

The Fragility of Higher Education in the Post-Conflict Somaliland: A Dialogue

Gerald Ainebyona

School of Graduate Studies and Research (SGSR), Hargeisa, Somaliland

ABSTRACT: *This article is based on a three years of hands-on experience, informal interviews with key educationists, lecturers and Somali students; and insider-outsider observations of Somaliland University Education. Its goal is to identify higher education gaps and possible pathways that could resurrect quality higher education. The article was analyzed based on desk and document review assisted by personal ethnic observation and participatory learning both in the boardroom and classroom. Evidence shows that an over 80% educated elite fled the internal Somali conflicts before 1991. Multiple increases in the number of universities in the aftermath of the civil war have attracted teachers with less or without any teacher training. Quality higher education and quality teaching are the highest priority in Somaliland Universities reflected in the very few technocrats imported from East Africa and across the globe who are not enough to fill the gap with very few quality local teachers. Local teachers not well prepared to do the difficult job of teaching, research and consulting because they are either un-or-under-qualified. Vulnerable university instructors and absence of national framework that regulates higher education comes with structural challenges of: infrastructure, policy, curriculum and teaching, accountability and; unemployment and vulnerability which are discussed at length. An etic outlook of Somaliland's higher education is also laid out. They impede practical education and breeds double vulnerability to the graduates and future economy since the future of any country depends on its teachers. The fate of Somaliland education is not only a product of their own making but also attributable to neoliberal policies. The article outlines a number of policy recommendations in relation to post-conflict societies around that could guide the Somaliland Ministry of Education and policy on possible realities that could move this country forward.*

Keywords: fragility, higher education, post-conflict, commoditizing, neoliberalism, policy, structural operation and Somaliland

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper is based on a three years of hands-on experience and insider-outsider observations and informal interviews with key educationists, students and teachers/lecturers of Somaliland University Education; The paper identifies higher education gaps and possible pathways that could resurrect quality higher education that was destroyed beyond deterioration during the SiyadBarre regime that collapsed in 1991. The paper was analyzed based on desk and document review assisted by personal ethnic observation and participatory learning both in the boardroom and in the classroom. Begins with worries of the Somalilander's old men and later goes on to navigate the challenging higher education of Somaliland.

"Before the collapse of central government that was in the 1969 to 1970; there were two teacher training colleges in Somalia. One was here in Hargeisa, another one was in Mogdishu it was called Lafoole. But since we separated, we have not done anything. There are so many schools, private and public universities but there is no teacher training. You can see any young person and he tells you that I teach something in Alfa but there is no teacher. They are doing what is omitted. But in Somaliland, there is nothing like that and that is something that needs a lot of advising. Even, if our managers could agree with us, they could open a faculty of teacher training ...," a retired aviation Engineer in his late 70s expresses his deep felt view.

Somaliland is located in the Horn of Africa-North West of Somalia. A decade before 2003 was marked by civil unrest that led to the overthrow of the SiadBarre Regime in 1991. It has been documented that the civil

war left all institutions destroyed, clashes and divisionism between Somalis while villages and cities were indiscriminately bombed and looted, basic services like water, health and education collapsed (Cummings & van Tonningen, 2003). In many scholarly documents, it is said that Somalis fled the country in great numbers including the privileged and educated that left first (Farid, 2004 in Kruienza, 2010). A huge migration of the elite class amidst deterioration of education and the most poor left behind in the hot plate could have shrunk and multiplied loss of hope as well as momentum to reconstruct meaningful education. The harrow and destruction of specialized teacher training colleges that existed before the civil unrest in Hargeisa and Mogdishu which the retired Engineer has echoed above could explain the quality gap in the teaching and student achievement in the schools and universities that emerged some few years after the war.

Given the Somaliland relative peace that has attracted local and Diaspora investments, foreign remittances to rebuild the cities of origin, cities like Hargeisa where three universities (A, B and C-pseudonym) have been studied is changing face with magnificent buildings, a growing private sector largely comprised of women in small scale business, increasing population, primary and secondary schools as well as tertiary institutions; it is unfortunate that the education system which could have been the accelerator of the country's economic growth is given very little attention ignoring the fact that higher education is where developing countries need practical skills. With the support of International Agencies, local organizations, religious organizations and diaspora funding in the education sector, twenty five years after the war is too long without an education framework to guarantee the quality of teaching and graduate skills in all educational levels. Where is the problem?

The clinician professional model which takes after medical professionalism, describes a teacher as "a reflective practitioner who actively carries out research and critically deploys scientific knowledge to inform practice" (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Shulman, 1987, 2005; Sockett, 2008 in Caena, 2011). Emphasizing the quality of teachers, Dr. Kofi Annan acknowledges that "we need to train teachers and build research capacity; we need to strengthen open universities and distance learning programs and we need to ensure that universities have access to latest technologies" (Annan, 2005 in Thakrar et al., 2009). In other words, research is a principle sea of knowledge without which teachers cannot cope with the current immense technological transformations that are continuously changing the education architecture. A teacher should be a participant in the classroom.

However, many observations have been pointing at the gap between theory and practice among teachers in post-conflict countries and most especially Somaliland. A teacher is like a physician set to diagnose the patient in the ward room. Once this physician is psychologically unprepared or sick, it is not advisable for him or her to treat any patient to avoid the likely under-dose or overdose. A person who doesn't go through student teacher training in specialized education colleges or underestimates the on-job or in-service capacity building is very vulnerable without quality teaching and technical skills. The severity of the risk associated with being trained by un- or under-trained teacher or lecturer imprisons the students mind and largely results in their inability to innovative thinking and action. Inadequacy in what teachers have trained and what they practice eventually forces them to deviate from the institutional standard policies. Students who go through the hands of vulnerable teachers experience a never-ending double vulnerability which determines their fate in the work place when they graduate from Universities without high quality teachers. Their fate also determines the future policy that will shape their country.

Somaliland's contemporary education policy needs to capture the ever-changing shifts in the special educational needs of the child or student which not only originates from within the learner and goes beyond the psychological handicaps or medical impairment but includes external contributory factors in a given environment. The contextual fact is that this country's universities administrators and managers need to realize that special needs education not only comes due to inability or disability of the student but any learning difficulties a child/student may face from outside such as absence of enough high quality teachers, shortage of teaching resources as well as absence of a national educational framework.

II. THE STATE OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE IN SOMALILAND

Commoditizing education as poverty levels increase, Somaliland is one of the countries in the Horn of Africa where the education sector is famous for increased numbers of primary schools, secondary schools and universities. National standards of who to recruit and criteria for recruitment are non-existent or ignored. Large numbers are admitted without considering their quality simply to harvest more revenue. It is now 25 years since the country broke away from the dictatorial regime of Siyad Barre after a civil war in 1991 that left the education sector destroyed beyond the deterioration of physical infrastructure as it is estimated that more than 80% of the elite left the country as the conflict began (Lindley, 2008 in Heritage Institute, 2013). This may be long enough for a country to have established an education system that works even though the (National Development Plan-2012-2016, 2011) disclosed "the ministry of education is incapable of meeting the ringing demand for

education.” This is why there many cases of under sourcing, increased competition amongst providers that largely value quantity than quality in higher education institutions. In a one or two kilometer radius of any of the universities studied, there has been establishment of more than five universities and all of them are yearning for greater numbers of students just to earn and save more money. To these education providers, investing in quality is still an unrealizable dream. Building a trusted education sector is taking so long in Somaliland. Unlike other post-conflict countries such as Rwanda, Zambia and South Sudan which have introduced resilient education strategies, the experience of Somaliland’s higher education instability might correlate with absence of an education framework or inconsistency to manage the quality standards in the ever increasing number of universities ... and thus, a direct impact on the quality of education across Somaliland and Somalia (Heritage Institute, 2013).

The Somaliland leaders could be focusing on international recognition, peace and reconciliation as the first priority rather than institutionalizing systems and structures and consolidating the rebellion. The Rwandan Minister of Education acknowledges higher education as fundamental and indispensable good. In her words, “the successful implementation of all our development policies are dependent on higher education playing its key roles as capital development and providing research and innovation to support the transformation process” (Gahakwa, 2008). For Somaliland’s case, international recognition is important but this could be viewed as a product of institutionalizing holistic national systems beginning with higher education framework. The University specialized teacher training colleges that train teachers in the other countries could be introduced here and an education framework put in place to drive quality teaching, high quality teachers and student achievement.

III. ISSUES OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN SOMALILAND HIGHER EDUCATION

Most Somaliland Universities depend largely on funding, management and maintenance of local, international, faith based as well as Diaspora organizations (Heritage Institute, 2013; Somaliland’s Education Sector Strategic Plan 2012-2016). But some of them depend largely on tuition fees paid by students for the difficult responsibility of running universities. Therefore, government authorities are limited from monitoring and controlling the structural operations throughout the Higher Education System Institutions in the country. At times quality standards may not be met because some people believe that some universities have a plenty of money to educate students while problems with student achievement, they believe are a result of inefficiency by school leaders or lack of motivation on the part of teachers (who are underpaid for many months) and students (a discussion on the Impact of money on students, 2004 in Malhoit, 2005). However, sometimes some institutions may be poor or collect less school fees. The latter does not do everything but it may do some of the things on quality education and for that matter, this does not exclude education institutions and departments of government in charge of conducting supervision, monitoring, coordinating evaluation roles in education as well as other social services to due affliction of situations where;

Somaliland generally has no heavy revenue, heavy tax collection and no heavy economic investment which makes it difficult to reconstruct education and specifically, higher education. Government has not yet attracted big players in the global economy but still depending on small and local few players with less production and less consumption which limits government income (an interview with Prof. Ssimbwa, 2016). There is need for government to widen economic opportunities and people negotiation power necessary for education transparency and accountability at all levels.

Sometimes, little money may be available but there may be no accountability on what and how it is spent. It is not only University managers that may not share accountability of the funds paid by students as tuition fees or got from local and international agencies but the latter may also be reluctant to share their accountability to their immediate stakeholders. Some of the participants in the study revealed Somaliland government requested local and international agencies operating in the country to share their budgets on the activities they do but they refused to do so. This was also backed by (Pelton, 2011) when he disclosed online that; “Many of the Somali NGOs do not publish their finances and the ability to determine their effectiveness requires an inordinate application of effort in remote and often hostile places. They do not also want to reveal the activities they do in the country.” It gives an impression that these organizations seriously demand accountability from beneficiaries of the donor funding but find it difficult for them to deliver accountability to the stakeholders. Therefore absence of transparency in some institutions of higher learning and NGOs is not only bottom-up but also top-down disease in the in the management of structures and systems of education progress. In order to build institutional trust and quality service, managers and staff coordinating moneys should employ Shaman’s “three-sided paradigm of; openness, accountability and inclusion” (2016). None of these sides should miss in the management of people and resources.

IV. DILEMMA OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE POLICY IN SOMALILAND UNIVERSITIES

This policy largely implemented by foreign lecturers and very few local teachers. For the latter, their English background has been very poor since right away from Koranic schools through primary and most secondary education, they are largely taught all the subjects in Somali language except foreign English lecturers. In one of the universities I interacted with, most students complemented how well a Somali lecturer taught them English language in Somali. In another university, other students attacked a foreign English teacher in my presence. While complaining of low marks in English, they shouted on top of their voices saying, "... all other teachers teach us everything in Somali, why is it that for you, you teach us English in English?" Experiences of how students are taught and the language in which they are taught largely determines how difficult they find it to find a job in well-paying companies and organizations that value skilled labor.

English as a language of instruction if collectively implemented by both foreign and local lecturers at all levels of academia could increase creative thinking and writing among students and teachers. The challenge is that the local teachers prefer to teach in Somali language but examine in English language. While very many lecturers including research and natural science lecturers at undergraduate level teach in Somali, very few local teachers/lecturers may mix both Somali and English. In one of the best Somaliland universities, one lecturer was open enough to share his experience in the classroom as he said,

"For me I never allow students to ask me questions because most of the students know 60% English; and I speak only 30%. So when I am teaching, I confuse them in Somali. Once I notice that a student speaks too much English better than myself, I call him or her silently and warn him/her ... "do not ask me any questions when I am teaching because I know you are very clever. So be rest assured of 100% in the examination at the end of the semester. So, when I come to your class, do not ask me any question ... and that student becomes my friend. So they do not ask me questions."

Denying students a chance to express their opinions is in itself an academic terrorism because it erodes students' innovative mind. A teacher should be a participant in the classroom in order to shape sustainable future policy outcomes. These kinds of teachers are not uncommon in higher education institutions of Somaliland and thus weakening their capacity to critical thinking and writing. Students like a teacher who gives them the highest marks, it doesn't matter whether he/she teaches appropriate content or not.

Failure to communicate effectively in English language impedes regional and international collaboration for Somaliland as a country. The latest evidence unveiled that international agencies operating within Hargeisa are largely crippled language barrier in their efforts to work with government to mitigate corruption. This leaves an unanswered question of how international agencies build the capacity of the local government staff. Countries which want to succeed in international business can get there if they can speak more than one foreign language including English language. International relations can be gainful if all the actors understand each other.

V. CHALLENGED POLICY SPACE IN SOMALILAND EDUCATION

A child who goes through a systematic education system, taught by trained teachers all the way through their training to university, largely comes out as University Material with tangible content attracted to the work place. Students who have graduated from these schools and universities may experience challenges along the way because of structural and policy gaps. They toil more and more to succeed with confidence that one day they may be absorbed in the work economy but they are disabled by the neoliberal agendas that are designed with divergent goals from those of African countries. The African people want to see their children succeed, innovate and make a difference in their countries. Unfortunately, the neoliberal proponents such as America and the European Union representatives are using all the possible means such as the loopholes in government ministries, judiciary as well as incompetent leaders to weaken African Education curriculum and content (Nherera, 1994). They are largely succeeding in countries without highly skilled labour force to negotiate better deals as well as absence of national quality control regulator tools.

In the words of Ssimbwa Peter, "Policy space is very challenged in developing countries like Somaliland" (2016, Forthcoming) ...are afflicted by lack of sentimentalism and professional focus in the sense that people may not focus on rational judgment. The value of such policies is not achieved because their judgment is not based on rational values. The international policies and systems are not built on basis of national values, traditional or cultural values. Like in other African countries, the values are usually so misleading with American Policies in African institutions and services. This is also continuously experienced in some Somali statements especially after a systemic bi-pass in structural operation in Higher Education Institutions ... ending up to say 'this is Somaliland or everything is okay.' This leads to what I call skeletal adoption of systems that do not work and could be avoided.

VI. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND SPECIALIZED TEACHER TRAINING

An absence of national syllabus may be troublesome to future policy making in Somaliland as anywhere else across the board. In the event where some Somaliland primary or secondary schools say "we

follow the American system, others say, we follow the Kenyan or British system or Turkish system of Education" (Mohamed, Pseudonym), the victims are the students and the beneficiaries of that or those diverse systems. When these students come to university, it is very difficult to mold them into the required skilling. Most of them are also largely likely to have gone through an education without an education framework, a national curriculum as well as formally college trained teachers. To the present day, Somaliland universities may not have a uniform curriculum. Many cases of teachers using personal curricula than the one collectively designed by university experts are very common.

In most cases, the recruiter asks the recruit if he can teach what the latter has never studied before. According to many field participants, many of the recruiters recruit mostly their friends or relatives no matter whether they are skilled or not. Surprisingly, the recruits of this kind largely agree that they can teach and they start on the job immediately, even without any knowledge of designing a course outline. This emphasizes the idea that the fate of Somali education is partly a product of their own-making.

If the structural operation in universities which are supposed to be the role model educationists is fragile, what do you expect in primary and secondary schools that handle mostly children (below the age of 18)? What is the quality of teachers in the current Somaliland education system? Who determines who should be recruited to teach and which criterion do they use? What is the education quality of the recruiters? How do such teachers handle students in and outside the classroom? To what extent do they contribute to the knowledge base of the students and how much do they address the knowledge gap shifting from the known the unknown in the current world of immense transformations? I do not think there are answers for these questions yet. How knowledgeable are they in linking curricula to the global transformational changes today? Its high time governments and their ministries of education worked together to streamlined quality education through standardizing and updating curricula at all levels in order to shape the future for national and international relations.

VII. OUTSIDER THOUGHTS ABOUT SOMALILAND HIGHER EDUCATION

Capacity building is a basic need in every organization or institution. It was discovered that teachers in the universities studied rarely go through comprehensive capacity building or never take it seriously. Local organizations usually send their staff to acquire training from these universities. Trainers are very many but very few may be skilled to do the job. However, the skill or education qualification may not be the priority requirement in the Somaliland social system that is usually based on technical knows-who rather than technical know-how. Verbal policies are exaggeratingly in millions but policy documentation and implementation may be less or rare in many schools and tertiary institutions. You cannot have a Ministry of Education operating without an Education framework and expect to produce quality human capital in the less government controlled universities. It is technically impossible. In most Somaliland elementary schools up to universities, it is most likely that most teachers do not know or follow pedagogical standards.

Cases of teachers following personally designed curricula without a persistent system of monitoring and evaluation that looks into everything largely exist and could pose a huge risk to universities progress, the country's development policies, investors and companies who might wish to do business here. They might be quick to think of the losses than the profits they might make should they invest big businesses in the country. They might also think of the likely conflicts that may result in case investors come with foreign labour instead of recruiting Somali graduates and other unemployed youths. For many times, unemployment of Somalis is blamed not on their lack of required skills but foreigners whom they claim have taken away their jobs. It also creates a never ending risk of shortage of required skills, the major source of unemployment in this country.

VIII. UNEMPLOYMENT AND VULNERABILITY

An unprecedented number of Somaliland youths were documented unemployed who include university graduates and other youths who did not go to school all amounting to 75% all of who declared they had never obtained paid or unpaid employment. Among them, 65-70 percent of the Somaliland's total population under the age of 30 (Jibril, 2011). Thus, this statistical information agrees with (Barakat et al., 2014) who opines, that "there is a large youth bulge in Somalia whose educational needs to gain legitimate employment are not met." Jobs may be available but the quality of skills offered by the country's institutions may not really match the fourth industrialized labor market. Universities in Somaliland are producing Doctors, lawyers, Engineers, Accountants, Environmentalists and Social Scientists among others annually. These products have been circulating in the public and private sectors in the country which may not rule out the fact that they are creating vulnerable economic policies and service delivery. A lot more find employment in the same kinds of schools and universities within the country or those ones they went through. What is your imagination of the quality of service they delivered by these junior teachers who have just been awarded the first degree to their immediate customers? It is most likely that people who have economic power seek for quality education services abroad leaving the majority poor to suffer in this fragile democratic country.

An engineering lecturer in one of the Hargeisa city Universities studied and whose names have been kept anonymous in this article who works in more than one of the famous universities in this country was recently asked two significant questions on the difference in the quality of students in the two universities he works with. He said they are all the same. The other question was, "now that thousands are going to graduate this very year, can you really recruit any of these engineers to work in your company?" His answer was so disappointing that one may wonder where this country's education is taking it. He said, "Nooooooooooooo, I cannot make that mistake." This is a strong response that any manager wouldn't like to hear in his or her institution/company. There is no doubt this lecturer's experience agrees with the Somaliland National Development Plan 2012-2016 which reported that "Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) is very much underdeveloped ... a lack of TVET professional personnel teachers and support staff, a situation which has implications for quality of instruction, supervision and coordination of all TVET units" (2011). Well, the teacher may be good, well trained but teaching university students without a strong education background may not produce trusted work force. The latter may not build self-esteem at all, which could largely vulnerabilize them to workplace competition. Wolhuter (2006) also argues that "any education system stands or falls by the quality of its teaching profession, and therefore, by implication, the quality of its teacher training programs." It may be one of the major reasons why international agencies may choose to seek for human capital in the outside countries, which they believe have gone through standardized education systems. The situation can worsen if there is no framework on education that control university education or even collective responsibility in the implementation of institutional policies that are designed internally. I do not know if the university I work with is part of this practical problem but it would make more sense if our managers could ask themselves if we are sailing in the same boat.

Therefore, any national and international efforts made to transform the education system with special emphasis starting with university education whose teachers are less or not skilled; and when the students' background in primary and secondary schools was not laid strong may be less or not be successful. According to (ILO, 2015), the global employment gap stood at 61 million ...280 million jobs will need to be created in the coming 5 year due to increase in the labour force." Somaliland is lucky that most students access university education; but accessing higher education does not mean they acquire technical skills. Policy makers in Somalia regions need to think beyond the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Goals which aims to "achieve universal primary education, secondary education affordable vocational training, access to higher education and many more." The Ministry of Education needs to take systematic steps to build a strong foundation of education and put an education policy in place accompanied with continuous monitoring tools.

International community should not determine our curricula content but the latter should be determined by Africa's most brilliant elites that understand the local context and needs. Relying on the minority that trained from abroad throughout all their education history is not enough to transform this country socially, economically and politically. A population that is not educated is very vulnerable to disorganization, conflict, preventable diseases, human rights violations, very low esteem, limited service delivery, mismanagements, poor or no planning, lack of accountability and transparency as well as irreversible climate change and its associated effects both on the environment and human life. At the end of it all, such a country can host a minority of practically trained doing very little with doubt and the majority nationals without proper education who confidently believe that everything is okay.

A wise man once said that 'an error does not become a mistake until you refuse to correct it.' There is a pressing need to respect full responsibility for our errors and allow space for people to point them when we miss them. President J. F. Kennedy once said that "without debate, without criticism, no administration, no country can succeed and no republic can survive." Moreover, without critical discussion, no institution (private or government), no school can thrive. A culture of professionalism is a necessity in good governance and politics, national and international security. But it all depends on quality higher education with a stronger foundation.

IX. NEOLIBERAL AGENDA AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE SOMALILAND-AMERICAN SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

Article 15, section 1 of the Somaliland Education Sector Strategic Plan (SESSP, 2012-2016) states that "the state shall pay particular attention to the advancement, extension and dissemination of all knowledge and education as it recognizes that education is the most important investment that can play a major role in political, economic and social development." However the quality of education matters in the realization of student success, institutional success, national success and international recognition. Somaliland and America share an opinion that education transforms people or the world.

Both American Education and Somaliland Education structure comprise of 8 years of primary education, 4 years of lower primary and 4 years of upper primary as well as four years of University Education (2012-2016 Draft Somaliland Nation Development Plan, 2011; Hussein, 2015).

In fact, some Somaliland Universities' administrative staff and management applaud the American System as the best in the whole world. However, the quality of education in the two countries differ in structural operations which doesn't make them the same but different indeed. The neoliberal American may applaud American education System of Somaliland schools and universities because the former's policies have little or no room for quality higher education in Somaliland and Africa generally. This is the major reason why in the 1990s, the world Bank and developed countries as well as international donors withdrew and reduced higher education funding from 40% to 30% favouring basic education funding which they proposed to increase from 11% to 27% at the Jomtien Conference in Thailand. The purpose of this collective decision was to force African students and those in other developing countries to secure high interest loans in World Bank (World Declaration on Education for All, 1993 in Ainebyona, 2016 Forthcoming). Of course, Somaliland is not outside Africa. The Somali students are also experiencing the effects of the neoliberal agenda. Like most parents in other African Universities/developing countries most Somali parents could be crippled by the international debt of their host countries disempowering them from contributing to higher education progress.

America and other neoliberal proponents are largely reluctant to empower African students with adequate skills, strong structures and proper procedures. Two years ago, Some American professors said that research is not necessary for Somaliland and suggested it was better for students in the graduate school to omit research and replace it with business plan, a neoliberal arrangement of establishing a large labour market than innovation among African students. International influence plays distractive roles of African students from vocational education to kill innovative minds. In Malawi, Technical colleges were transformed into entrepreneurship development institutes and influenced the redesigning of the college curricula including the requirement to write a business plan as an extra examination subject (King and McGrath, 2002 in Ainebyona, 2016 Forthcoming). As such, research is not taken seriously by most university teachers in many Somaliland Universities especially the ones studied. Entrepreneurship is very important for African higher education because students are equipped with business skills but meaningful entrepreneurial business is only possible if it is supported by evidence research. Where US professors may say that research is not necessary for Somaliland or Africa, the United States has placed university research and industrial collaboration at the forefront of their economic policy. They have a strong conviction that "research drives invention and innovation drives, long-run economic growth creating jobs and improving living standards in the process" and aggressively fund it (Atkinson & Steward, 2011). In the latest research by VeugelersReinhilde, the European governments have "turned to academic research as a valuable asset for economic growth ... looking for more direct and large scale involvement of academic research in knowledge based growth" (2014). The question we should ask ourselves as Africans and as Somalilanders is, 'if developed countries increasingly see their global innovation advantage through academic research, what is their reason for persuading poorer countries that research is not necessary for them/Africa/Somaliland?' Following the evidence by the European Commission; "teacher educators potentially play a key role in maintaining and improving the quality of education system through their impact on student teachers and serving teachers ..." (2010). This implies that in order to produce quality teachers that will largely contribute to the workforce demands requires them to go through specialized teacher training. These days, African countries and universities are encouraging entrepreneurship (a course spearheaded by the World Bank) and innovation in higher education but the gap to get innovative and positive difference is largely unaddressed. The developed countries and the neoliberal proponents know that research is the critical mechanism to transfer knowledge from university to industry and finally fill this gap to create better living standards of their populations.

It is so surprising however; that most Somali managers, leaders and teachers may not be paying attention the structural gaps between the American System of Education in America and the American System of Education in Somaliland. Their differences are manifested in the education policies and structural operations. Where the American higher education is guided by an education framework, in Somaliland it is nonexistent which might result into uncoordinated education in the latter. Unlike the Somaliland education system, American system of education is not only guided by an education framework, but the latter has also had changes incorporated by the Obama administration which ensures that "every American has access to at least one year of post-secondary training or higher education to gain skills needed to rebuild the economy and meet the workforce demands" (Brand et al., 2013). Today, a one-size-fits-all education policy cannot meet the needs of the increasingly and faster changing world. This disadvantages the Somali students. A framework on higher education is not only necessary for transforming the Somaliland education system but should be designed to meet the technological world transformations today. To all the global employers, the highly skilled workforce matter for improved output returns.

However, where research is taught at undergraduate levels in most Somaliland universities, almost everyone claims to teach research but rarely follow the research guidelines. To most of the lecturers, research is a very strange subject. They may have heard about research but may not know beyond basic research. Development today requires applied research but, the latter is non-existent in their vocabulary. The students they

teach have notorious difficulties with the whole research process beginning from the research topic. Many of the students I interacted with have reported several complaints about their inability identify their research contexts. In most faculties of the three universities studied, a huge number of graduating students have no research topics at all but rather a section appearing like a chapter in the book, for example 'Unemployment and Poverty.' Whenever they get stuck and approach the specialized teachers such as those handling master students programs for any assistance, they are confused the more because the former cannot find where to start from to guide them. The general lack of research capacity forces them into plagiarism which is the most unforgivable academic sin. Students upgrading to masters degrees find it difficult to differentiate between theoretical and basic research done at undergraduate level; and applied research at the graduate level most of whom are undergraduate lecturers and various staff currently working with government and Non-governmental organizations. This is a gap that needs to be filled but can be possible if universities recruit experienced research lecturers for undergraduate students and encourage all graduate students to write at least a research paper or dissertation, not just a business plan as a condition for an award of a Master Degree as required by the neoliberal proponents.

X. LESSONS LEARNT FROM OTHER POST-CONFLICT COUNTRIES OF AFRICA

Drawing on the lessons from **Rwanda**, when the majority "... elites died in the 1994 genocide" (Mineprisc/Minesupres, 1994 in Obura, 2003), Rwanda government availed the national funds to recruit and remunerate regional and international staff and called for urgent bilateral and multilateral cooperation to provide more funding for public and private sector higher education institutions (see, Obura, 2003). Today, Rwanda enjoys the highest level of social progress with highly qualified products fit for economic development. Somaliland could take Rwanda's example baring the fact that the former has the highest huge numbers of diaspora. The Somaliland government could collaborate with these Diasporas to mobilize funds for higher education back home. Building the capacity of local teachers could reduce the cost of cost employing the expensive foreign labour.

South Sudan is another living example that experienced more than two decades of civil war from the 1990s that dismantled the education infrastructure, associated with examination of thousands of Dinka people as well as millions of displacements but still sustained their education. The government of the time realized they could not manage their education system and made collaboration with neighboring countries such as Uganda while sourcing trained teacher or sending their children to attend quality education in the Ugandan higher education institutions.

The other post-conflict countries such as **Uganda, Zambia and Kenya** through their Ministries of Education forged partnership with each other in order to streamline their education systems and therefore build capacity of their teachers. For example, Egerton University of Kenya, Makerere and Kyambogo Universities of Uganda and University of Zambia established collaboration to conduct tutorials to their teachers both pre-service and in-service; ... others through distance study with long intense face-to-face-sessions during holidays and relatively low student numbers (Thakrar et al., 2009). Research shows that the top-ten countries leading the World Class Education that exclude America have continuously produced smarter and innovative graduates than the rest of the world not because these countries are smarter, but because of how they educate their students (see, Obama in Duncan, 2010). It is the reason why some African Universities such as Egerton University (Kenya), Makerere University and Kyambogo University (Uganda) as well as the University of Zambia conduct face-to-face lectures and tutorials to teachers both pre-service and in-service, ... but also engage others through distance study with long intense face-to-face sessions (during holidays) and relatively low student numbers (Thakrar et al., 2009). I believe they want to compete in the global education arrangements and feel the gap left behind by civil strife. The former minister of education in Uganda once said that "teacher education is seen as a continuous process, beginning with a phase of initial training and continuous throughout the teacher's professional life, throughout regular and sustained periods of in-service training" (Mushega, 2004). Weak economies anywhere in the world can only grow when they are supported by persistent quality higher education. With the availability of relative peace in the country, international academic recognition, availability of expatriates rich in technical knowledge working to build local capacities, there should be no reason why Somaliland higher education institutions should not utilize them to explore the same opportunities and advance state-building.

The global village has come with immense transformations and therefore in my perspective, higher education of the 1960s or 70s may not apply in the 21st Century. Technology is changing the way people live and do their businesses. Therefore, African higher education and Somaliland inclusive should be designed to meet current local needs. Educationists must think global and act local to influence the appropriate direction of macroeconomic policy.

XI. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Building capacity of higher education staff is essential in enhancing specialized training, teaching and research. The Somaliland Ministry of Education needs to design and publish a policy on national education to address all the pedagogical practicalities including the teaching of research by highly competent teachers/lecturers with an excellent record in supervision and teaching of applied research for innovative development to both graduate and undergraduate students.
- Government must ensure that universities collaborate rather than pulling each other down in order to promote both institutional, students', national and international success. This could be achieved when universities of Somaliland set a pace training teachers/lecturers through pre-service or in-service based face-to-face sessions to prepare them improve quality learning and teaching in higher education institutions.
- Government needs to take urgent steps to establish at least two Primary Teacher training colleges, two secondary teachers Colleges offering Diploma in education and demand all universities in the country to establish a reliable schools of education. These teachers receive extensive training by modern educationists who take them through pedagogical and practical education necessary for shaping the future of young people and national economy.
- There is need to develop sustainable approaches of funding. This could be achieved through seeking bilateral or multilateral cooperation regionally and internationally.
- The Ministry of Education needs to prioritize quality education achieved through the National Education Policy implementation at all levels of education.
- The Ministry of Education should establish a monitoring tool headed by competently prepared and serious inspectors of schools and universities who should make follow ups on the structural operations of all departments in schools and universities.
- The Ministry should ensure the heads of schools and faculties from primary to university have the necessary qualifications recruited through standardized criteria.
- The Ministry of Education should ensure that teachers and lecturers to be recruited to teach in primary, secondary or university teach only the subjects or courses they qualified for, during their college or university education; and emphasize at least a minimum qualification master's degree and most preferably a PhD to teach in a university. This will increase skills and improve quality service in the work economy.
- Since we are living in a world of tremendous change and technological transformations that affect the way people live and do business today and characterized by international interdependences, the Somaliland Ministry of Education needs to prioritize English as a medium of instruction throughout all the colleges of education. Students at all levels and, or doing any course in schools and universities should be taught in English in order for them to fit in the global village when they graduate.
- Government could attract huge capital investors so that they can contribute on the education funding of Higher Education. But this should be accompanied by high level negotiation between government and foreign investors to avoid being thrown into neoliberal traps.
- Government must ensure that all ministries of government observe transparency and accountability to achieve the best service delivery of socioeconomically and political services bearing in mind that the success of all government policies are dependent on quality higher education.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Ainebyona, Gerald (2016 Forthcoming) *Analysis for American Policy for Africa: Insider View focusing on Natural Resources and Conflicts*. Gollis University Research Institute.
- [2]. Atiknison, Robert & Steward, Luke, A (2011) *University Research Funding: The United States is behind and falling*. The Information Technology and Innovation Foundation.
- [3]. Brand, Betsy; Valent, Andrew; Browing, Andrea (2013) *How Career & Technical Education can Help Students be College and Career Ready: A Primer*. American Institute for Research.
- [4]. Caena, Francesca (2011) *Teachers' Core Competences: Education and Training 2020 Thematic Working Group 'Professional Development of Teachers'*. Published by European Commission.
- [5]. Cummings, William, K & Van Tonningen, Lestyle, Rost (2003) *Somali Education Sector Assessment: With Special Attention to North West Zone*. Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS) Activity.
- [6]. *Draft Somaliland National Development Plan (NDP) 2012-2016: For Full Recovery & Rapid Development*. October, 2011.
- [7]. Duncan, Arne & Martin, Carmel (2010) *A Blueprint for Reform: The Re-authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act*. United States of Education.

- [8]. European Commission (2010) *Education & Training 2020 Programme Cluster 'Teachers and Trainers' Report of Peer Learning Activity in Reykjavik, Iceland 21-24, June, 2010.*
- [9]. Gahakwa, Daphrose (2008) *Republic of Rwanda Ministry of Higher Education Policy.* July, 2008.
- [10]. Heritage Institute (2013) *The State of Higher Education in Somalia: Privatization, Rapid Growth and the need for Regulation.* Published by Heritage Institute for Policy Studies.
- [11]. Hussein, Abdulahi, Sh. Adam (2015) *Education Challenges in the Post-Conflict Somalila.* Published by the Heritage Institute for Policy Studies.
- [12]. International Labour Organisation (2015) *World Employment Outlook: Trends 2015.*
- [13]. International Labour Organisation (2015) *World Employment Social Outlook: Trends 2015.* Geneva: ILO.
- [14]. Jibril, Mohamed, Amin (2011) *Unemployment fuels Youth Exodus from Somaliland.* (Available on: <http://www.irinnews.org/report/94285/somalila-unemployment-fuels-youth-exodus-somaliland>).K-12 *Education Reform. America Next.* [www.AmericaNext.org].
- [15]. Kruizenga, Teresa, M (2010) *Teaching Somali Children: What Perceived Challenges do Somali Students face in the Public School System.* International Journal of Education. Vol. 1, No.1: E12.
- [16]. Malhoit, Gregory, C. (2005) *Providing Rural Students with a High Quality Education: Rural Perspectives on the Concept of Educational Adequacy.* Published by Rural Schools and Community Trust.
- [17]. Mushega, Amany (2004) *Teacher Education in Uganda.* Ministry of Education and Sports.
- [18]. Nherera, Muchemwa, Charles (1994) *Vocationalization of Secondary Education in Zimbabwe: A Theoretical and Empirical Investigation.* Thesis submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of London.
- [19]. Obura, Anna (2013) *Never Again: Educational Reconstruction.* Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning.
- [20]. Pelton, Robert, Young (2011) *Help us find NGOs who do not deliver their Promises.* 07/19/2011.
- [21]. *Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015) Plan of Action.* Addis Ababa: African Union.
- [22]. Shaman, David (2016) *The Meaning of Transparency-A Perspective.* (Available on <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/meaning-transparency-perspective-david-shaman?trk=prof-post>).
- [23]. *Somalilands Education Sector Strategic Plan 2012-2016. Final Draft SESSP 2012-2016.* Republic of Somaliland and Ministry of Education & Higher Education.
- [24]. Ssimbwa, Peter (2016) *Reflection on Somaliland Economic Growth: An Interview.*
- [25]. Thakrar, Jayshree&Zinn, Denise; Wolfenden, Freda (2009) *Harnessing Open Education Resources to the Challenges of Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa.* IRRODL.
- [26]. *The Constitution of the Republic of Somaliland.* Approved by Referendum on 31 May, 2010. International Relations and Security Network, Primary Resources in the International Affairs (PRIA). Published by ISN.
- [27]. *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/Res/70/1.*
- [28]. Veugelers, Reinhilde (2014) *The Contribution of Academic Research to Innovation and Growth.* Published by Europa Welfare Wealth.
- [29]. William, H. James and Cummings, William C (2015) *Education from the Bottom Up: UNICEF's Education Programme in Somali.* International Peacekeeping, 22:4, 419-434, DOI: 10.1080/13533312.2015.1059284.
- [30]. Wolhuter, C.C. (2006) *Teacher Training in South Africa: Past, Present and Future.* Education Research and Perspectives. Vol. 33, No.2, 2006.