critical thinking skills builds self-empowerment and confidence. It enables young people to be selective in gathering facts, process information, and critically assess and analyze their data. Given the abundance of information available on the internet, it is crucial that young people learn how to assess its worth and use them efficiently.
- When the public is made of individuals who can interpret and use information efficiently, Somalia will be blessed with capable citizens who can use these data in a constructive manner for nation building and development.
- Students will be encouraged to ask questions but also to listen, observe, reflect and evaluate. Critical thinkers t for future progress and national cohesion.
- Individuals trained in critical thinking can form sound beliefs and judgements, and in so doing, learn to base their opinions not on emotions, which are easily manipulated, but on reflection. In our national context, this belief can nurture tolerance among people

and reduce fanaticism, extreme partisanship, and sectarian strife.

- The next generation of Somali businessmen and businesswomen will be able to make informed economic decisions, such as whether to invest in a particular business or start a new business. This involves analyzing data and considering possible risks and benefits as well as evaluating alternative options. The government can use the same criteria to determine whether some investments are viable or not.
- Politically, leaders can use critical thinking to solve national problems and communicate effectively and in an ideal manner. Their confidence derived from their ability to evaluate situations enables them to make good and timely decisions. These business skills are the key to success, at individual, local, and national levels.

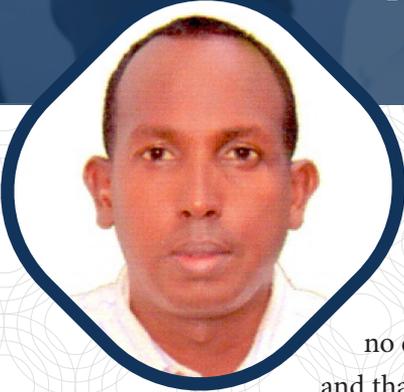
The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, whose works were widely studied in the Muslim world and expounded by the classical Muslim philosophers once said, “It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it”. This emphasizes that understanding an idea does not mean accepting it, which is a big difference. The American author, theorist and educator Bell Hooks noted that critical thinking requires our imagination, seeing things from perspectives other than our own, and envisioning the likely consequences of our position.

Therefore, the government’s decision to introduce this foundation course in our universities deserves our unconditional support. Nevertheless, adequate preparations and proper execution will be required to make this program a success, combined with a positive attitude by all involved, teachers and students alike.

# NOT UNDERSTANDING NUMBERS: IS THIS A MEDICAL CONDITION

Dr. Sheeye (shaaciye) Hussein Abdulle  
Head of Pharmacy, and Public Health and  
Nutrition Departments

Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Somalia (UNISO)  
Sheye.abdulle@uniso.edu.so



My colleague told me a story that surprised me. One day, a student raised concerns regarding his exam result and completed a complaint form. However, upon reviewing the exam paper, it was found that the student had scored seven marks in one section and eight marks in the two sections, with no extra marks, but insisted that seven plus eight was 18 and not 15, and that his calculation was correct.

My colleague searched the exam database and discovered that the student had a good track record. With concern showing on her face, my colleague asked me about my impression, and I remembered my time working with students with disabilities in England, including dyscalculia. It reckoned that our student had this condition.

The Latin word 'dyscalculia' means inability to count or understand numbers. In the medial field, dyscalculia denotes a specific learning difficulty also referred to as **number blindness**. This is because a dyscalculic person does not see the numbers and the mathematical symbols correctly. Researchers do not know what exactly causes dyscalculia. However, they have identified certain factors that indicate the brain's inability to map preexisting representations of numerical magnitude onto symbolic Arabic digits.

In terms of prevalence, various studies have shown that dyscalculia is more prevalent in boys than in girls, with a male-to-female ratio of 1.6:1, although recently this data has been challenged. The estimates on the prevalence of dyscalculia are quite varied, and the actual figures have yet to be determined. The global prevalence of dyscalculia is estimated to be between 3% and 11%. For example, estimates of the prevalence of dyscalculia in the UK range from 5% to 6%, in Switzerland 4.7%, and in the USA 3% to 8%. Additionally, 91 primary school students in Malaysia participated in a study that revealed 5.5% of students had dyscalculia, while a Kenyan study found that 6.3% of students at public secondary schools suffered from the condition. However, no data are available for Somalia, which motivated me to write this article and raise more awareness of this disability.

Like dyslexia, dyscalculia is a lifelong learning disability, manifesting in early childhood and progressing as a person develops into maturity. Dyscalculia comes in different types, and each has its own characteristics and challenges. When numbers are presented verbally, people with verbal dyscalculia have trouble recognizing them. Writing and comprehending mathematical symbols might be difficult for those with **lexical dyscalculia**. **Graphical dyscalculia** involves difficulties with reading, writing or using the correct numbers and symbols. A problem with written or verbal mathematical operations is known as **operational dyscalculia**, whereas acquired dyscalculia develops later in life, often due to brain injury. Generally, common signs of dyscalculia in primary school children include: frequent mistakes, incorrect symbols (e.g., confusing the number six with nine, or 36 with 63) as well as forgetting one or more numbers in a series and difficulty classifying objects by shape and size. But despite these difficulties, a person with dyscalculia will have average or above average intelligence.

Adults suffering from dyscalculia face considerable difficulties when it comes to basic arithmetic, leading to frustration, anxiety, and even depression. Dyscalculia is also a socio-economic issue, as adults with poor arithmetic skills suffer a major disadvantage on the job market. In schools and universities dyscalculia leads to distress, low self-esteem, stigmatization and, disruptive behavior in class.

However, there are ways to accommodate dyscalculic children in the classroom and prevent their condition from worsening. Dyscalculia cannot be treated through diet, therapy, or medication and is a life-long learning difficulty, as mentioned above. However, specialized instruction, multisensory instruction, assistive technology, repetition, reinforcement, making games out of counting and arithmetic as well as working with professionals can help individuals to build basic mathematical skills.

Considering that there are children and young adults with dyscalculia who are currently attending our schools and universities, I suggest that regular workshops and seminars should be organized, so that teachers learn how to support their learners with learning difficulties. Moreover, educators should conduct research studies on dyscalculia in order to identify the magnitude of this condition in the country. Additionally, the ministers of education at federal and state levels can propose new policies and funding for students requiring special needs education.



In conclusion, dyscalculia is a math learning disability that impairs an individual's ability to learn and there is insufficient awareness among the public in Somalia. Therefore, steps should be taken to ensure that dyscalculia is identified early and adequately managed to minimize its negative effects, at school, at university, and at the workplace. It is important to invest in special teachers, trainers, and technological support to support dyscalculic children and adolescents in Somalia, based on established medical approaches. Even though dyscalculia is not treatable, these approaches —combined with appropriate care and support— help these deserving learners to navigate through life without any stigma attached to it.

# FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE AND VETERINARY

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# CAN SOMALIA AVOID SOVEREIGN DEBT IN THE FUTURE

Mohamed Garad Hassan

Founder & Executive Director of Concern Growth Centre

Mohamedgarad13@gmail.com



Since the Second World War, the issue of sovereign debt has become increasingly important in public policy discussions worldwide. As a result of the global financial crisis 2007–2009, the public debt-to-GDP ratios of strong economies have reached unprecedented levels. Debt risks are on the rise in many emerging markets, with some in complete default and others experiencing significant financing challenges. Furthermore, the World Bank and IMF estimate that more low-income countries are currently at high risk of debt distress since the start of official debt relief operations in the 2000s. Therefore, we should put this current scenario in the historical context, recognize its distinctive elements, and consider solutions for the future.

This article explains how Somalia can avoid unsustainable sovereign debt in the near future, since the economy requires long-term stability and a credit-debit balance. In other words, the country must not spend more than it earns. The loss of this balance could lead to a massive debt super-cycle that will undermine growth and require more debt reduction in the long term. This also indicates that the dependence on continuous government borrowing is risky political behavior because it eliminates any new growth opportunities and limits the economy to being a consumption-based economy. How can the Somali economy achieve long-term, sustainable development goals without accumulating excessive debt? These are the issues that demand the attention of policymakers and researchers, but they cannot be satisfactorily answered without a good understanding of sovereign debt. For instance, indebted developing countries such as Sri Lanka, Brazil, Pakistan, and Egypt are struggling to achieve sustainable fiscal discipline.

One fundamental instrument of economic policy is the issuing of public debt. Governments can use borrowing to implement countercyclical fiscal policy, deal with negative shocks, and pay for large expenditures like investments in public infrastructure. In response to the global financial crisis, several governments—particularly in developed economies—implemented massive debt-financed fiscal stimulus programs. These

unprincipled debts, however, are what kills the economy because they generate external imbalances undermining debt sustainability and posing a threat to future investment plans and sustained economic growth.

In 2013—after two decades of isolation from the global financial system—Somalia started to re-engage with international financial organizations including the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to seek financial and technical support and rebuild its economy. This re-engagement was the foundation for Somalia's 2016 admission to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) program, allowing it to obtain grants and concessional loans as well as receive debt relief. The IMF, World Bank, and other bilateral, multilateral, and commercial creditors established HIPC in 1996 to make sure that the world's poorest nations are not overtaken by unmanageable or unsustainable debt loads.

Since then, Somalia has reformed its fiscal management, raised domestic revenue, and improved expenditure control. So far, it has made great strides towards debt relief and succeeded in reducing its debt decreased from USD5.2 billion (89% of GDP) at the end of 2018 to USD3.7 billion (63% of GDP). This impressive reduction rate has enabled Somalia to reach the HIPC decision point for debt reduction in 2020. There are two steps in the HIPC debt relief process, which are the decision point and the completion point. The decision point designates a country's enrolment in the HIPC program. To establish a history of prudent economic policies between the decision point and the completion point, a qualified government must work together with the World Bank and IMF.

Finally, to avoid living on borrowed resources and borrowed time resulting in unsustainable sovereign debt Somalia must adapt fiscal policy management through regulated spending, debt, and fiscal results, in addition to a rule-based fiscal policy for reducing political influence on public expenditure. However, fiscal discipline can help Somalia to resume economic activity and maintain social stability. When rigid and ostensibly political fiscal rules tip the public spending debate in favor of sound finance, merely responding to the changing economy following compliance mechanisms is not the path to be pursued. Moreover, sustainable fiscal regime strategy is necessary to avoid unsustainable public debt.



A viable intergovernmental fiscal relationship between the federal government and the federal member states must be agreed upon by the federal and state governments so as to enhance domestic income mobilization essential for long-term viability. To boost domestic resources and enable Somalia to finance its development agenda, the new federal leaders must work with the state governments to prioritize revenue assignment. Governments must be transparent about the grave errors committed by countries like Pakistan and Egypt, which are drowning in borrowing debt, currently running large fiscal and current account deficits. These deficits are responsible for the buildup of external and domestic debt in the future that will cripple their economies and pull up the red flags over their inflation, employment, gross domestic product and foreign direct investment rates.

# CHALLENGES FACING CHROMOSOME ANALYSIS IN SOMALIA: LIMITED INSTRUMENTATION IN MOGADISHU HOSPITALS

Yonis Dahir Mohamud  
M.Sc. Medical Biology and Genetics



Chromosome is a structure that exists inside the nucleus of a cell. It consists of proteins and DNA organized in genes, where each cell normally contains 23 pairs of chromosomes. Chromosome analysis is an important diagnostic procedure in clinical medicine where it detects abnormalities in the chromosomes that make up our body's DNA.

Chromosome analysis techniques involve the examination of chromosomes to identify structural abnormalities, numerical abnormalities, and other chromosomal variations associated with genetic disorders. The ability to comprehend and diagnose a wide range of medical disorders—from cancer to congenital illnesses—is facilitated by chromosomes. However, there is a shortage of chromosome analysis techniques in government hospitals in Mogadishu due to a shortage of financial resources. Private hospitals also lack the instruments to detect chromosomal abnormalities. Therefore, important techniques such as karyotype analysis, fluorescent in-situ hybridization, and chromosomal microarrays are not available in Mogadishu hospitals.

In our country, the absence of chromosome analysis techniques in Mogadishu hospitals creates a diagnostic void, impacting patients and families across the region. Doctors have to witness heartbreaking cases, such as expectant mothers having miscarriages due to undetected chromosome abnormalities. Moreover, families with chromosome abnormalities are left in the dark, as doctors lack the necessary techniques to confirm them and offer guidance.

In fast-growing cities like Mogadishu, the healthcare infrastructure is complex and under constant and ever-increasing constraint, making access to advanced chromosome testing challenging. This limitation encompasses both a scarcity of specialized equipment and laboratories capable of conducting sophisticated analyses. Insufficient training of staff compounds these challenges, particularly when it comes to operating sophisticated chromosome analysis instruments. Such instruments demand a high level of technical expertise. Also noted are training gaps in understanding specific data acquisition

techniques employed by advanced instruments and knowledge of the setting, calibration, and adjustment necessary for accurate results. Without comprehensive training, laboratory personnel are likely to lack the necessary skills to troubleshoot technical issues that may arise while operating the instruments. This lack of troubleshooting capability can lead to prolonged downtimes and delays in delivering critical results. Moreover, training deficiencies impact the implementation of robust quality control measures.

Proper training is essential for personnel to adhere to the quality assurance protocols and ensure the accuracy and precision of the chromosome analysis. The integrity of laboratory processes relies on the competence of laboratory personnel, and inadequate training can compromise the quality of results and the overall effectiveness of genetic testing services. Healthcare professionals may not be fully informed about the latest chromosome analysis instruments and technologies. As a result, there might be an underutilization of advanced equipment that could enhance the accuracy and efficiency of genetic analyses. Without awareness of high-resolution analysis techniques, laboratories may miss opportunities to detect subtle chromosomal abnormalities. This can impact the diagnostic yield and the ability to provide comprehensive genetic information to patients.

In conclusion, the challenges faced by Mogadishu hospitals in chromosome analysis are multifaceted, involving financial constraints, inadequate healthcare infrastructure, insufficient training of health personnel, and lack of awareness about advanced chromosome technologies. These issues not only hinder the accurate diagnosis and understanding of genetic disorders but also have a profound impact on patient care. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort to improve financial support, infrastructure, training, and knowledge dissemination in this field, particularly in densely populated areas like Mogadishu.



# RESEARCH



# BRIBERY IN SOMALI INSTITUTIONS: IT'S TIME TO CAST A WIDER NET

Abshir Nur Mohamed

Finance Director

University of Somalia (UNISO)

finance@uniso.edu.so



Bribery is the act of offering money or other incentives to a person with agency in exchange for favors. Such dishonest practices come in many forms like corruption, cronyism, nepotism, and patronage. It is a pervasive problem in Somalia, affecting virtually every aspect of life in our society.

It is a widespread evil that has infected all business sectors. One of its conduits is the patronage network which limits access to a tightly-controlled group of a few individuals. Corruption occurs at all levels in both the public and private sectors, and is—regrettably— done in the open and an expected form of behavior rather than an irregularity. Public procurement is a particularly high corruption-risk area for businesses in Somalia, with government contracts usually being awarded to relatives.

Bribery as a form of corruption is a problem endemic among public or government officials. Time and again, we hear of officials lacking the prerequisite qualifications to manage particular departments. They claim those privileged government offices at the expense of highly qualified graduates loitering the streets in search of elusive jobs. And to add insult to injury, these incapable officials act as agents of corruption, so as to keep their positions in government offices. This situation calls for the establishment of permanent, independent, and constitutionally anchored anti-corruption institutions to make genuine progress in the fight against these illegal kickbacks.

The unchecked misappropriation of funds also hinders development and makes it impossible to trust the funds donated by international partners, even though Somalia depends in foreign assistance. Businesses face a high corruption risk when dealing with the courts, and procurement contracts frequently involve the greasing of hands.

However, bribery is not limited to the public sector; it is equally common in the private sector. It affects virtually every aspect of Somali society, from the misuse of public goods by public officials for private gain and the solicitation of bribes in exchange for basic services to the clan-based patronage networks used to obtain lucrative employment and receive political appointments. Similarly, businesses have adjusted to this climate of shady

dealings and lawlessness. For instance, they are apt in avoiding taxes and selling expired foods and drugs, thus compromising the health and wellbeing of the already struggling average Somali citizen.

The hydra of bribery in the education sector also has many heads. For example, parents offer bribes to teachers or school administrators to secure favorable treatment, such as higher grades or admission to certain schools or programs. Similarly, teachers or administrators may demand bribes from students or their families in exchange for academic advantages or access to educational resources.

There are widespread reports of corruption among teachers who expect payoffs for admission of unqualified new students, tendering false documents, and obtaining promotions. The sale of exam papers and the use of unqualified individuals to obtain academic credentials are among the common forms of corruption in this sector. This undermines the quality of education and erodes public trust in the education system.

When a whole society thinks that bribes are as natural as the sky is blue, then it has a serious problem. Corruption festers like a sore. If left unchecked and untreated, the whole body will become infected and weak. Similarly, corruption has infected all public and private sectors in Somalia.

In the education sector, bribery perpetuates inequality and creates an unfair advantage for those who can afford it, while those who do not have the means remain disadvantaged. It erodes the merit-based principles that should govern education and undermines trust in the system. Ultimately, it hampers the development of a knowledgeable and skilled workforce, which is crucial for the progress and stability of any nation.

Corruption also affects the environment. It decreases environmental sustainability through deforestation, illegal logging, timbering, and smuggling of forest products. Small wonder that the effects of climate change are exacerbated, and Somalia suffers under longer periods of drought and heavy rainfalls that cause flooding and more devastation.

In the private sector, bribery has serious economic consequences. It distorts competition, undermines market efficiency, and hampers overall economic development. It creates barriers to entry for small businesses and discourages foreign direct investment.

Between 2010 and 2016, Somalia was ranked among the world's most corrupt countries, according to Transparency International's corruption perceptions index. This state of affairs



has besmirched the reputation of the country on the international stage, with repercussions of aid cuts by international donor agencies.

In a nutshell, corruption increases inequality, decreases popular accountability and political responsiveness and thus leads to increased frustration and hardship among citizens who are then more likely to believe in the promises of hardliners and extremists. This is, however, not the road we want to take. What Somalia needs and what the Somali public deserve is happiness, peace, stability, and development. That is why bribery must be condemned and persecuted at all levels. Corruption is a significant problem in the country, which affects all sectors and institutions. However, addressing it requires a comprehensive approach that includes institutional reforms, transparency initiatives, and strengthening the rule of law.

# كلية الشريعة والدراسات الإسلامية

البكالوريوس في الفقه وأصوله  
البكالوريوس في الدراسات الإسلامية والتربية  
البكالوريوس في الشريعة والقانون  
البكالوريوس في الكتاب والسنة  
البكالوريوس في الدعوة والإعلام  
البكالوريوس في الدراسات الإسلامية والتكنولوجيا



# AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD) IN SOMALIA: WHY IS THERE A LACK OF PUBLIC AWARENESS?

Omar Hussein Karie

Lecturer at University of Somalia (UNISO)

Jimcaale8289@gmail.com



Autism can be described as developmental disorder caused by anomalies in the neurological system. It can cause communication and social interaction difficulties that manifest before the age of three years. Autism persists throughout person's life, although symptoms can improve overtime. Persons with autism may face problems such as delayed speech development, limited vocabulary for their age, repetition of set of words and phrases. They also have trouble making friends and interacting with people, difficulty understanding other people's facial expressions, difficulty understanding their own and other people's emotions, not making eye contact, not wanting to be cuddled, and not answering when called, or refusing to do things when inquired.

Children with severe autism move their body repetitively by flapping their hands, spinning the wheels of toy car, performing self-harm activities such as biting, head-banging, sticking to the same routine every day and having difficulty adjusting to even minor changes.

The precise cause is unknown, although autism has been attributed to a range of causes such as vitamin D deficiency, environmental factors as well as hereditary and chromosome variants. Environmental variables such as advanced parental age, pregnancy-related exposure to air pollution, maternal diabetes, immune system abnormalities, infection, smoking, and alcohol are also considered. The global prevalence of autism varies greatly, which is mostly due to a lack of awareness and diagnostic problems, particularly in developing nations.

Autism is a neurological condition that is not well understood in low-income countries in Africa. At present, the focus of African public health has shifted to communicable diseases including HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis. As stated in a United Nations study from 2015, around two million Somalis live outside the country due to political insecurity. A striking trend has developed in research of Somali expatriates. According to research undertaken in Sweden (Barnevik-Olsson, 2010), Great Britain (Hassan, 2012), and USA (Maenner 2018), autism appears to be more prevalent among Somali youngsters than in other children.

Vast research of autism was carried out among Somali diaspora parents, which revealed that they know very little about this condition. Meanwhile no research on autism has been done in Somalia, and the Somali public have no understanding of this disorder. There are no research centers in Somalia that focus on neurological disorders, and most health professionals focus on more prevalent diseases such as malaria, bronchitis, tuberculosis, typhoid, hepatitis, HIV/AIDS.

The only two autism centers in Somalia were established by former emigrants. Rahma Abdikadir Mohamed had studied abroad before returning to Somalia and decided to establish the Mustaqbal Center in Mogadishu for children with special needs such as autism and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in 2016.

The second autism center in Somalia was founded by Shadiya Abdikadir Abdi, the Autism Somalia Center in Garowe, Puntland. Having just returned from abroad in 2019, she saw two Somali children restrained in chains, and this deplorable sight prompted her to open an autism center in Garowe. One of the challenges that she faced was lack of funding support, as she explains on her website.

However, an average family cannot manage the task of nurturing a child with autism without government support; thus, government interventions, partnerships with non-governmental organizations, and philanthropic initiatives are required to fill this funding gap and save these families from financial ruin. Lack of qualified health specialists and diagnostic facilities in the country are big part of the problem. The situation is especially dire for pediatric and psychological health specialists.

The fact that there are only two autism centers in Somalia shows that there is no support system for children with autism in Somalia. Research studies in Somalia show that one in 36 individuals have autism in Somalia; however, this figure is only a rough estimate. For autism to be fully understood and acknowledged in Somalia, the following recommendations are proposed:

- A comprehensive approach is required to raise awareness about autism in Somalia. The government, child health groups, and professional medical authorities can develop policies, hire physicians and pediatric psychiatrists with extensive knowledge of autism, and introduce diagnostic guidelines for early intervention and support.
- Budgetary allocations for health should include specific considerations for families with autism, and it should be included in primary health care.
- Autism community awareness for parents should be encouraged and informed that

their children can be supported so that they can live a productive life.

- Collaboration with the Somali diaspora community who can share their knowledge, experience, and resources to create awareness in Somalia and help build appropriate facilities.
- Recent research studies indicated that there is a higher occurrence of autism in Somali children; therefore, local autism research should be properly funded and developed.
- Autism research projects, support centers, and specialized child mental health clinics should be established by the government, in cooperation with international partners.

In conclusion, the issue of autism and the number of autistic children in Somalia, who require professional care and support, can only be taken on when it has been addressed, acknowledged and discussed.

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[www.uniso.edu.so](http://www.uniso.edu.so) | [info@uniso.edu.so](mailto:info@uniso.edu.so)  
P.O.BOX 627

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