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Active-Learning Pedagogies: Policy, Professional Development and Classroom Practices- A case study of two post-conflict contexts: Afghanistan and Somaliland

Case Study 1: Somaliland



Submitted by:

Geeta Menon, CARE International
Hakim Ahmed, Project Manger, CARE Somalia

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Research Assistants:

Fatumo Dahir Duale

CARE Education Officer

Abdikadir Mohamed Osman

Local Consultant, Development Worker

Abdikadir Abdilahi Hussein

School Inspector MoE

Elmi Mohamed Wacays

School Inspector MoE

Acknowledgments:

Abdulahi Yasin Derie

Director Curriculum Development and Training MoE

Hussein Dahir Roble

Director Non-formal Education MoE

Charles Wabwire

SCOTT Project Manager, Save the Children UK

Jama Aden Ali

Dean Faculty of Education University of Hargeisa

Keith West

Intern, Basic & Girls' Education, CARE USA

As the world community (including Somalia) converged in Jomtien in March 1990 to enunciate the EFA decade, Somalia was rapidly sinking into a deep morass - the nadir of her development. The dramatic expansion of her education system up to the early 1980s had been followed by a steady decline that accelerated into a complete collapse on the outbreak of civil war in 1991. UNESCO EFA Report.

1. Historical Background

Somaliland declared itself an independent country in 1991, but international recognition has remained elusive; it is still considered a region of Somalia. Somalia continues to be plagued by conflicts amongst different clan and militia groups, and for 17 years has had no legitimate central government. Somaliland has arduously formulated its independent constitution and government and has moved ahead with peace and development initiatives. It is undoubtedly an unusual circumstance for a country.

As a nation state, Somalia is a 20th century phenomenon. Historically comprised of large clans residing in geographical areas governed by their own norms and values, the clan structure and affiliations have dominated the socio-cultural and political canvass of Somalia, and continue to do so. During the colonial era, different regions of Somalia were either occupied or colonized by various European countries. Given their strategic interest in the port of Aden, the northern part became the Protectorate of the British, the French captured former French Somaliland (now the Republic of Djibouti), the Italians moved into southern Somalia in 1893, and the Ethiopian emperor Menelik annexed western Somalia in the late 19th century (Habte-Selassie, 1987; Sauldie, 1987; Lyons & Samatar, 1995).¹

Depending on the political interest of the colonizing countries, the administrative and development approach differed in each of these regions. Therefore, the physical and administrative infrastructure in each of these regions differed vastly. The syndrome of somewhat illogical mergers or divisions that accompanied the independence of many colonies applied to Somalia as well. In June, 1960 the Somalia Republic was established by merging the Italian 'Trust Territory' and the British Protectorate. At its independence the Somalia Republic had inherited both the clan and the colony politics, a situation hardly conducive to nation building.

The initial years after independence were, therefore, characterized by internal tensions, coupled with the feeble and relatively unsuccessful attempts towards governance and nation building. In 1969 General Mohamed Siad Barre overthrew the civilian government and established a government professing scientific socialism which lasted until 1991. Although there were some positive steps taken during these years, the Barre

¹ Abdi, Ali. "Education in Somalia: History, destruction and calls for reconstruction." *Comparative Education*. 34.3 (1998): p. 327-341.

regime was characterized by favoritism and partisan, clan-based politics as well as involvement in the Cold War politics of the USA and USSR. This ultimately resulted in a war with Ethiopia and a region that was low in development and high in arms. The Barre government became highly repressive in the face of rising opposition. The latter part of the 80's in particular were weighed down by inter-clan, inter-militia fighting and violence, which escalated even more after the collapse of the Barre regime in 1991. "Subsequent fighting among the parties, clans, and guerrilla groups plunged the country into civil war that lasted into the early 2000s. In 1991 and 1992 alone, some 50,000 people were killed in factional conflict, and an estimated 300,000 died of starvation as it became impossible to distribute food in the war-ravaged nation."²

The regional clan based infighting culminated in the Somali National Movement (SNM) declaring the North West Region independent (former British Protector), and called itself Somaliland. The North Eastern Region of Somalia and established a regional administration called Puntland. Central and South Somalia remains to date insecure with inter clan fighting and continued violence. Overall the continued violence and insecurity that started in the mid 80s has destroyed Somalia, with Somaliland and Puntland holding on tenuously to peace.³ The long phase of violence and insecurity affected all aspects of life. Infrastructure in terms of government buildings, roads, water and electricity were destroyed or damaged. Livelihood including agriculture was affected, communities were dislocated.

In 1991 Somaliland established its own Government. The Republic of Somaliland has an area of about 137,600 km, it shares borders with Ethiopia, Djibouti, the Gulf of Aden and Puntland. Somaliland has a President and Vice President and has two legislature houses. The upper house consists of representatives from the main clans in Somaliland⁴. Incorporation of the traditional clan structure into the Governance is seen as essential in addressing the clan based dynamics in the region. It has in the recent past also conducted local government representative elections as well as Parliamentary and Presidential elections that have been described by international election monitors as largely free and fair. This is seen as an important sign of moving towards democracy.

Located in the Horn of Africa, Somaliland consists both of high mountains with semi-deserts and an extensive coastline. Its economy is based on livestock, agriculture, mining and fishing. Much of the development is that of a fledgling state and is dependent on stability and security in the region. High levels of corruption are also known to affect the economy and governance in the country.

² "Encyclopedia: Somalia." Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia. (2006). World Almanac Education Group. Website access:

<http://www.history.com/encyclopedia.do?vendorId=FWNE.fw..so146100.a#FWNE.fw..so146100.a>

³ Bennars, Gerard A., Seif, Huda A., Mwangi, Doris. (1996). "Mid-Decade Review of Progress Towards Education for All: The Somalia Case Study." Nairobi: UNESCO, Education for All Forum Secretariat. pp. 6-32.

⁴ Major Somaliland Clans include: Issa, Issack, Dulbahante, Samaron and Warsageli

2. Education System in Somalia

In the pre-colonial years, children in Somalia lived with their clans. They acquired the skills and knowledge required for living in their society, passed informally from one generation to another. Many of these clans were nomadic pastoralists. With the advent of Islam, Koranic schools came into being and became an integral part of Somali life, a practice that continues to the present. The modern or western education system was introduced during the colonial period, typically with the narrow aim of producing lower rank administrators. This was particularly the case in British-occupied Somalia. The Italians favored more vocational and low skill education. From 1950 to 1960, under the UN Trusteeship Agreement, the Italians were given the role of preparing Somalia and its people for independence. A mandate under this agreement included the development of an education system in Somalia. During these preparatory years both the Italians and British attempted to increase the number of primary and secondary schools, opened a university and a teacher training college. However, the expansion barely reached one percent of the population, focusing on a miniscule part of the urban population.⁵

Optimism and considerable buoyancy followed independence in 1961. Education was viewed as one factor that would help the nation build as well as support individual image, development and aspirations. “With 18,000 Somalis enrolled in different schools in the 1961/62 school year, and a university institute with law and economics departments set up by the Italians already in place (Laitin, 1976), the future of Somali education looked promising.”⁶ However, the educational infrastructure left behind by the colonizers was minimal. It was not enough to serve the educational needs of the population and of the new nation moving towards self governance and development.

The military government of Said Barre adopted some significant initiatives. One of these was the development and adoption of script for the Somali language in the early 1970’s. This was seen as an historic step by the nation. It had the symbolic importance of removing remnants of the dominant colonial past, thereby instilling national pride. Simultaneously, it had the practical significance of implementing the use of Somali language at all levels of administration. This new development saw the adoption of Somali language as the medium of instruction in schools, thereby opening doors to mass education. From 1974-1976, nationwide literacy campaigns were taken up by the government. Increases in primary schools enrollment were another corollary development. The efforts saw a significant rise in literacy rates in the mid seventies, from a dismal 5% to 55% (Laitin & Samatar, 1987).⁷ Significant development was also seen at the university level.

The gains made in the 1970’s, however, did not translate to the next level of progress. A number of unfortunate developments severely affected the progress in education. Two of these events were the border war with Ethiopia in 1977-78 and an attempted coup by dissidents against Said Barre in 1978. These events triggered a repressive, partisan phase

⁵ “Somalia History and Background.” (2007). Website access: <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1376/Somalia-HISTORY-BACKGROUND.html>

⁶ Abdi, op. cit., p. 333.

⁷ Abdi, op. cit., p. 334.

marked by corruption and mismanagement. Significantly it also saw funds flowing away from development projects to military and arms expenditure. The Cold War situation only fuelled the arms flow in Somalia. The collapse of the state in 1991 resulted in factional violence, with warlords and their militias using those very same weapons against each other. The inchoate signs of development were a casualty caught in the crossfire. Schools, universities, government buildings and the educated elite were targeted with amazing and unfortunate single mindedness. Schools and other educational institutions stopped functioning during these years of internecine fighting.

The ongoing warfare had a drastic impact on the educational system in Somalia. The Education for All (EFA) report on Somalia estimates that of the approximately 24,000 primary school teachers that were trained between 1965 and 1981, only 8,122 were teaching in 1984. And by 1985 there were only 644 primary schools left in the whole country. Sadly, much that had been built was destroyed after the state's collapse in 1991. During the civil war, all educational institutions – schools, universities, teacher training institutions – became casualties of the destruction. This meant that structures and human resources that could have helped development were destroyed. Little was left to serve as building blocks for reconstruction. It is said that, while the world made its commitments to Education for All in the 1990s, Somalia was pushed into a situation where education was available to none.

Generally, the situation for education in Somaliland is quite bleak. Although net enrollment ratios for primary education are slowly rising, the number of girls out of school remain high. At the same time Somalia is faced with increasing numbers of youth between the ages of 12 and 24 who either never enrolled in school or dropped out before acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills. Add these demographics to the toll that conflict and HIV/AIDS have taken on the educational systems of Somalia and it becomes clear that reaching EFA goals by the revised 2015 target will require new thinking and redoubled commitment on the part of the world community.

3. The Education System in Somaliland: Initial Efforts

There was a complete collapse of the formal education system in 1991. This included primary and secondary schools as well as the universities; Koranic schools were the only ones which continued to function. Initial steps towards restarting schooling began in 1993 as communities and teachers began gathering students and parents. These initial steps were strengthened by former educational administrators coming forward to establish informal education committees. These efforts were reinforced by the arrival of international agencies like Save the Children Fund (SCF) and CARE. UN Agencies such as UNICEF, UNHCR, UNESCO and UNOPS played a major role in initiating education in Somalia. Training of teachers focused on skills of classroom management, lesson planning and student motivation. The idea was to begin schooling as quickly as possible. UNICEF and UNESCO were involved in setting up regional and district level committees, distributing Teacher Emergency Packages and rehabilitating school buildings.⁸ The efforts towards reconstruction were made by multiple agencies, donors

⁸ Bennars, et al., op. cit.

and local communities. Reconstruction activities largely included providing basic supplies for pupils and teachers, rehabilitating school premises and so on. Some organizations complemented these efforts by providing food and health care measures to children and teachers. These agencies also undertook efforts to educate Somali refugee children in neighboring African countries.⁹

Inter-clan warfare continued, however, making security and stability unpredictable. The increased insecurity saw the departure of United Nations Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM) in 1995, which adversely affected general reconstruction efforts, including education. Despite the adverse conditions, some international efforts continued, many of which focused on curriculum development and teacher training. Largely these trainings focused on primary school subjects, child centered methods, psycho-social care or peace education. The duration of these programs varied from a few days to a couple of weeks. These efforts occurred at the most critical time and contributed towards creating learning opportunities when there were none. However, the efforts varied in quality and remained largely dispersed.

The newly formed Somalia Aid Coordination Body (SACB) attempted to provide order by coordinating the different NGO efforts within the framework of the Education Sectoral Committee (ESC). Bringing uniformity to diverse efforts remained a challenge.

4. Educational Reform Discourse: Restoration and Reconstruction of Education in Somaliland

From 2000 and 2003, NGO's and donor agencies that had worked in Somaliland during the conflict and early post-conflict years joined hands in supporting the newly elected Somaliland government in re-constructing the education system. Depending on their institutional priorities and available funds, agencies took on different roles. As the first step, under the coordination of the Ministry of Education, a National Policy of Education (NPE) for Somaliland was developed. The National Policy of Education articulated its goals to correspond with the national goals.¹⁰ Some of the key goals of the NPE included: commitment to the preservation and enrichment of cultural values and traditions based on genuine Islamic principles; acquisition of literacy and mathematics; mastery and application of scientific, technological and managerial knowledge; acquisition of key life skills for full self development; and actualization of the individual's potential for the purpose of state development and participation in the global economy. Other important issues to address through education were the promotion of logical thinking, self expression, growth of learners into mature and useful members of the society with positive attitudes to gender and family life issues. The critical focus of primary education policy was equitable access to education for all children, including girls, children with disability, nomadic children, returning "internally displaced person" (IDP) children, street children and orphans.

⁹ "Somalia Year 2000 Education for All Assessment Report." (2000). Obtained from the UNESCO website: http://www.unesco.org/education/wef/countryreports/somalia/rapport_1.html

¹⁰ National Policy of Education (NPE), Republic of Somaliland Ministry of Education.

The NPE endorsed the commitment to improving the quality and relevance of primary education in several ways. One was by improving the teaching/learning process through a more equitable and sustainable deployment of teachers across districts and schools. Another aimed at improving the quality and efficiency of learning in classrooms through providing new teachers. Finally, it promised to upgrade the skills of current teachers and support practicing teachers to make them more productive.

The NPE saw a direct relationship between improvement of teachers' conditions, terms of service and enhancement of gender responsive physical facilities. The issues of number of teachers and teacher quality were acknowledged by the policy, particularly the variation in basic qualifications and training amongst teachers. The objective of teacher education was to improve professional skills, confidence, general knowledge and prepare teachers as future managers of learning institutions. A two-pronged strategy employing both pre- and in-service teacher training programs was proposed. Improvements at the school level were also initiated by enhancing educational materials, and establishing guidance counseling services for all students, particularly girls.

The Somaliland experience shows that development of the National Policy for Education is an important step in the reconstruction process. It is an opportunity for addressing problems created by the conflict. Proposed reforms in the policy define national priorities and act as the guiding framework for all external as well as internal players. Above all, it signals that the MOE is functioning and in-charge. This is important in the process of reconstruction.

Various documents and interactions demonstrate that the process, as well as the product, is important in policy development. It is necessary that policy development is a participatory and consultative process, with representation from different factions in the country as well as external players. Ownership by the local people is important. They are best positioned to choose their priorities and place the reform agenda within it. For example, the issue of access for all, equity and institutional building were considered top priorities. Reforms at the classroom level in terms of new pedagogical approaches, was somewhat subdued.

5. Teacher Development: Responding to the Imperative

Following the national policy, government attention focused on teacher training, considering it to be instrumental in promoting both access and quality. It was also recognized that the large number of discrete projects needed to be consolidated. The priority became a transition from emergency mode towards system and capacity building and strengthening of institutions.

The Ministry of Education and a consortium of international agencies initiated Strengthening Capacity of Teacher Training in Somaliland (SCOTT). Funded by the European Commission, the Consortium members were Save the Children (UK), Save the Children (Denmark) and CARE International. Aligned to the sector-wide approach, SCOTT was designed to strengthen teacher education at different levels. Specifically, it

was intended to support the development of National Teacher Education Policy, strengthen capacity of Ministry of Education and Teacher Training Institutions, develop unified Curriculum for Primary Teachers, establish a mentoring system for trainee teachers in the field, and ensure efficient planning and monitoring systems at different levels.

A number of key steps were accomplished under this unified approach, including the development of the National Teacher Education Policy (Sept. 2006), development of a unified curriculum for teacher training, establishment of partnerships with three universities for implementing pre- and in-service teacher training, development of teacher training systems and material and the commencement of teacher trainings.

The Teacher Education Policy recognized the issue of untrained teachers. Out of 2563 teachers, 80% were untrained. Moreover, there was a gross gender imbalance: only 10% of teachers in Somaliland were women and the number of teachers was inadequate.¹¹ On the issue of quality, the policy stated a need “to develop teachers who are proficient in child-centered teaching methods, fully conversant with subject content in the subject they teach and are committed.” Equated with modern teaching methods, child-centered methods were seen as participatory learning, promoting problem solving, critical thinking, active inquiry and creativity (Teacher Education Policy, p. 12).

A Unified National Primary Teacher Training program was developed for the first time to operationalize and support the National Teacher Education Policy. The intent was to improve the pre and in-service teacher training programs. The curriculum consisted of five broad categories: professional education studies, mathematics and science, languages (Arabic, Somali and English), humanities (comprising social studies, Islamic religious education and physical education), arts and crafts and teaching practice, under which the teacher is exposed to school teaching.¹² Prior to the development of the Unified Curriculum, UN and international NGOs used different curriculums for teacher training.

Four universities, the University of Hargeisa, Gollis University, Amoud University and University of Burao, were selected to implement teacher training. The four institutions, each established after 1991, were more developed and had reasonably good infrastructure and other amenities (though lacking furniture and reference material). The profile of trainers in the three universities varied somewhat. Approximately 50% of Amoud University faculty were post-graduates (1 Ph.d) while the rest were college graduates. All the faculty staff in Hargisa and Burao held college degrees.¹³

The selection of universities as the implementing agency was deliberate. The intent was to build sustainable systems within the country without burdening the administrative

¹¹ National Teacher Education Policy, (2006). Ministry of Education, Republic of Somaliland.

¹² “Unified National Primary Teacher Training Curriculum.” Ministry of Education, The Republic of Somaliland. (April, 2006).

¹³ Munyi, Woki. “Capacity Assessment of Institutions for implementation of SCOTT Project.”, December 2005.

system. The universities are implementing the course in dual modes. There is a two year, full-time course using a traditional face-to-face teaching approach (largely pre-service training). The other course is structured as an in-service course with teachers coming in for contact programs during summer and winter breaks. Both options are supplemented with modules for all subjects. The modules are written and implemented at an easily understandable level.

The unit on the teaching process is structured to enable the trainees to understand the difference between teacher-centered and child-centered approaches, under the terms *expository and heuristic approach*. The module then proceeds to give brief descriptions of different kinds of methods, including discovery approach and its related steps.

“Expository approach is defined as an approach to teaching which a teacher uses to import or expose knowledge to the students. The teacher tells the students both generalizations and specifics.”

Common teaching methods: lecture, story telling, narratives, text reading, teacher demonstration.

“Heuristic approach, also know as discovery or inquiry or experimental or facilitation, refers to an approach in teaching and learning where learners are left to explore, find out information for themselves”

Common teaching methods: question and answer, investigation, probing, group work and discussion.

(p. 15 Module 1 and 2, Unified National Primary Teacher Training Curriculum, Republic of Somaliland.

Interaction with the trainers from one university indicates that the notion of child-centered methods is restricted to learning by doing and teachers giving children some activities to carry out. There is a strong feeling amongst the trainers that child-centered methods can and should happen only within the culturally accepted norms, such as respect to elders, obedience, asking permission to go out, and following teacher instructions. Lecture is the dominant teaching method used by the teacher trainers.

Godfrey and Sheikh observe in their report that curriculum development in a post-conflict scenario can be an extremely emotive exercise, to be approached with a great deal of caution.¹⁴ They call for considerable balancing amongst the various voices and factions. Ownership of the country is paramount. This concern was a primary consideration in the development of Somaliland’s teacher training curriculum. Certain aspects of quality and content were initially set aside, with the intent of addressing them in later revisions after the test phase.

Initial reviews show some “teething problems” in the teacher training program rollout. Some issues concern the logistics of transportation and dissemination of material, while others are related to infrastructural needs. Two critical gaps identified are the capacity of

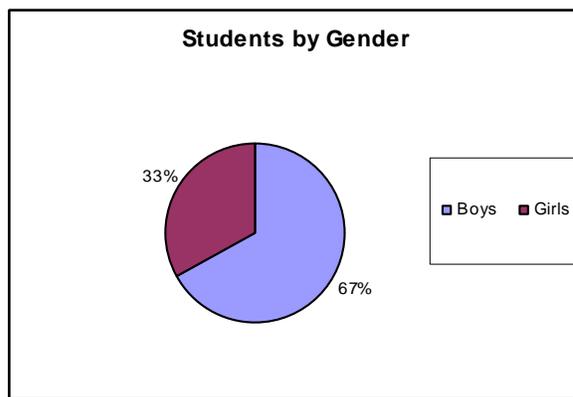
¹⁴ Mse, Godfrey Shedd and Sheikh, Adan Saman. “Strengthening Capacity for Teacher Training (SCOTT) Project.” (April, 2006). Report submitted to SCF (UK).

the trainers and wide ranging credentials amongst the trainees. The teacher trainees range from university graduates to secondary or primary school graduates to Koranic teachers who have never gone to primary school. These varying backgrounds pose a significant challenge. Solutions are being proposed but will take time to become operational.

The other issue is related to the institutional capacities of the universities themselves. These institutions, too, are in developmental phase and the task of rolling out new teacher training programs with limited human and infrastructure resources undoubtedly affects program quality.

6. The Reconstruction Process and Classroom Practices

The section below presents data collected from 19 formal government schools in and around Hargeisia; 13 schools were in urban areas and 6 in rural areas. Almost 64% had classes from standard 1st to 8th, the others included only selected grade classes.



The data show high under-representation of females both as students and teachers. Only 33.4% of students were girls and, of the total teachers in the 19 schools, just 20.6% were women. If this is the case in a largely urban sample of schools one can imagine the situation in rural areas may be worse. Participation of girls in schools is one of Somaliland's pressing problems.

In terms of the infrastructure facilities, the data show that 89.5% of schools operated in concrete buildings, with 50% having more than 8 classrooms. Of the 19 schools observed, 13 had outdoor space and only two had both outdoor space and play equipment. None of the schools observed had a library.

Most of the classrooms observed were overcrowded and lacked adequate furniture. In some instances, children sat on the floor. In all 19 schools, classes were conducted in concrete structured rooms. However, 2 schools had some of their classes outdoors in the open air and 1 school had its class on a veranda. Several classrooms had unswept floors.

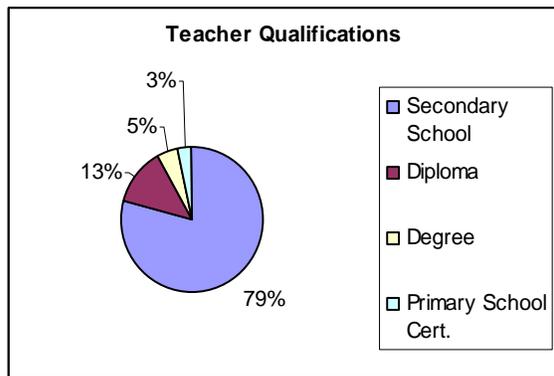
In terms of classroom cleanliness, organization, light, ventilation and space for children's activities, it was observed that only one or two schools were clean and well kept. Most classrooms were either unclean, disorganized or both. None of the 38 classrooms in the 19 observed schools had any kind of storage facilities such as cupboards, shelves or boxes.

All classrooms in the 19 schools had similar sitting arrangements. Children sat in rows facing the black board. Sometimes they faced each other within the rows. This arrangement was largely adopted because children did not have individual sets of textbooks and shared one textbook as a group.

Only 2 of the 19 schools had children’s work displayed in the classrooms; 17 schools had no work displayed at all. Six of the 19 schools visited had teacher-made displays in the classrooms.

In most schools children had pencils and notebooks. Only in a few schools were text books available to the children and even in those cases, often there were not enough textbooks, forcing groups of children to share. Only 1 school had drawing paper. In no instance did the data collectors observe the use of any other learning material such as crayons, old newspapers, used boxes, natural materials, story books/magazines and the like.

The most often observed teaching material available to the teachers was the textbook and almost all teachers used one. Only 2 teachers were observed using the teacher guide and one used a reference book.

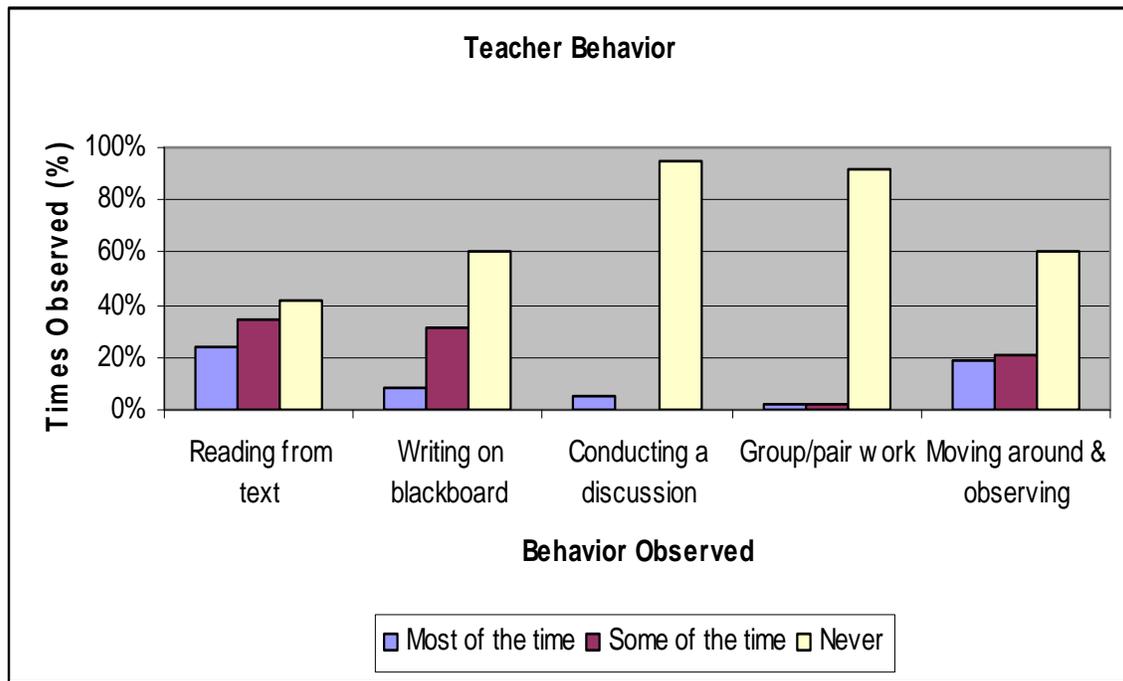


Classroom lessons of 38 teachers were observed. Of these, 32 were male teachers and 6 were female teachers. A majority of the teachers (79%) held secondary school certificates, five teachers (13%) were diploma holders, two (5%) had university degrees, and only one (3%) teacher had a primary certificate. Out of the 38 teachers observed, 28 (73%) had less than 10 years of teaching experience. This means that most of the teachers in the primary schools

observed were recruited into the teaching profession after the end of the main conflict in Somaliland in 1991. Meanwhile, 10 (or 26%) of the teachers had more than 10 years of teaching experience. About 65 percent of the teachers had undergone an 18-day training by UNICEF and UNESCO. The others had received trainings from other NGOs such as Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Candlelight, CARE and SCF. Sixty percent of these teachers are now enrolled for the two year teacher training program under SCOTT.

Out of the 38 classes observed, 29 (76%) were single grade and 9 (24%) were multi-grade. It is significant to note that most of the multi-grade classrooms were found in the rural schools where fewer classrooms exist.

Dominant Teacher and Student Behaviors:

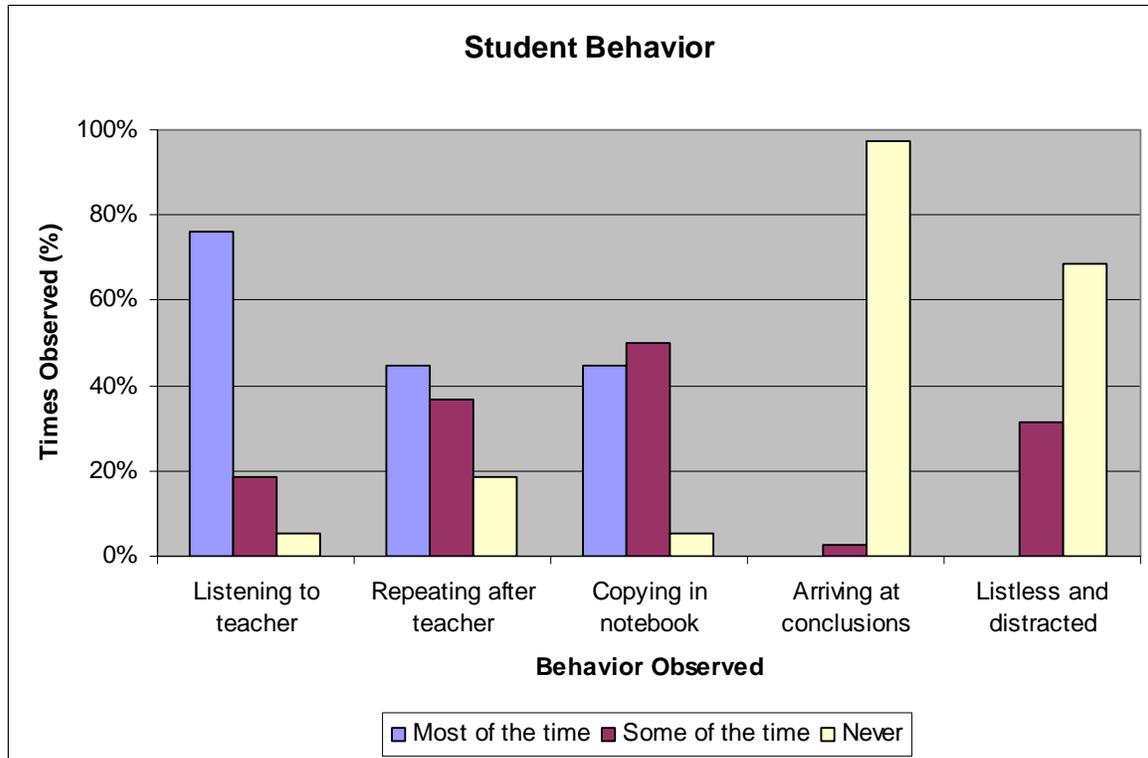


(See appendices 1-3 for complete reporting of all observations.)

The following teacher behaviors were observed most frequently: reading from the text book, explaining information from the text book, writing text book related questions on the blackboard, asking text book related information, reciting or correcting children’s recitation. In the 38 class room observations, the percent of teachers demonstrating these behaviors *most of the time* and *sometimes* was relatively high, falling in the 20-40% range.

The teachers were also observed moving around, giving attention to all students, motivating them, being friendly to them and rarely beating or scolding them. Teachers were *sometimes* observed to be connecting topics to daily life and previous knowledge of children.

Except for one or two instances the classroom observations did not show teachers adopting teaching behaviors that promote child-centered education. These included behaviors such as: encouraging children to gather information, conducting a discussion, assigning tasks in pairs or groups, making learning resources available to children, giving reasoning tasks or feedback on problems.



(See appendices 1-3 for complete reporting of all observations.)

The student behaviors that occurred most frequently were: listening to the teacher (76.3%, 18.4%), repeating after the teacher (44.7%, 36.8%), copying in notebooks (44.7%, 50%), answering questions from teacher (42.1%, 42.1%).

Aside from a few instances, less than 10% of classroom observations show student behavior such as: narrating observations of experiences, working in groups or pairs, solving problems, arriving at conclusions, listening to each others' views or discussion in groups.

It was observed that students were occasionally distracted and listless, falling into the "some of the time" category at a rate of 31.6%; similarly students were observed talking amongst themselves "some of the time" at a rate of 36.8%.

Teacher Perspective:

Interviews with the teachers show that:

A significant majority (84%) of the 38 teachers interviewed understood the term *child-centered learning* to mean "the active involvement of children in the learning process." This is largely explained by the fact that most of the teachers interviewed had undergone some training in child-centered methods of teaching. A small number of teachers (16%) did not understand the term. These teachers had not had any training.

Twenty-four percent of teachers interviewed said that they had learned the following at the training: how to manage children in a classroom environment, lesson preparation and presentation, child motivation, organizing and conducting group discussions, effective communication with children and creating good relations with the children. According to the teachers, lecture was the most used method of training, followed by group discussions and question/answer methods of training. Other methods used included text books, visual aids and writing on the blackboard. A majority of the teachers interviewed said that they did not get any material from the training while a few teachers indicated they had received some materials.

Teachers interviewed considered good administration and management to be the key elements of a good school. The other indicators of good schools mentioned by the teachers included availability of electricity, water, toilets and sports facilities, adequate classrooms and learning material, qualified teachers and a good teacher-parent committee

Almost 90 percent of teachers interviewed said that they had been able to adopt *active-learning methods* in their classes. They believed that giving attention to children, not scolding or beating them and motivating the children are all indicators of child centered methods. Inadequate teaching material was the most commonly cited obstacle to consistently adopting active-learning methods. Another major challenge identified by the teachers was overcrowded classrooms. Classroom observations corroborate this assertion. The other reasons mentioned by teachers were limited time for teaching, lack of sufficient training and little or no pay. The absence of payment is a serious issue affecting teacher motivation and performance. The community contribution is erratic and hardly sufficient and the government offers little or no payment to teachers.

7. Factors affecting Implementation of Active Learning Pedagogy

Reform Amidst Reconstruction:

The damage and destruction to the education system in Somaliland has been extensive. The deterioration of the education system started in the 1980s when most funds were diverted to military expenditure, totally depriving the education system of financial support. Payment of teachers and administrators was affected. The civil war wreaked havoc on the system. Almost 90% of schools were destroyed, educational material and equipment were looted and children and teachers fled. No child went to school in 1991 and 1992 because of the insecurity. The ensuing conflict and insecurity destroyed any semblance of a functioning nation state. "Economic activities were severely dislocated, grain and livestock were looted, commercial infrastructure was destroyed, farmers were unable to cultivate land leading to a severe famine" (*Mid-decade Review of Progress Towards Education for All*, Case study, Somalia 1996). Efforts towards rebuilding the education system had to literally begin brick by brick. Initial efforts were made by teachers, education professionals and NGOs. These involved retrieving the curriculum, training teachers and starting schools with the help of the communities. With the formation of the government in Somaliland, efforts moved towards a sector wide approach of developing the total education system.

The issue of active learning or child-centered methods was placed under these larger reconstruction efforts. There are two issues here for consideration. One is the issue of national choices regarding competing priorities in a post conflict scenario. Whereas the issue of quality and acknowledgement of child-centered methods was part of the education policy, the priorities were undoubtedly building schools, setting up systems and building capacities. The second issue is related to the advancement of active learning methods and ownership of the concept by different stakeholders. In this regard, a more traditional and acceptable approach to active learning was adopted by Somaliland. Given the history of conflict, any radical treatment or approach was deliberately avoided. Therefore, the discourse on active learning is found to be more subdued and traditional in the different policy and training documents.

Socio-political Context:

Somaliland holds tenuously to peace while the government and communities strive for normalcy. The government, with the help of donors, diaspora communities and local communities, is taking steps towards restoring political processes, economic activity and delivery of key services like education and health. A number of critical steps have been taken in this direction, including developing national policies, passing critical acts and setting up institutions. However, every step is a struggle for the government which has no international recognition. The country does not hold significant geo-political importance. As a result, the much needed donor attention remains well below what is necessary. Stability and peace is moving forward but border tensions with Puntland and Somalia could prove unsettling at any time. Clan politics, though not presently in conflict, affect every governmental decision relating to economic and development progress. Economic progress becomes all the more important in light of Somaliland's harsh environment which hinders agricultural and food production. Economic growth will take time to improve; the poor economy negatively affects revenue generation and key services, like education, along with it. The resources and efforts are more inclined towards providing access to all rather than quality. Clan and religious beliefs and values strongly influence concepts like active learning and their implementation.

Approach to Teacher Development:

Teacher training in Somaliland followed two distinct phases in the post conflict scenario. One was the initial effort by NGO's and UN agencies, which focused on collaborating with communities to start schools as quickly as possible. In this phase the aim was to assemble the basic requirements for learning. These efforts included development and retrieval of text books and training and deploying a teacher cadre as quickly as possible. In this phase, teacher training focused on developing basic teaching and classroom management skills. Most agencies employed the child-centered concept in their training. Based on interviews, teachers were aware of the method and could define it. However, classroom observations show that adoption of child-centered teaching methods has not taken place. It is possible that the short 18-day training probably helped start schools on an emergency basis, but was inadequate for teachers to understand and adopt complex pedagogy like child-centered or active learning methods, particularly when teacher qualifications were at diverse (typically low) levels.

The second phase of teacher development included an attempt by the Somaliland government, with the help of NGO's and donor agencies, to unify and systematize the teacher training efforts. Teacher development was an enormous challenge for the new government. In 2006/07 school year, there were 2,563 primary school teachers in Somaliland, 80% of whom were untrained. Moreover, of those few trained teachers, many had only been teaching for a short time. There also existed a significant gender imbalance in the teaching force. According to the government's Teacher Education Policy, (2006) only 10% of teachers in Somaliland's primary schools were women. Daunting challenges faced the newly formed government including the varied qualifications and experience of teachers as well as the sheer numbers who needed to be trained. The low level of qualifications resulted in very basic content knowledge on the part of teachers. Training-program efforts in Somaliland had to include both course content as well as teaching methods. As a result, the two-year training curriculum has focused more on basic knowledge of disciplines, thereby giving short shrift to child-centered or active learning methods.

Another issue is the treatment of the concept of active learning or child-centered methods in the teacher training curriculum. The concept is presented in a more traditional manner, with little hands on or practical guidelines for child-centered lesson development.

Finally, one cannot ignore the issue of teacher remuneration. Teachers are either not paid or the payment is grossly inadequate. This has serious implications on teacher motivation and performance. Under these circumstances, it is very difficult for teachers to undertake their jobs effectively. These various inter-related factors of teacher development affect the adoption of the active learning methods in classrooms.

The Reality of Schools:

The school and classroom observations and teacher interviews clearly show that learning conditions in the schools are very poor. The classrooms are overcrowded. Few learning materials are available to teachers and students. Text books are shared amongst groups of students. Since there are no school libraries, neither teachers nor students have access to additional reading or reference material. In the case of multi-grade classrooms, even the blackboard is shared, with one half for one grade and the other half used for the other grade. "Heneveld (1994:3) observes that in many African countries the conditions essential for such learning are lacking. Most primary schools in Sub-Saharan Africa suffer from very poor conditions for learning: dilapidated or half-completed buildings, insufficient desks, overcrowded classrooms, few or no learning materials, poorly educated and motivated teachers and choral recitation as the dominant mode of instruction."¹⁵ In the case of Somaliland these conditions are exacerbated by poor governance and insecurity that impacts school infrastructure, learning material, teacher development and supervision. These challenges in turn determine the teaching practices in the schools.

¹⁵ "Somalia Year 2000 Education for All Assessment Report." (2000). Obtained from the UNESCO website: http://www.unesco.org/education/wef/countryreports/somalia/rapport_2_3.html

8. Conclusion

It is evident from the case study of Somaliland that the teaching-learning practices at the classroom level depend on a number of macro- and micro-level factors. These include the larger issues of security, status of the government, the issue of revenue generation and resources available for education, which in turn determine the infrastructural facilities available at the school level, learning materials and teacher salaries. These underlying issues are intertwined with the issues of low teacher capacities and limited teacher training. Taken cumulatively, each negatively affects the teaching – learning practices at the classroom level, including the adoption of active learning methods.

Moreover, limited educational capacities are not restricted to primary schools but are pervasive in teacher training institutions as well. The depletion of human capacity is perhaps the biggest price that nations pay as a result of prolonged conflict. The basic building blocks necessary for Somaliland's reconstruction – human capacities – is weak and needs time to improve. The choice of maintaining peace by ensuring education for all supersedes other concerns. How to deploy limited resources is a difficult decision and governments emerging from conflict like Somaliland tend to opt for equity to access over quality. It is essential that Government and non-Government factor in inputs at all levels while advancing the agenda of change in teaching-learning methods.

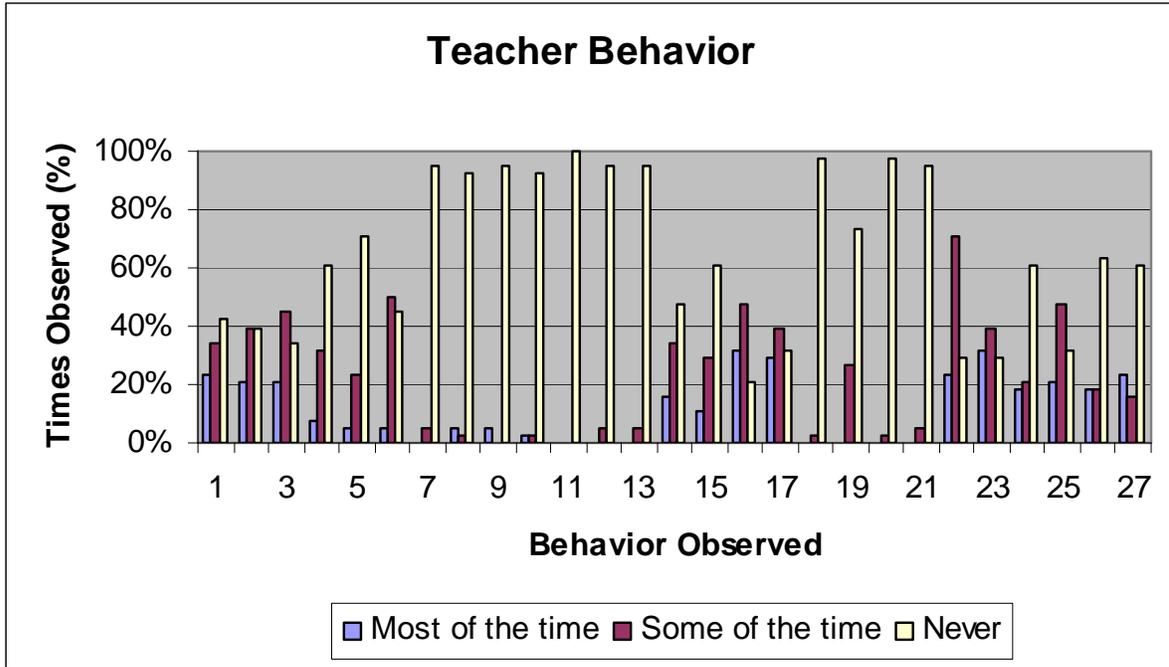
Appendix 1: List of observed teacher and student behavior

(Full graphs reporting classroom observations can be found below in appendices 2 and 3.)

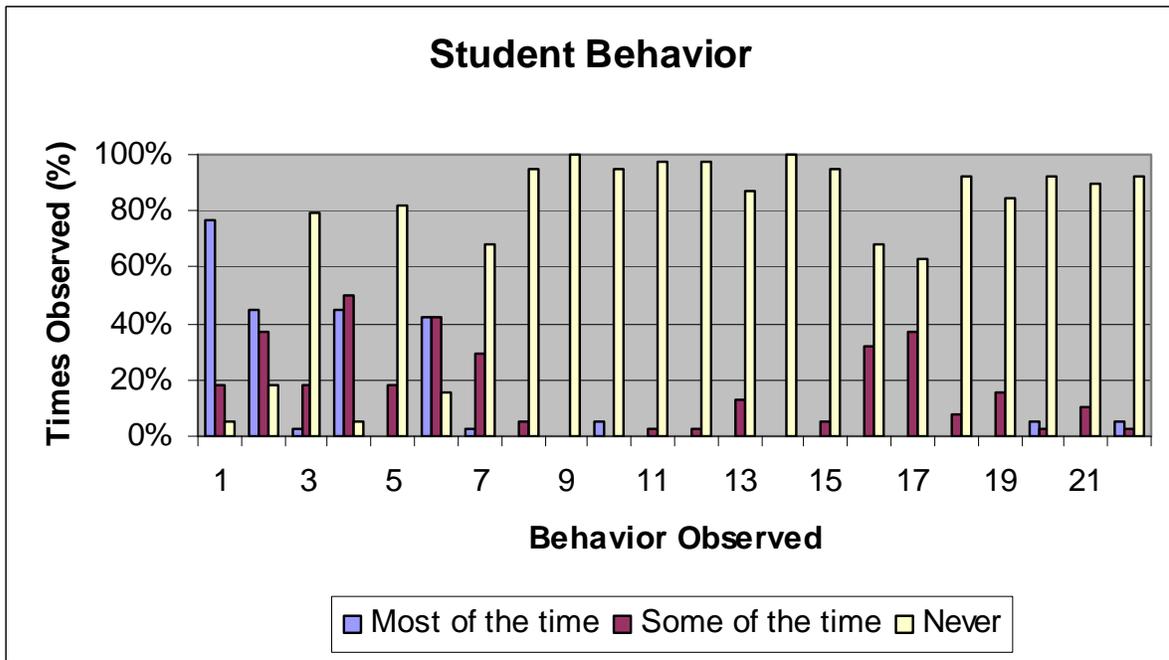
	Teacher Behavior
1.	Reading from the text book
2.	Explaining information from the text book
3.	Lecturing
4.	Writing main point from the text book on the black board
5.	Reciting/Singing
6.	Correcting students' recitation/reading
7.	Asking text book related information
8.	Giving a learning task that needed information gathering and analysis
9.	Conducting a discussion
10.	Assigning tasks for group/pair work
11.	Guiding the group work
12.	Making learning resources available to children
13.	Giving suggestions/feedback on problems
14.	Consolidating the concept
	<i>Teachers classroom management and disciplining behavior</i>
15.	Doing her own task
16.	Being friendly with the students
17.	Giving attention to all children
18.	Interpreting student response
19.	Ignoring some of the students
20.	Scolding/being rude/insulting
21.	Physically punishing the students
22.	Encouraging student interaction
23.	Motivating students
24.	Moving around and observing students
25.	Listening to students and their opinion
26.	Involving students in setting the rules for the classroom
27.	Creating an atmosphere that gives students confidence to speak their minds

	Student Behavior
1.	Listening to the teacher
2.	Repeating after the teacher
3.	Recollecting facts/information from the text book
4.	Copying in their note books.
5.	Creative writing – observation, imagination.
6.	Answering the teacher's questions
7.	Asking questions to the teacher
8.	Narrating their observations or experiences in the discussion
9.	Working in pairs
10.	Working in groups
11.	Solves problems
12.	Arriving at conclusions
	<i>Child behavior - social and discipline related</i>
13.	Most students were confused
14.	Groups had problem in working together
15.	Quarreling or fighting amongst themselves
16.	Listless and distracted
17.	Talking amongst themselves
18.	Doing some other work
19.	Were helping each other
20.	Discussing with group members
21.	Listening to each other's views
22.	Working together
23.	Giving feedback to each other

Appendix 2: Graphed results of teacher observations



Appendix 3: Graphed results of student observations



Appendix 4: Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
EFA	Education for All
ESC	Education Sectoral Committee
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MOE	Ministry of Education
NPE	National Policy of Education
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
SCF	Save the Children Fund
SACB	Somali Aid Coordination Body
SNM	Somali National Movement
SCOTT	Strengthening Capacity of Teacher Training in Somaliland
TEP	Teacher Emergency Package
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia