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# BRAIN GAIN OR BRAIN DRAIN?

## A Review of USAID Participant Training Programs in Somalia

United States Agency for International Development
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## Glossary of Abbreviations:

| | |
|---|---|
| AAI | - African American Institute |
| AFGRAD | - African Graduate Fellowship Program |
| AFMET | - Farm Management, Extension, and Training Center |
| AID | - Agency for International Development |
| ALIGU | - American Language Institute, Georgetown University |
| AMDP | - African Manpower Development Project |
| CDIE | - AID Center for Development Information and Evaluation. |
| DIS | - AID Development Information System Database |
| E/HRD | - Education/Human Resources Development |
| FY | - Fiscal Year |
| MHE | - Somali Ministry of Higher Education |
| NA | - Data not available |
| PIO/P | - Project Implementation Order/Participant |
| PP | - Project Paper |
| SIDAM | - Somali Institute for Development Administration and Management |
| SNU | - Somali National University |
| S&T/IT | - AID Bureau for Science and Technology/ International Training |
| TOEFL | - Test of English as a Foreign Language |
| USDA | - United States Department of Agriculture |
| USIS | - United States Information Service |

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Executive Summary:

A study was conducted on AID/Somalia participant training programs to evaluate their cost, return rates and overall effectiveness. The study involved compiling statistical information on 5 projects. Detailed information was gathered on three projects- the Ag. Delivery Systems Project, AMDP, and AFGRAD- including interviews with a number of returned participants.

The study found the following:
* Costs were high, averaging between $32,000 and $54,000 per participant. Individual programs ran as high $70,000.
* The length of time in training was excessive in most cases, averaging between 23 and 31 months per participant, with some spending as long as 49 months on a master's degree.
* The return rates were unacceptably low. Rates ranged from 31% to 83%, but only one project was above 67%. Some students counted as "returned" didn't return to the projects on which they were assigned to work.

The status of participant training in Somalia is so bad, that there is a real question whether after spending over $2.1 million on the five projects studied, the country is better off. The statistics show that AID is spending money to produce what may be a net brain drain rather than a brain gain to the country. This is a staggering conclusion that demands a major revision of the approach to participant training in the mission.

Based on the data gathered and the interviews with former participant, AID, and Ministry of Higher Education officials, this report recommends the following:

1- Reorientation of AID/Somalia Training Programs:
The mission should reorient entirely its approach to participant training. The following should be the important components of a new mission training policy:

* Training should be conducted more on a short-term basis rather than primarily long term academic training.
* Training in the U.S. should be almost totally replaced with training in Third Countries and inside Somalia.
* Academic training should be conducted either totally or at least partially within Somalia. This could be less expensive, more applicable to Somalia's needs, and avoid the problem of non-return.

2- Project Design:
* Bilateral projects should incorporate participant training into project design-
  a) Training need analyses should be conducted, and their results incorporated into the Project Papers;

b) The Project Papers should specify in greater detail the purposes of training and the criteria for selection of participants.
* Regional projects should be implemented with greater mission involvement and control. The general goals of the regional projects should be specifically adapted to Somalia.

3- Selection of Students:
* Selection criteria for training slots should be made explicit and quantified as much as possible.
* Special emphasis should be placed on English language ability. Pre-training advanced language instruction should be conducted to obviate lengthy extensions for such training abroad.
* Efforts should be made to open up the application process to bring in more candidates and to bring in applicants from non-elite families and from the private sector.

4- Placement and Orientation of Students:
* Orientation sessions should be organized for all departing students.
* Students should be provided with more input into their placement at overseas universities.

5- In-Training Recommendations:
* Consultations should be conducted with USDA about the improving the supervision of ag. project trainees.
* The mission should keep closer contact with participants in training and their universities to avoid the surprise extension requests and cost overruns that are so common now.
* Planning for training time and cost should be more realistically based on past experience.

6- Increasing Return Rates:
* Participants should not be allowed to take family members with them for training.
* The commitment to return should be made more explicit and more binding. A signed, sworn statement should be required of each participant before leaving.
* The mission should make an effort to assist returnees so that they are placed in attractive jobs.

7- Follow-up Studies:
* The mission should conduct regular follow-up activities, to provide continuing evaluation of training activities and monitor returnee placement.

8- Mission Record Keeping:
* Mission training records should be computerized, both in a summary form (already partially complete) and on the new PTMS system, and E/HRD personnel should be trained to use and update the computerized record system.

## 1. Introduction

In the quest for successful economic development projects, a number of critical elements are needed-- raw materials, financial capital, and functioning input and output markets are all important. But if one had to select a single most important factor, that factor would probably be that of human resources. Without individuals having the proper education, experience, or work and management skills to implement a project, any attempt at development is virtually predestined to failure.

This need for the development of human capital as a prerequisite for economic progress has been recognized by the Agency for International Development since its inception. Almost every AID funded project includes a participant training aspect, ranging from informal on-the-job training to formal graduate degree programs in American universities. It is estimated that over 240,000 foreign nationals have participated in US sponsored participant training programs over the last 35 years, with an average of around 8,000 per year in recent years.

Participant training programs have been particularly important in USAID/Somalia, because of the lack of adequate educational opportunities provided by the Somali government and the acute shortage of highly trained personnel. In the last seven years alone, USAID/Somalia has sponsored over 150 students for academic training abroad leading to Bachelor's, Master's, and Ph.D. degrees. The mission has also sponsored over 220 short-term training visits abroad, for periods from one week to one year in duration. If anything, the mission's emphasis on training programs will increase in the future, with the addition of the Somali Management, Training, and Development (SOMTAD) Project, which will train hundreds of Somalis in government and the private sector over the coming years.

The emphasis on participant training programs in USAID/Somalia has been based on an instinctive belief in the need for human resource development in Somalia. Unfortunately, the evidence suggests that it has not always been based on rational calculations of the specific needs of the country, nor those of the projects concerned. Moreover, there have not been adequate attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of the training programs implemented.

This study is a first attempt to remedy the severe lack of information evaluating AID participant training in Somalia. Of the many projects with participant training components, several were selected for evaluation. Summary data was compiled for the African Manpower Development Project (AMDP), the African Graduate Fellowship Project (AFGRAD), the Agriculture Delivery Systems Project, the Bay Regional Project, and the Central Rangelands Project. A more detailed examination was focused on the first three of these projects, with interviews and follow-up information collected from returned participants.

The projects studied and the persons interviewed were in no way selected randomly. Rather, the study was governed by the pervasive difficulties of gathering data, contacting people, and doing any kind of research in Somalia. Nevertheless, the data gathered are from a broad research base (28 interviews) and are quantifyable to an amazing degree. The conclusions presented are at times startling, but I have reasonable confidence in their reliability and their potential impact on the direction of participant training programs in Somalia.

## 2. Overview of Participant Training Problems

The five projects studied here have involved 118 participants in academic study during the last seven years, with 47 of those individuals still in training as of the date of this report. Another 98 participants were involved in short term training programs abroad over the same period. An examination of summary data about these participants will give a first idea of the nature of problems in participant training in Somalia. Table 1 contains basic information on return rates, cost and duration of study.

The most important point to consider in examining the summary data is that of the return rates-- that is, how many of those sent abroad actually return to Somalia? The first issue to be addressed is that of a definition of a returnee. This is not as clear-cut as it sounds. There are a number of grey areas that must be clarified: 1) Are students who remain in the States for study beyond that originally planned considered in training or not returned? For the purposes of this study, individuals are considered non-returnees if they stayed abroad beyond the end of their original study programs unless authorization and/or funding was given by USAID. In cases where the status of further study was not known, it was counted as unauthorized. This may have caused the return rate to be biased downward somewhat, but was considered justified because of a counteracting upward bias elsewhere and because of the problems caused in several projects by students delaying their return for further study. 2) What about students who returned for a time and then left the country again? These participants were counted as returnees, though some of them remained in Somalia as little as 3 months. This creates an upward bias in the return figures, though there may be other non-returnees who eventually did come back (though no such case was found in the study). 3) What about participants trained to work in a specific project who returned to the country, but did not return to the project to which they were assigned? These students were counted as returned though their "return" was of little value to the projects funding their study.

A look at the return rates given in Table 1 show that there are serious problems in getting Somalis trained abroad to return upon completion of their studies. The return rates for the five projects range from a low of 31% for AMDP participants sent to

Table 1- Summary Data on Training for Five Projects

Ag. Delivery Systems Project:

| | |
|---|---|
| Academic participants | 20 |
| Return rate | 67% |
| Ave. duration of study | 26.6 months |
| Ave. cost/participant | $46600 |
| Short-term participants | 30 |
| Ave. duration of study | 14 weeks |
| Ave. cost/participant | $7475 |

Bay Region Project:

| | |
|---|---|
| Academic participants | 16 |
| Return rate | 83% |
| Ave. duration of study | 27.5 months |
| Ave. cost/participant | $53400 |
| Short-term participants | 13 |
| Ave. duration of study | 9 weeks |
| Ave. cost/participant | $18800 |

Central Rangelands Project:

| | |
|---|---|
| Academic participants | 15 |
| Return rate | 67% |
| Ave. duration of study | 31.3 months |
| Ave. cost/participant | NA |
| Short-term participants | 2 |
| Ave. duration of study | 3 weeks |
| Ave. cost/participant | NA |

African Manpower Development Project:

| All Trainees: | | U.S. Trainees | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Academic participants | 25 | Academic participants | 17 |
| Return rate | 50% | Return rate | 31% |
| Ave. duration of study | 23.4 mo | Ave. time of study | 28.0 mo |
| Ave. cost/participant | $32400 | Ave. cost/part. | $40600 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Short-term participants | 63 |
| Ave. duration of study | 9 weeks |
| Ave. cost/participant | $7900 |

African Graduate Fellowship Program:

| | |
|---|---|
| Academic participants | 42 |
| Return rate | 57% |
| Ave. duration of study | 28.4 months |
| Ave. cost/participant | NA |
| Short-term participants | 2 |
| Ave. duration of study | 3 weeks |
| Ave. cost/participant | NA |

the U.S., to a high of 83% for the Bay Project. Generally, the results are dismal. The Bay Project's good results are based on only 6 people finished with their program. All of the other projects had return rates below 70%. This is clearly less than any acceptable return rate. These results are not confined to the projects studied. A 1985 report on participant training in the Ag. Extension, Training, and Research Project (UNCLASS MOGADISHU 03365) gave a return rate of only 45%, including those who returned without completing their degrees.

The severity of the problem is fully seen with the following illustration: In the AMDP project, academic trainees were sent to the U.S. at an average cost of $40,600 per person for master's degree training. Less than a third of them returned. This means that for every 3 people with Bachelor's degrees sent, the country gained only one person with a Master's degree--two people were completely lost to the country. And USAID spent $121,000 to achieve this dubious result!! not only is that clearly not cost-effective training, there is a real question about whether training under these circumstances constitutes a benefit or a net loss of human resources to the country.

Though the AMDP U.S. training is the most severe example, the problem applies to the other projects studied as well. USAID-funded training may be draining resources from Somalia rather than augmenting them. this is a staggering conclusion, but is inescapable given the facts. Under these circumstances, there must either be a drastic reorganization of participant training programs, or perhaps AID should consider abandoning them.

Another important point from the summary data to consider is the length of study. For the projects studied, the average length of study ranged from 23.4 months to 31.3 months. When non-U.S. AMDP training is exculded, the range becomes 27.5 to 31.3 months. Individual participants took as long as 49 months to complete a Master's degree. Since the average Master's program in the U.S. is designed to last 18-24 months, these figures seem too high. Indeed, some 28 of the participants studied took 30 months or more to complete their Master's programs.

This long period to degree completion often reflects inadequate pre-training preparation. There are particular problems in language competency and adjustment to American educational style that could be alleviated by better prepartion. The results are often cost overruns and and delays in project implementation for bilateral projects that depend on returnees to fill specific jobs. Lengthy training in general delays the time in which the country can benefit from the skills developed.

The final piece of summary information that is interesting as an introduction to participant training in Somalia is a breakdown of subject matter studied. Figure 1 depicts this, subdivided for agriculture and non-agriculture projects. The study programs of the agriculture projects are primarily defined by the needs of the projects involved. The breakdown for AFGRAD and AMDP is interesting more for what it doesn't reveal than what it does. It doesn't reflect any real assesment of the training needs of Somalia as whole, because no such needs assessment has been used. There has been an Education and Human Resources Sector Assessment which is discussed in the mission's Country Development Strategy Statement (CDSS), but application of its findings has lagged behind. Perhaps the most striking feature of the breakdown, other than the strong emphasis on business and management studies, is the small share of studies in the education sector-- a sector traditionally extraordinarily neglected in Somalia.

## 3. Analysis of Individual Projects

Having looked at summary information on five projects, I would now like to examine in more detail the participant training for the three projects for which interview were conducted-- the Ag. Deliver Systems, AMDP, and AFGRAD projects.

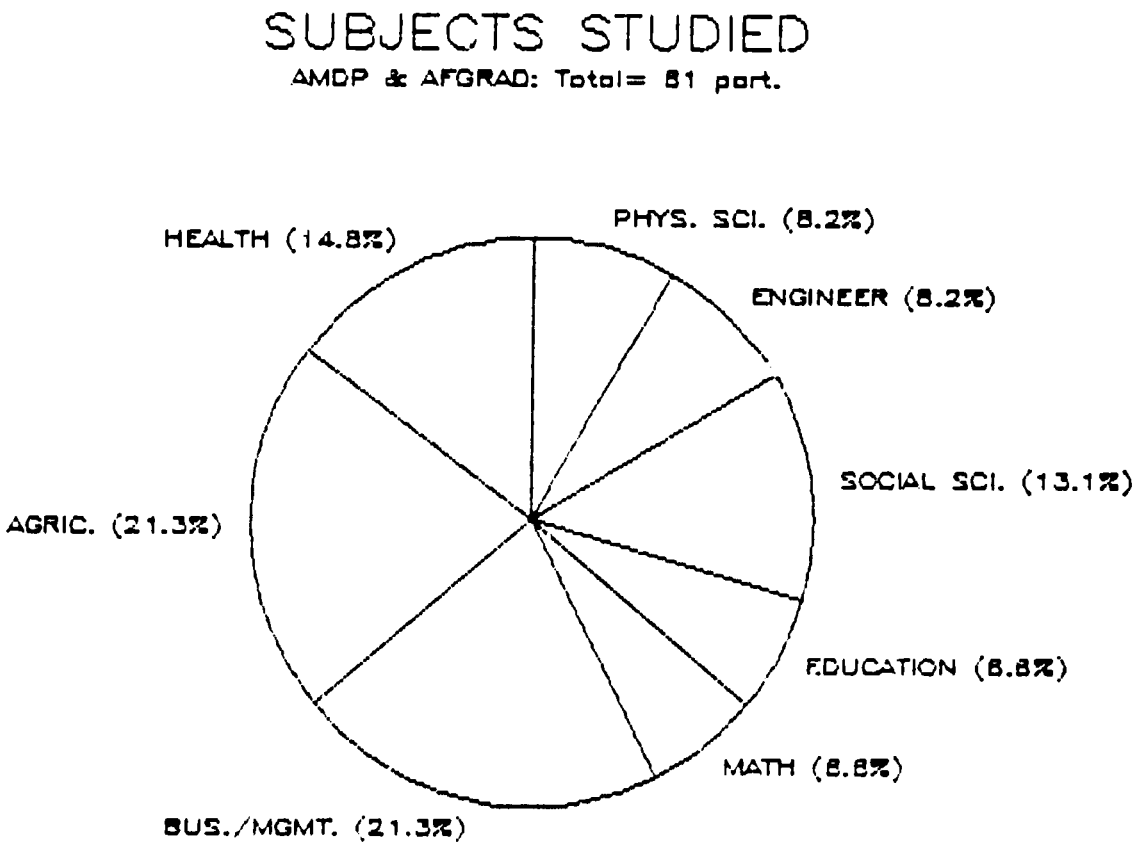
### 3.1 The Agriculture Delivery Systems Project

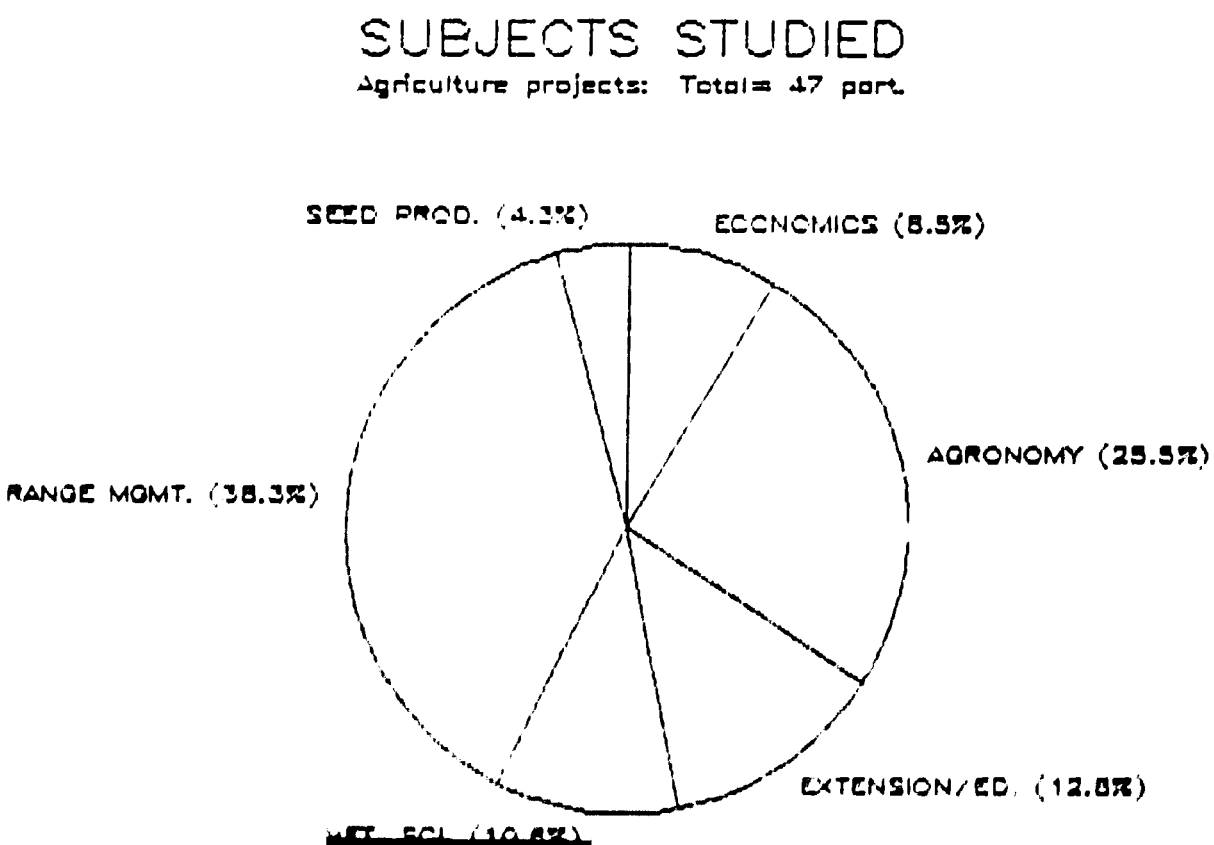
The focus of the Ag. Delivery Systems Project has been to set up the Farm Management Extension and Training Center (AFMET) and from AFMET to build up a national agricultural extension service for Somalia. Training was a crucial component to the success or failure of the project, since overseas training was necessary to obtain qualified Somali faculty to provide instructors for AFMET, which would in turn train the personnel needed to staff the extension service.

AFMET itself has been fraught with the kinds of difficulties endemic to development projects in Somalia. It is far beyond the scope of this study to look at the training difficulties there. There were, however, problems that impacted on AFMET performance that were born of the problems in the overseas training aspect of the project.

Problems with overseas training began before the project did. The Project Paper (PP) included in its more than 100 pages exactly one paragraph on overseas training, though it represented a key to the success of AFMET and constituted $1.15 million of the project's total funding of $7.75 million. There was no attempt in the PP to consider such crucial questions as the selection of participants, selection of universities and program of study, and of the crucial issue of post-training return and reintegration into the project. Procedures for all of these steps should have been established in advance.

**Figure 1- Subject Matter Breakdown for Projects Studied**



A 1983 evaluation of the project that prompted a significant revision in the project also failed to address the issue of overseas training, perhaps because the crucial phase of return/non-return and reintegration had not yet begun. The evaluation's only comment was that "... the rate of progress in the processing of long-term participants is excellent."

The plans for short-term training were even less well thought out. The funds provided amounted to a carte blanche for over $200,000 without any substantive guidance as to its use or how its use would contribute to the project.

Currently, the project is drawing to a close. The results of the participant training program are good only by comparision with other projects in Somalia, not by comparision with the potential results. The return rate was 67%, with 8 of 12 participants returning, and 8 others still in training. Of the 8 that did return, however, only 5 are currently working on the project, so the effective "return to project rate" is a mere 42%. Clearly, this is a significant impairment of AFMET's and the extension service's ability to function. The subjects studied by the participants do seem to be appropriate to the project, and the participants themselves seemed generally pleased with their training (see section 4 for an analysis of the interviews conducted).

There were concerns expressed by members of the Utah State team that some of the participants didn't get as much out of their training as they should have because of inadequate background or preparation in the subjects studied. This problem was the cause of several extensions in training, which may have hampered the effective progress of the project. Finally, there was sometimes friction between returnees and the team members in implementation and instruction because of the old Biblical phenomenon: "because they are learned, they think they are wise," but the presence of these returnees has been an undeniable asset to the project, and more are needed.

The short-term training seemed to be more successful than academic training. This is primarily because the return rate was 100%, so any skills learned did get back to Somalia. Only two of thirty participants left their jobs after training, and both are still working in government agriculture-related jobs. The training programs were from one week to 48 weeks in duration, and were conducted in India, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, and Mexico, as well as the U.S. The returnees evaluation of their training was quite positive, even for relatively short sessions.

A disturbing feature of the training programs was the degree to which the choice of participants was often more a function of political considerations than of qualifications. The realities of Somalia are such that political and personal considerations almost inevitably creep into almost every decision on the disposition of "plums" like overseas training, but the lack of clear guidelines in the selection process made that problem far more severe that it might have been. If political "plums" are needed to get things done here, there could perhaps be lesser ones found than training programs costing tens of thousands of dollars per person.

3.2 The African Manpower Development Project

AMDP is a regional project that has been in existence since 1976 and is currently moving into its third incarnation. Phase I of the project went from 1976-1981 and Phase II lasts through FY 1986. The participation of Somalia in the first years of the project was limited because of the resricted American presence in the country, but AID/Somalia has since become fully involved. Funds administered jointly by the mission and the African Bureau of AID/Washington are provided for both academic and short-term training programs in the U.S. and elsewhere abroad.

The AMDP has been the rubric under which much of the mission's general training has been conducted. As can be seen from Table 1, the AMDP project is the largest of those studied in terms of the overall number of participants, with a total of 88. Also, though AFGRAD will be examined separately, it should be noted that during AMDP Phase II, AFGRAD was also a part of the AMDP project, making its share of AID/Somalia training programs even larger.

Since AMDP is an exclusively training oriented project, it has not suffered from neglect in terms of the justification and conceptualization of the role of the training to be conducted. The Project Papers lay out the need for the project in terms of the shortage of trained personnel in Sub-Saharan Africa. The project was to focus especially on providing skilled personnel to staff African development and training institutions. In these positions, the returnees could foster a "multiplier effect" on their countries, by sharing the knowledge gained abroad with their compatriots. The PPs also specifically discuss the need for follow-up on past participants as an integral part of the project.

In a project involving participants from almost 40 countries across an entire continent, the Project Papers will be necessarily vague in defining the training to be conducted beyond the broad goals mentioned above. This is not only inevitable, but also beneficial, since it gives individual missions the flexibility to adapt the project to their needs.

This flexibility, however, demands that the missions dedicate time and effort to adapting the AMDP framework to their specific needs. Otherwise, the project become little more than a source of discretionary funds that allows the mission to send people abroad. The AMDP Phase II PP specified the following responsibilities of each mission:

1- Identification of needs
2- Selection of participants
3- Follow-up on the utilization of returned participants
4- Careful preparation of PIO/Ps
5- Detailed attention to pre-departure programs
6- Maintenance of financial and statistical records

These six responsibilities are crucial to the success of the AMDP training programs. In operation, there have been problems with almost all of these at AID/Somalia. The identification and selection of participants has been hampered by pressures for favoratism by officials at the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE), as well as a lack of any mechanism for even semi-open competition for training slots. Pre-departure programs have been practically non-existent, which has undoubtedly affected participant performance and cultural adjustment upon arrival abroad. Previous to the preparation of this study, there had been essentially no follow-up on past participants, and record keeping has been more often than not incomplete and out of date.

Under these conditions, it is not surprising that AMDP has had a dismal performance record. The return rate for academic study in the U.S. has been a mere 31%. The record on short-term training has not been stellar either. AMDP is the only project studied where the return rate for short term study (3-12 months) was less than 100%, and it was only 62%! With results like these, one must question whether it might not be more beneficial to both Somalia and the US taxpayers to simply shut the project down rather than continue to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars while draining off some of Somalia's most educated citizens. If the project is to continue, severe modifications are needed.

The mission has made efforts to overcome these problems in the last two years, and the changes are beginning to bear fruit. Academic training in the U.S. has been largely discontinued in favor of training in Nairobi and Cairo. These programs have not only proven less expensive, but the early return rate has been an impressive 100%. Success in short-term training has been hampered by a fiasco at SIDAM (the Somali Institute for Development Administration and Management, a precursor of the SOMTAD project training institute) where of 10 students sent to Fresno State University for their final semester of study, only five returned. Still, even this failure was born of an effort to conduct more training in Somalia rather than abroad-- a step towards eventually raising return rates.

## 3.3 The African Graduate Fellowship Program

The AFGRAD project is the longest lived of the projects studied. AFGRAD has been in existence as a regional project since 1963. Between 1963 and 1976, AFGRAD I trained over 1,500 students. AFGRAD II (1977- 1985) has trained some 690 students as a part of AMDP II. Now, AFGRAD is once again a separate project and plans to educate about 750 African students between now and 1992.

AFGRAD differs from its AMDP cousin in several important respects. First, it is regionally administered as well as regionally funded. The African American Institute (AAI) in New York has been th administering agency under contract from AID. Second, the project relies on obtaining tuition waivers for participants from American universities, which reduces project costs per participant considerably. Third, the project is almost exclusively for academic training in the U.S. There is no provision for third country training or short-term training (except for language training for participants).

The biggest problem in evaluating the AFGRAD project's efforts in Somalia has been a severe informational problem. Since the project is regionally administered, the AID/Somalia mission has had little to do with the choice of participants, and has almost no information on who they are, what and where they're studying, or what has happened to those that have returned. This is an intolerable situation. The list of AFGRAD participants used in this study was compiled from time-consuming searches through old reports and cables, plus a reliance on hearsay information from other returnees. It is was incomplete. The Ministry of Higher Education--which works with AAI on the selection of candidates--promised complete records, but never produced even the most rudimentary information. Requests to AAI in New York over a month and a half finally obtained updated information, the day before the study ended. Even then, there were some discrepancies between AAI's data and locally verified information in some cases.

This information problem is the first issue that must be addressed in improving the AFGRAD program. AAI and AID/Somalia need to work harder to share and information, and the mission must improved its ability to retain and organize this information. The idea that a USAID mission has to spend months of effort simply to find the names of people USAID has sent to the States for study is ridiculous.

The information finally obtained pointed to a number of problems in the project in Somalia. The return rate is the most obvious one. At 57%, it is much too low. This study indicated that the figure could be even lower. Two of those counted as

returned by AAI were not returned according to mission investigation. In addition, two of those "returned" have since left the country. The problem at one point was so severe, that the 1985 PP for AFGRAD III specifically stated "USAID/Somalia declined to accept AFGRAD fellowships at this time because of problems they are experiencing in the repatriation of long-term participants" (PP, p. 4).

The cost figures for AFGRAD are not available, but they are probably fairly low, since participants obtain tuition waivers. The duration of study, however is fairly high, averaging 28.4 months for those studied. There was also a large number of participants extending their studies beyond the agreed upon degree, further delaying their return. These extensions were both authorized and unauthorized. Since several of those who have returned with only master's degrees have reported feeling overqualified for the jobs they do (see section 4), the wisdom of a large number staying for Ph.D. studies is doubtful.

A final concern was the susceptability of AFGRAD appointments to political and personal pressures from officials in the Somali government. Because the mission is not involved in the selection process, and AAI is located in New York, it is difficult to monitor the internal MHE operations that produce recommendations for students. It was alleged that only through family or political ties, could such a nomination be obtained. this charged is difficult to confirm, but care should be taken to avoid this problem.

Despite these criticisms, AFGRAD participants interviewed were generally very complimentary to AAI concerning the management of their study programs. This contrasts sharply to comments by some Ag. project and AMDP returnees.

## 4. In-Depth Analysis of Training Program Problems

Many difficulties in participant training programs have been alluded to in the above project description and summary analysis. Though the problems differ from project to project, the difficulties share much in common. It is therefore useful to analyze each step in the training process to pinpoint trouble spots and suggest remedies applicable to all AID/Somalia training activities.

Many needs were identified in follow-up interviews conducted with returned participants. The interviews were geared towards finding out the following information: 1) The returnees' evaluation of their training experience; 2) The impact the

training has had on their careers (i.e. relevance and utilization of skills learned); and 3) Recommendations for improvements in future U.S. AID-funded training programs.

Figure 2 displays the overall evaluation given by those interviewed. The results are fairly favorable, with almost all participants rating their experience as good, very good, or excellent. It is interesting to note that the ratings for those in the Ag. Delivery Systems project were generally much higher than those of AMDP and AFGRAD participants. Five of the seven "Excellent" rankings were given by ag. participants, while 7 of 8 "good" ratings and both of the "fair" ratings were given by AMDP and AFGRAD returnees.

A summary of the major problems and major recommendations given in the interviews is contained in Table 2. The results will be discussed in the context of an in-depth examination of the participant training process in sections 4.1- 4.4.

Figure 2—

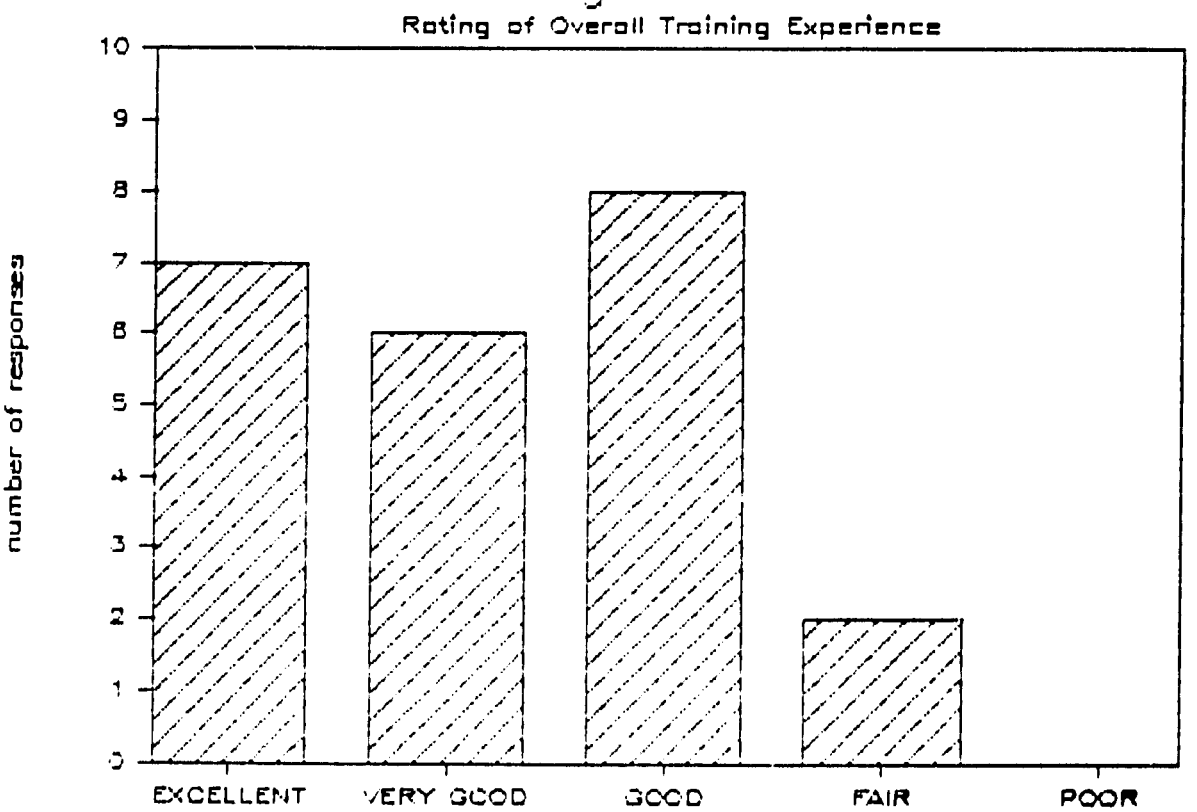


Table 2- Summary of Problems and Recommendations in Interviews

| Most Frequently Mentioned Problems: | # responses |
|---|---|
| 1- Lack of information and orientation about the programs in American universities | 8 |
| 2- Money (shortage or delays in payment) | 6 |
| 3- American educational style | 5 |
| 4- Shortness of Time | 5 |
| 5- Academic Program Specialist (ag. projects) | 4 |
| 6- Bureaucracy (difficulties with approvals, funding, changes, visas, etc.) | 3 |
| 7- Lack of practical experience | 3 |
| 8- Training not relevant to needs | 3 |

| Most Frequent Recommendations: | # responses |
|---|---|
| 1- More information about academic program before departure | 9 |
| 2- More language training | 9 |
| 3- Provide the means for internships/practical training | 7 |
| 4- Pre-training orientation | 6 |
| 5- Preparation for American educational style | 6 |
| 6- More time for training | 6 |
| 7- More information | 5 |
| 8- More time for cultural adjustment | 5 |
| 9- More flexibility | 4 |
| 10- Less bureaucracy | 3 |
| 11- More opportunities for training | 3 |

## 4.1 Design of Projects

The problems with participant training begin in the design phase of the projects. As was the case with the Ag. Delivery Systems Project, often training is not "designed into" a project, but rather "tacked-on," as an appendage whose need is vaguely felt, but whose role is not really understood. Truly including training in the project design implies conducting training needs analysis during the preparation of the project prosposal, and then integrating the results of the needs analysis into the plans for project implementation. Also needed is a more detailed specification of the the purposes and procedures for training in the Project Papers.

In regional training projects,such as AFGRAD and AMDP, there is also a need for "project design" on the country level, since these projects need to be adapted and applied to Somalia in a systematic way. The flexibility in these regional programs needs to be exploited so as to maximize the impact of the programs on Somali development priorities. Each participant needs to be seen as a contribution to an institution or project, and not as an individual receiving individual training.

With a firm foundation in project design, the problems of return and reintegration can begin to be addressed before the project even starts. Participants are more likely to return when they perceive themselves to be part of a development plan and when they feel their skills will be needed and used. For the good of the project, this perception should be based in the reality of training integrated into project needs and outputs.

## 4.2 Selection of Students

The selection of qualified applicants is obviously crucial to the success of any training program. Unqualified participants will either not complete their programs, or will complete them only after delays and cost overruns that could jeopardize interlocking phases of the project. At this time, no AID project training Somalis has an openly competitive selection process to

ensure that the most qualified people apply and that the most qualified applicants are selected for training.

There are constraints on the selection process. It is important to have Somali government input into the selection process, which usually takes the form of recommendations of specific individuals. Furthermore, many projects involve training staff at particular institutions, and those positions are already filled by particular individuals. Finally, poltical pressures are always near the surface in decisions of this nature made with Somali government concurrance.

Despite these restrictions, however, there are improvements that should be made in the selection process. First, firm criteria for selection should be specified and adhered to. Specifying criteria could help to remove personal influence from the selection process and could ensure a minimum level of competence among candidates chosen. Which qualifications will be considered important should be made explicit, as well as at least a general idea given of their relative weights in the overall evaluation. In some cases, quantitative criteria could also be applied-- such as with TOEFL scores or grade averages from the Somali National University. Political pressures could also be more effectively resisted when strict guidelines can be used to justify a given candidate's acceptance or rejection. If reasonable minimum criteria cannot be met by candidates recommended for training, it may well be better to not conduct the training than to lower standards or bow to personal pressure.

A second step that could be taken to improve the selection process is to open up the applications to a greater of number of candidates. Currently, an individual wishing to study abroad has to have either connections at USAID, at the Ministry of Higher Education, or (preferably) both. There are undoubtedly qualified individuals who never apply because they are not aware of the opportunities available. A completely open search for candidates would not be possible, given the constraints of AID training staff and given the nature of many of the projects involved. Nevertheless, an effort should be made to increase the pool of candidates applying for AID funded training programs. This could be done through simple measures like posting announcements at the University inviting written applicatations. These could be given a preliminary screening quickly by AID or project staff. Increasing the pool of applicants could help to raise the quality of students chosen as well as help to bring in participants from non-elite families and from the Somali private sector that might not get involved otherwise.

## 4.3 Placement and Orientation of Students

Some of the most common recommendations and complaints received from returned participants interviewed for this study dealt with difficulties in their placement and orientation (see Table 2). Lack of information and orientation about programs offered in American universities was the single more commonly mentioned problem in the interviews, and aleviating that problem was the most commonly mentioned suggestion for training program improvement. The idea of a pre-training orientation here in Somalia for students leaving was also a prominent recommendation, as was giving some previous preparation to help students adjust to the American educational style.

By the returnees own assessment, then, orientation and placement problems are real and should be addressed. Pre-training orientaion in Somalia would be relatively easy to organize and could be extremely helpful. Several of the returnees i be considered important should be made explicit, as well as at least a general idea given of their relative weights in the overall evaluation. In some cases, quantitative criteria could also be applied-- such as with TOEFL scores or grade averages from the Somali National University. Political pressures could also be more effectively resisted when strict guidelines can be used to justify a given candidate's acceptance or rejection. If reasonable minimum criteria cannot be met by candidates recommended for training, it may well be better to not conduct the training than to lower standards or bow to personal pressure.

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## 4.4 In Training Difficulties

During the actual period of study, the problems reported by participants themselves were often more a reflection of pre-training failures than of problems with the programs themselves. Cultural adjustment and adjustment to the American educational system were frequently mentioned by interviewees as problems; the solutions suggested were more orientation, and more time to adjust.

The students in the Ag. Delivery Systems Project often complained about the USDA Program Specialists in charge of supervising their educational experience. Contacts with them were difficult, not helpful, and guidance given was minimal. Other students occasionally mentioned problems with university academic advisers, but this was rare.

The study revealed that the two most significant problems in training were frequent extensions and associated cost overruns. While the students themselves reported lack of money and insufficient time, from the mission's perspective the problem was the reverse. As discussed in section 2, the length of time in study and the average cost per participant are both unduly high. The solution to this should lie in a combination of better pre-training preparation, selection of better candidates, and in more realistic financial and time planning in project design.

Related to the problem of cost and time overruns is another informational problem. The mission needs to keep better tabs on the progress of students in training. Often requests for extensions are presented by the university involved as almost a fait accompli-- a student due to return in a few weeks, and assumed to be on schedule is suddenly announced to be months (or years) from his degree. The mission is forced either to terminate training after considerable expense and without receiving a fully trained individual in return, or to acquiesce to the additional cost and delays that could wreak havoc on a carefully planned project implementation schedule. This is not the mission's fault, but more frequent and detailed progress reports should be obtained from the universities involved.

## 4.5 Problems with Returning

Obviously, the crux of the entire training problem is the fact that so many of those trained don't return to Somalia. This has already been discussed in section 2. The reasons why participants don't return are diverse-- desire to escape political repression, desire for a better standard of living, desire to continue professional work or study that would be impossible in Somalia, etc. These are problems that are beyond the control of USAID, so methods need to be found to encourage return given the immense incentives not to.

Insights into ways to encourage return can be gained from the interviews with those who did return. The primary reasons for return are listed in Table 3. They reveal a patriotic desire to help their country, a desire to return to their families, and good job prospects in Somalia as the three most important reasons for return.

Table 3- Primary Reasons for Returning to Somalia

| Reason given: | # responses |
|---|---|
| 1- Desire to contribute to Somalia | 7 |
| 2- Return to family in Somalia | 6 |
| 3- Job prospects in Somalia good | 5 |
| 4- Desire to honor commitment to return | 4 |
| 5- Wanted work experience before continuing study | 4 |

Though nothing can be done to increase the altruistic desire to help one's country, the mission should respond to the other two points by not permitting dependents to accompany students abroad and by trying to provide productive, rewarding jobs for returnees. Such jobs can easily be included as part of the project design for bilateral projects.

It would also be advisable to increase the degree of commitment to return elicited from students before leaving. Several interviewees mentioned that they had never had to sign any obligation to return, and that such a commitment was never made explicit. While a legally binding commitment to return is probably impossible, a formal, signed and sworn statement should be required of all students. This stick could perhaps be coupled with a carrot of a small "readjustment payment" in Somali Shillings given to returnees upon arrival back in the country.

Finally, given the strong pressures not to return, the mission should consider redesigning its training program so as to avoid academic training in the U.S.-- the training from which students are least likely to return. The following suggestions are applicable:

- Replace academic training with short-term training wherever possible.

- Change U.S.-based training to Third Country training whenever possible.

* Implement academic programs where all or part of the training is conducted inside Somalia--
  a) Avoid giving internationally marketable degrees (have SNU grant them);
  b) If combination U.S.- and Somalia-based training is conducted, do not conduct the final stage of training in the States, so that students will have to return to finish their studies;

Academic programs based in Somalia have several other advantages to commend them: 1) For a large number of students, they are cheaper than study in the U.S.; 2) Study can be adapted to the specific needs of Somalia, increasing the relevance of the program; 3) Problems of cultural adaptation are avoided; 4) Somali students can be given the remedial help they often need due to poor secondary and undergraduate educational preparation; and, 5) Training in Somalia helps in local institution-building in education.

In the long-run, only a reorientation and redesign of the training programs involving AID/Somalia are going to turn participant training from a net drain of human resources into a true gain.

4.6 Post-Return Concerns

The first post-return need that must be met if participant training is to be considered a success is that of follow-up. There must be a standard mechanism to check on the status of returnees. This has been sorely lacking at AID/Somalia. In fact, this study represents the first comprehensive follow-up of participants on record. It was a large and difficult undertaking, but future follow-ups could be much less trouble if conducted regularly. each follow-up could build upon the preceding one, with only a few new returnees to evaluate each time. Annual or at least bi-annual reviews should be conducted by the mission.

The follow-up conducted for this study revealed interesting information about the current status of returnees from AID training projects:

Post-training Job Placement. Most participants interviewed either returned to the same job held before training or to a job with similar responsibilities. Only two people interviewed were placed after training in less satisfactory jobs than they held before. On the other hand, few returnees were given better job upon return either. There was attrition from previous jobs as well. As discussed earlier, in the Ag. Delivery Systems Project, 3 of 8 returnees left the project. Many of the former

participants that were not contacted were missed because they had left their last known jobs. Some even leave the country a short time after their "return." In an interview, I was told of one former participant with a Ph.D. who now owns and drives a bus in Mogadishu. It was said he earns more per day than his previous monthly salary in government. It proved impossible to check the veracity of the story, but given the skewed incentives system in Somalia, it actually seems plausible.

Job Advancement, Raises. As a result of advanced training overseas, one would expect that returned participants would receive pay increases more quickly, advance in job standing, and move into supervisory positions. While there was some evidence of this, it was far from a general phenomenon. There are several explanations for this. First, the civil service pay system is so ossified and unrealistically outdated that it bears no relationship to reality. Some individuals receive the same wage over a period of as much as 10 years-- a time during which the value of the Shilling has deteriorated from 6=$1 to 83=$1. Second, since AID training programs in Somalia date from 1979 at the earliest, most participants have been back in the country for three years or less. That is not long enough to get a long-term idea of career mobility. Future follow-ups will give a better picture of this. Finally, some people interviewed did mention a certain amount of resentment of foreign educated Somalis in some circles. When one considers that the highest echelons of the government are staffed with many very poorly educated people, this prejudice could be a legitimate concern.

Relevance of Skills Learned. Returnees interviewed has generally positive feelings about the relevance of their training to their subsequent work. Often they commented that although some of the specific things learned were not applicable, the overall educational experience was very useful. Other skills were originally not considered applicable, but have since proven helpful. For example, several mentioned that they had not thought that computer training would be relevant, and now they are beginning to work with computers in Somalia.

Nevertheless, there were concerns about the relevance of study programs, particularly in the U.S. One student did a Master's degree in Ag. Mechanization at the University of Nebraska, only to return to Somalia, where the main ag. mechanization challenge is not using the latest tractors or combines, but using animal traction versus hand plowing. Some students mentioned feeling overqualified for the jobs they were asked to do. Interestingly, returnees from some short-term programs seemed more enthusiastic about the relevance of their training than those in academic programs. this perhaps reflects the specific nature of short-term training and the fact that much of the short-term training was located in other Developing Countries.

Intellectual Decay. Intellectual decay is the deterioration of skills occurring among graduates after the conclusion of their training programs. It is by no means confined to returnees in the Third World-- any individual leaving school will begin to forget things learned unless a constant effort is made to keep up to date. The challenge for professionals in Developing countries, however, is particularly acute. Because most of the participants interviewed have returned relatively recently from their training abroad, intellectual decay was not yet severe, but it is a porblem. One man, educated in an Ivy League graduate program in physics, complained of the impossibility of conducting any research or doing any experiments beyond demonstrations for his first year students. Others complained similarly of a lack of resources to help them update or even retain their skills. This was particularly evident in the number of graduates who expressed a desire to return for further study.

## 4.7 Other Issues Raised by this Follow-up Study

There are several general issues that were raised in the course of this study that merit special attention. Some of these have been alluded to earlier in the report.

Disagreements between this report and the returnees interviewed. The interviews conducted with former participants were extraordinarily useful. But there were points on which the prevailing opinions of those interviewed disagree with the arguments presented. The interviewees wanted more time and money for their training programs. They expressed a preference for academic over short-term training and for U.S. over Third Country programs. Several also vehemently disagreed with the suggestion that training should be conducted more in Somalia. Some returnees interviewed wanted to see more Ph.D. training and fewer Master's only programs. They also wanted to see more Somalis placed in elite U.S. universities (Ivy League, Stanford, Berkeley, etc.) rather than in state land grant institutions.

In my mind, these suggestions constitute more of a wish list for a utopian student program than realistic suggestions for improvement of present training programs. Certainly individual students would benefit from more time and money and better schools, but it would clearly not be the most efficient of AID funds. The students' own assessments of their programs belied their claim that long term, U.S. training was better than short-term, Third country sessions; the latter were generally rated higher on relevance and had fewer problems than the former.

The possibility of delayed return. The director of Higher Education at the MHE indicated in an interview that the question of return rates was not a big concern of the Somali government . "Many of these people stay abroad for a few years to earn money, but eventually almost all of them return. This is their home,"

he stated. This may be an accurate statement. Today, many Somalis who have worked for years in the Gulf States are returning, bringing their skills and their foreign currency savings with them. Still, from the point of view of a development strategy, it is not acceptable to take such a relaxed attitude towards the return/non-return question. Every year a participant remains abroad is a year the investment spent on his training fails to pay off for Somalia. Only immediate repatriation can take full advantage of the skills taught in participant training programs. This is especially true for training under bilateral, sector specific projects like the agriculture projects examined.

Record keeping at AID/Somalia. Throughout this study, informational problems have been the single greatest constraint. Many of these difficulties could have been avoided by accurate and up-to-date record keeping within the mission. Following the progress of hundreds of student participants is not an easy task, but it can and must be done. As one step in this process, a computerized record system was developed on the mission's Wang computers using the Lotus 1-2-3 software package. Information for the five projects examined was compiled and entered on the computer. In the future this system will be easy to update and will automatically calculate such important information as cost, duration of study, and return rate figures.

There are several steps that should be made to take advantage of the computerization of the participant training records:

1- Training records for the rest of the mission's projects should be computerized.

2- Personnel in the E/HRD office must be trained on how to use and update the system. In this context, brief written reference instructions should be combined with some personal sessions.

3- Project managers for each project should be provided with these computerized records to aid their supervisory activities.

In addition to the summary records on the mission-designed system, AID/Washington has developed a computerized Participant Training Management System (PTMS) to store more detailed data on each participant with dBase-III software. It is, unfortunately, much more complex than the Lotus system to enter data and to operate. Still, this system would be very useful for keeping track of each participant and would standardize mission records with those worldwide. Therefore, I recommend:

4- Training records should also be also computerized on the PTMS System.

5- Sessions should be held for E/HRD personnel to train them on the PTMS. This training would have to be more detailed than that for the mission system.

## 5. Looking to the Future: A Summary of Recommendations

As suggested in Section 1 of this report, unless dramatic changes are made in the participant training programs of AID/Somalia, consideration should be given to eliminating them. Since Somalia has such a severe shortage of skilled personnel, the preferable option obviously is to reform the participant training system. A number of recommendations have been presented here that, if taken together, could effect the dramatic turn around needed. They are summarized here.

### 1- Reorientation of AID/Somalia Training Programs:

The most important recommendation to consider is to reorient entirely the mission's approach to participant training. Such a revision could serve as a model for AID missions around the world, rather than having AID/Somalia in possession of one of the most dismal training records. Only a complete redirection of participant training programs will make this possible. The following should be the important components of a new mission training policy:

a) Granting internationally marketable degrees encourages defection and should be avoided.
b) Mixed U.S.- and Somali-based training should always conclude training in Somalia to give students an added incentive to return.
c) Training within Somalia, even using U.S. professors, could be cheaper and more applicable to Somali needs than study abroad.

The remaining recommendations (2-8) are suggestions that could be incorporated in to the present training system, but also apply to any redesign of the educational program. Under any circumstances, some students (such as in AFGRAD) will continue to travel to the U.S.

2- Project Design:

* Training should be conducted more on a short-term basis rather than primarily long term academic training.

* Training in the U.S. should be almost totally replaced with training in Third Countries and inside Somalia.

* Academic training should be conducted either totally or at least partially within Somalia.

* Bilateral projects should incorporate participant training into project design-

a) Training need analyses should be conducted, and their results incorporated into the Project Papers;

b) The Project Papers should specify in greater detail the purposes of training and the criteria for selection of participants.

* Regional projects should be implemented with greater mission involvement and control. The general goals of the regional projects should be specifically adapted to Somalia in a coherent and explicit fashion.

3- Selection of Students:

* Selection criteria for training slots should be made explicit and quantified as much as possible. Special emphasis should be placed on more objective indicators (e.g. test scores, grades).

* Special emphasis should be placed on English language ability. Pre-training advanced language instruction should be conducted to obviate lengthy extensions for such training abroad.

* Efforts should be made to open up the application process to bring in more candidates and to bring in applicants from non-elite families and from the private sector.

4- Placement and Orientation of Students:

* Orientation sessions should be organized for all departing students. They should include--

a) Informal discussions with former participants.
b) Orientation to life in America.
c) Orientation to the American educational system, style of teaching, university structure, etc.

* Students should be provided with more input into their placement at overseas universities--
a) The mission should obtain catalogues (on microfiche) of American universities and give candidates access to them.
b) Students should be allowed to make suggestions on universities and possible programs of study, rather than being assigned without prior consultation.

* After placement is made, students should be provided with as much information as possible on their university and study program. Course information should be obtained before the student leaves Somalia.

5- In-Training Recommendations:

* Consultations should be conducted with USDA about the supervision of ag. project trainees. It has not been adequate in the past and should be improved.

* The mission should keep closer contact with participants in training and their universities to avoid the surprise extension requests and cost overruns that are so common now.

* Planning for training time and cost should be more realistically based on past experience.

6- Increasing Return Rates:

* As discussed above, the most effective way to increase return rates would be to redesign completely the approach to participant training. Barring that (or in addition to that), other measures could be taken--

* Participants should not be allowed to take family members with them for training.

* The commitment to return should be made more explicit and more binding. A signed, sworn statement should be required of each participant before leaving.

* Incentives could be offered to help induce return, such as a "readjustment allowance" payment in Somali Shillings to participant upon return.

* The mission should make an effort to assist returnees so that they are placed in attractive jobs. This is particularly possible in bilateral projects.

7- Follow-up Studies:

* The mission should follow up on each participant soon after return, to provide continuing evaluation of training activities and monitor returnee placement.

* The mission should conduct follow-up studies yearly, or at least every two years, to provide more detailed, long-term information on the impact of participant training on Somalia.

8- Mission Record Keeping:

* Mission training records should be computerized, both in a summary form (already partially complete) and on the new PTMS system.

* E/HRD personnel should be trained to use and update the computerized record system. Written instruction should be provided along with orientation sessions.

* Project managers should be provided regularly with computer updates on participant training in their projects.

Record of Interviews:

| Name: | Date: | Program: |
|---|---|---|
| Jama Abdullah Shuriye | 8/10/86 | AMDP |
| Ibrahim Ali Ambar Education, MHE. | 8/10/86 | AFGRAD, Director of Higher |
| *Gordon Beckstrand of Party. | 8/11/86 | Ag. Delivery Systems, Chief |
| *Guy Denton | 8/11/86 | Ag. Delivery Systems |
| Mohamed Ibrahim Omer | 8/12/86 | Ag. Delivery Systems |
| Abdulkadir M. Elmi | 8/14/86 | Ag. Delivery Systems |
| Bashir M. Mohamed | 8/14/86 | Ag. Delivery Systems |
| Hussein Moalim Iman | 8/14/86 | Ag. Delivery Systems |
| Abdulkadir Haji Elmi | 8/14/86 | Ag. Delivery Systems |
| Ibrahim Mohamed Omer | 8/14/86 | Ag. Delivery Systems |
| Kamar Osman Ibrahim | 8/21/86 | AMDP |
| Yusuf Ahmed Mire | 8/24/86 | Ag. Delivery Systems |
| Abdinur Hassan Ali | 8/24/86 | Ag. Delivery Systems |
| Faiza Jama Mohamed | 8/25/86 | AMDP |
| Hussein Said Shaba | 8/25/86 | AMDP |
| Mohamed Dahir Mohamed | 8/25/86 | AMDP |
| Nura Ahmed Jama | 8/25/86 | AMDP |
| Hassan S. Mohamed | 8/25/86 | AMDP |
| Abukar Osman Abikar | 8/25/86 | AFGRAD |
| Yusuf Ainab Muse | 8/26/86 | AFGRAD |
| Hassan Yusuf Nur | 8/26/86 | AMDP |
| Abdurahman Mohamed Warsame | 8/27/86 | AMDP |
| *Dee Henderson | 8/28/86 | AMDP, Director of SIDAM. |
| Musa Farah Elmi | 8/28/86 | AMDP |
| Rashid Ahmed Weli | 9/4/86 | AFGRAD |
| Mohamed Osdman Nur | 9/4/86 | AMDP |
| Mohamed Said Omer | 9/4/86 | AMDP |
| Mahdi Hussein Gelle | 9/7/86 | AFGRAD |

In addition to the formal interviews conducted, the study benefited from more informal discussions with the following people:

Edwin Tolle, Training Officer, USAID/Somalia
Rodger Garner, Agriculture Officer, USAID/Somalia
Ray Carpenter, Agriculture Development Officer, USAID/Somalia
Dr. Stanley Andrews, Contractor, USAID/Somalia
Flavia Sales Ramos, Center for International Education, University of Massachusetts
Hassan Mohamed Jama, Asst. Training Officer, USAID/Somalia

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