

# The State of Higher Education in Somalia: Privatization, rapid growth, and the need for regulation



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## Chapter 1: Executive summary

The eruption of civil war in 1988 and the subsequent collapse of the central state in 1991 severely disrupted all public social services in Somalia. The education system in Somalia was entirely destroyed. Prolonged periods of instability and intermittent conflict constrained the ability of local populations and the international community to rehabilitate the country's educational facilities and resources. Destruction of the sector went far beyond the deterioration of physical infrastructure. It is estimated that more than 80% of the educated elite left the country in the period since the conflict began (Lindley, 2008). This extended period of insecurity and instability has robbed a generation of young Somali men and women the chance to attend formal education. Somalia now suffers from one of the lowest literacy rates in the world (Cummings and van Tonningen, 2003).

The education system in Somalia started to fall apart long before the civil war. In the aftermath of the war with Ethiopia in the late 1970s, and the subsequent economic collapse during the 1980s, policy development stagnated with social services severely affected. In recent years, as stability and security has improved in parts of the country, a diverse range of actors (including local communities, the Somali diaspora, local and international NGOs, Islamic aid agencies, and the private sector) have made a significant contribution to the rehabilitation and development of the education sector.

The relative peace and stability that has characterized the self-declared Republic of Somaliland, in the north-west of Somalia, since 1991 has meant that the level of reconstruction of the education sector in this region is noticeably higher than other regions. In the north-eastern region of Somalia, the semi-autonomous Puntland State of Somalia has also made significant progress in rebuilding the education sector since it was formed in 1998. The prolonged period of insecurity, intermittent conflicts, and volatility of political control in the southern and central parts of Somalia (referred to in this study as South-Central following conventional usage) has meant that progress has been localized, occurring in specific areas of relative stability only.

Recent growth of the higher education sector has however been considerable. Shortly before the war, Somalia had only one state-owned university located in Mogadishu and enrolling approximately 4000 students (Hoehne, 2010). There are now close to 50 higher education institutions (HEIs) of different sizes and different capacities functioning across the country and enrolling over 50,000 students. The exponential growth of the higher education sector, especially given the prolonged periods of insecurity experienced in parts of the country, challenges conventional wisdom that social and economic development ceases in the absence of a central government (Leesen, 2007). The absence of a central government and strong local authorities in Somalia has enabled and encouraged the privatization of the higher education sector.

In the absence of regulation by governing authorities in all three regions and the low capacity of teaching staff, the quality of education has suffered considerably. An alarming 86% of surveyed HEIs complained about low capacity of teaching and administrative staff. This is likely to impact the quality of education students are receiving, and the qualification and competence of graduates entering the public and private sector in Somalia.

Although the expansion of the higher education sector is evident throughout the country, there remains a lack of detailed information on the activities of HEIs. This baseline study provides a snapshot of HEIs in Somalia while analyzing the current state of the sector by providing the results of a survey conducted between February to June 2013 with 44 HEIs in South-Central, Puntland, and Somaliland.

The study attempts to provide an insight into the state of HEIs in Somalia by examining the following criteria:

- Quantity of institutions, students, and academic and administrative staff
- Number and type of departments/faculties
- Access to facilities (e.g. libraries, information technology, and scientific laboratories)
- Qualifications of academic staff

- Research and publication capacity
- Levels of internal and external funding
- Challenges and the needs of institutions
- Level of engagement with partner institutions (both local and international)

## 1.1 Findings

The key findings of this report include the following:

- 1. Significant growth of the higher education sector occurred between 2004 and 2012.** Of the 44 institutions surveyed, 34 were established during this period. However, the growth period varied across the three regions. In South-Central, the pace of growth slowed down between 2006 and 2009 reflecting increased insecurities following the Ethiopian invasion and the fall of the Union of Islamic Courts.
- 2. Over 50,000 students are currently enrolled at HEIs across the country.** 49% of these students are enrolled at universities in South-Central, 35% in Somaliland, and 16% in Puntland. 56% of all students are enrolled at 8 of the 44 surveyed institutions. The top three universities with the highest number of students are Mogadishu University (10.2%), the University of Hargeisa (7.8%), and the University of Somalia (7.6%).
- 3. The majority of students are enrolled in information technology (IT) and business administration courses.** Although HEIs across the country are offering a wide range of courses, approximately 44% of students are enrolled in variants of information technology (IT), business administration, and social science courses.
- 4. A large number of HEIs operate without a library, IT facilities, or a science laboratory.** Only 28 of the surveyed 44 institutions reported having a library. 32 institutions reported having a computer laboratory with printing facilities. Less than half of the institutions offering variants of engineering courses reported having a science laboratory.
- 5. There is currently very low research and publication capacity within HEIs.** Only 15 of the 44 surveyed institutions reported being engaged in any publishing activities. None reported being involved in any research activities. The absence of research capacity is exacerbated by the lack of meaningful research links and relations with other institutions in the region and beyond.
- 6. Beyond the initial registration process there is a limited relationship between local authorities and HEIs.** The surveyed institutions reported that although communication channels exist, federal and local authorities have little oversight on the day-to-day activities of HEIs. When asked who governed the higher education policy in their respective regions, 20 of 44 of the surveyed universities stated that they are governed by local education associations and umbrella organizations.
- 7. 11% of the 2501 lecturers hold doctorate (PhD) degrees, 50% hold Masters degrees, and 39% hold Bachelors degrees.** Although this trend is evident across all three regions, some differences exist. In Somaliland there are proportionately fewer lecturers with PhD qualifications compared to Puntland and South-Central.
- 8. Student fees are the primary source of funding for HEIs.** Although some institutions receive small government subsidies and/or external aid, the majority of institutions depend on student fees to fund their operational costs.
- 9. Limited financial resources, a shortage of learning materials, and insufficient basic infrastructure ranked high among the challenges facing HEIs.** All 44 surveyed institutions reported that the lack of sufficient financial resources placed significant constraints on their operational capabilities. Other challenges reported by the majority of institutions, in order of importance were: a shortage of learning materials, insufficient basic infrastructure, limited capacity of administrative staff, a shortage of teaching equipment, a shortage of qualified academic staff, and a lack of university-owned buildings.

## Chapter 2: Methodology

### 2.1 Survey of HEIs

The survey of HEIs was conducted between February and June 2013 in South-Central, Puntland, and Somaliland. Security conditions and access restrictions prohibited researchers from visiting some institutions located in South-Central. Time restrictions also meant that the researchers could not visit all HEIs across the three regions. A general survey was administered to 44 HEIs. Each HEI was asked about their student numbers, lecturers' profiles, faculties, facilities, their relationship with other local or international institutions, and their financing structure. The institutions were also asked to list their most pressing needs. It is worth noting that the information collected from each institution and outlined in this report reflects the situation and condition of the institutions at the time of data collection. Moreover, the HEIs provided the information in this study voluntarily, and the Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (HIPS) did not attempt to verify the information.

Table 1 below lists the names of the HEIs across the country that were interviewed for this study. Appendix 1 provides a more detailed table including the location of each HEI.

**Table 1. List of HEIs surveyed**

#	Name	Est.	#	Name	Est.
1	Indian Ocean University	1993	23	East Africa University	1999
2	Mogadishu University	1996	24	Galkayo International University	2005
3	Dar Al-ulum University	1998	25	Garowe Teachers Education College	2005
4	Hamar University	1999	26	Maakhir University	2011
5	SIMAD University	1999	27	Mogadishu University - Bosaso Campus	2008
6	Islamic University	2001	28	Puntland State University	2004
7	Benadir University	2002	29	Puntland University of Science & Tech.	2004
8	Kismayo University	2005	30	University of Bosaso	2006
9	Plasma University for Science & Tech.	2005	31	University of Health Sciences	2006
10	University of Somalia	2005	32	Admas University	2006
11	University of Southern Somalia	2008	33	Alpha University	2009
12	Hormuud University	2010	34	Amoud University	1998
13	Jazeera University	2010	35	Beder International University	2012
14	Salaam University	2010	36	Burao University	2004
15	Horn of Africa University	2011	37	Eelo University	2007
16	Horseed International University	2011	38	Gollis University	2005
17	Jamhuriya University of Science & Tech.	2011	39	Hope University	2008
18	Hope University	2012	40	International Horn University	2004
19	Job-Key University	2012	41	New Generation University	2009
20	Modern University for Science & Tech.	2012	42	Nugaal University	2004
21	Somali International University	2012	43	Timacade University	2009
22	Darul Hikmah University	2012	44	University of Hargeisa	2000

The total number of universities surveyed is different across South-Central, Puntland, and Somaliland. Our study found that there are more universities in South-Central and Somaliland compared to Puntland. Of the 44 HEIs surveyed: South-Central (50%), Somaliland (29.5%), and Puntland (20.5%).

## **2.2 Site selection and sampling**

As the premise of the study was to collate information on the current state of the higher education sector, efforts were made to reach all functioning institutions across the three regions. The study used the following working definition for higher education: the education level that comprises post-secondary forms of education that lead to the award of an academic degree. Local education and higher education authorities were consulted in each region. However, registration with the local authorities was not used as a criterion for selection as some of these institutions are governed by umbrella organizations and not by local authorities.

## **2.3 Research questions, data collection tools, and analysis**

This study utilized a mixed-methods strategy to collect the required qualitative and quantitative data. A standard questionnaire was designed to capture both data types. Three enumerators were selected to conduct interviews with universities across the country. One enumerator was selected from each of the three regions. The selection process for these enumerators was based on the fact that they had done similar research in the past and that they are actively involved in the higher education sector and thus have existing knowledge of the sector in their region.

The project manager discussed the purpose and objectives of this study with the enumerators and maintained frequent contact with them during the data collection phase. The project manager debriefed each enumerator after the survey was completed.

## **2.4 Data limitation**

Although the study collected data from a large number of universities across South-Central, Puntland, and Somaliland, the findings in this study do not necessarily apply to all universities across the country. Interpretation of these findings and policy recommendations should take into account the significant differences that exist across the three regions, both in relation to governmental structures and also differences in social and economic development.

## Chapter 3: Background of the education sector in Somalia

### 3.1 Pre-colonial and colonial education

The spread of Islam and the Arabic language, together with the exposure of Somali traders, seamen, soldiers, and religious pilgrims to different forms of education, meant that small settled communities on the coast were introduced to a mixture of western and Islamic education long before the arrival of European colonizers in Somalia (Cassanelli and Farah, 2007). However, for the majority of Somalis leading nomadic livelihoods, education continued to be an informal community affair involving the interaction between elders and youth on subjects covering clan history, religion, battle, and other knowledge and skills essential for survival (Abdi, 1998; Hussein, 2007).

Introducing formal education in Somalia was a challenge for the colonial powers; the British in the northwest and the Italians in the south. First, the nomadic pastoral livelihoods of the majority of Somali people (over 90% of the population at the time) severely restricted the spread of formal education (Cassanelli and Farah, 2007). Second, the common perception that colonial education was spreading Christianity invoked fears that educated Somali children would be converted. This caused anxiety among the population and frequently led to conflict (Dawson, 1964). Nevertheless, in the early to mid-twentieth century some progress was made in establishing education infrastructure, particularly during the immediate years prior to independence in 1960.

The authorities of the British Protectorate of Somaliland intensified their efforts in 1957, a trend that was evident in the increase of education spending from £500 in 1939 to £340,000 in 1957 (Cassanelli and Farah, 2007). In the south, the ten years of the Italian Trusteeship Administration (Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana della Somalia, AFIS) saw significant progress in the expansion of education infrastructure, including for higher education. However, at the time of independence, apart from the few post-secondary school institutions set up by AFIS in the former Italian colony, the higher education sector in the rest of the country was non-existent.

### 3.2 Post-independence education

Improving education was a priority in the years following independence and the subsequent creation of the Somali Republic in July 1960. A perception of what education could do for the individual and for society is captured in the popular nationalist song composed shortly after independence by the Somali poet, Abdullahi Qarshe, with verses such as *Aqoon la'aani wa iftiin la'aane* (lack of knowledge is lack of enlightenment) (Abdi, 1998). Progress however was slow. The inability of the new government to reform and expand the education system could be attributed to various challenges. Integrating two education systems developed by very different colonial powers, Britain and Italy, with different languages of instruction, syllabuses, and management styles, was a daunting task. Finding effective strategies to provide education to the large proportion of the population leading a nomadic pastoral lifestyle also proved to be extremely difficult.

The military coup led by General Mohamed Siyad Barre in 1969 marked the beginning of a period of significant progress in the provision of education in the country. The military regime introduced a number of revolutionary social and economic programmes under the banner of 'scientific socialism' – a mixture of Marxist-Leninist socialism and Islamic principles. One of these programmes was the mass literacy campaign launched in 1974 which mobilized a large number of students and civil servants to teach in rural nomadic communities and increased the literacy rate in Somalia from a dismal 5% to approximately 55% (Abdi, 1998). The adoption of the Latin alphabet as the official script in Somalia in 1973, though controversial, paved the way for a more cohesive education system in the country. Progress was made in 1970 when the Somali National University was established in Mogadishu with dedicated faculties for journalism, education, and medicine among others (Hoehne, 2010). Very little progress was however made in the provision of the higher education in the rest of the country.

The promising start made by the military regime in the education sector was eclipsed by the

costly war with Ethiopia in 1977 when the Barre regime ultimately failed to take control of the Somali-dominated region. The economic crisis and the internal conflicts that followed saw a reversal of the earlier progress made across all levels of the education sector. Widespread nepotism and mismanagement of public resources followed characterizing most of the 1980s (Abdi, 1998). Within the education sector, enrolment rates at all levels of education deteriorated. A 1991 UNESCO report stated that gross enrolment rates for 4-23 year-olds dropped from 14% in 1980 to just 7% in 1988 (cited in Abdi, 1998). Internal conflict eventually escalated to civil war in 1988 and total state collapse in 1991.

### **3.3 Education post-1991**

The civil war and the subsequent collapse of the Somali state completely destroyed the education infrastructure of the country. Nevertheless, significant progress has since been made in the reconstruction of education infrastructure throughout South-Central, Puntland, and Somaliland. The prolonged period of instability in South-Central hampered reconstruction but it did not stop the efforts of various actors in rebuilding the sector in certain locations. Local communities, Islamic NGOs, and the Somali diaspora have been vital in the rehabilitation of HEIs. Furthermore, education umbrella organizations such as the Formal Private Education Network in Somalia (FPENS) have been key to the reconstruction and management of the primary and secondary education sectors (TFG Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education, 2011). By 2010 a dozen universities funded and maintained by diaspora and/or Islamic organizations were operational in Mogadishu (Hoehne, 2010).

The relatively longer periods of peace and stability that have characterized Somaliland, and to a lesser extent Puntland, created an easier environment to initiate reconstruction efforts to that of South-Central. The progress in Somaliland is particularly substantial and the number of education institutions across all levels has increased significantly. In 1999 there were 144 primary schools and five secondary schools in Somaliland. By 2010 this number had risen to 917 primary schools and 84 secondary schools (Somaliland Ministry of National Planning, 2011). The number of students enrolled at these levels of education has also increased. The introduction of free primary education in 2011 encouraged an additional 12% increase in grade one enrolments. However, the lack of capacity meant schools could not cope with this increase and many children had to be placed on waiting lists.

The growth of lower levels of education has fuelled the increase in demand for higher levels of education. In response, the higher education sector grew rapidly in the last decade. In Somaliland, 23 institutions were functioning in January 2013, a significant increase from the two institutions that existed in 2004. In South-Central, a 2011 report by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education stated that 15 universities were operational across the region. Since then, the number of HEIs increased exponentially. Consequently, the number of students in universities, the number of faculties, and the number of university graduates has also increased.

Local authorities have played, and continue to play, a limited role in the operations of the higher education sector. The majority of the universities are owned, funded, managed, and maintained by a diverse range of actors – the private sector, the diaspora, the local community, local and international NGOs, and religious organizations – with limited oversight from the national or local authorities. One consequence of this laissez-faire trajectory is that across the country there is a lack of a regulatory framework to manage standards of the ever increasing number of universities. This has a direct impact on the quality of higher education across Somalia. As a result, many of the graduating students lack the basic skills and education necessary to enter the labour market.

## Chapter 4: Current state of the higher education sector

### 4.1 Growth patterns

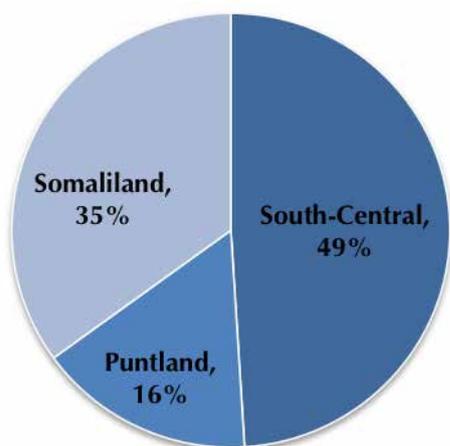
Data collected from the survey suggests that the most substantial growth of the Somali higher education sector occurred in the last decade. Of the 44 surveyed universities, 34 were established between 2004 and 2012. This growth pattern slowed down between 2006 and 2010 and then picked-up again between 2010 and 2012. Only one university was established between 2005 and 2009 in South-Central, reflecting increased insecurities following the Ethiopian invasion and the fall of the Union of Islamic Courts. Meanwhile, growth in Somaliland and Puntland continued until 2011. Of the six institutions established in 2012, five are based in South-Central, the highest number of new HEIs in any given year for the region.

Given the fact that only one university existed in the country prior to the collapse of the state in 1991, growth patterns across South-Central, Puntland, and Somaliland in the last two decades have been remarkable. This finding could be interpreted in two ways. First, it is possible that growth merely corresponds with the significant growth of the higher education sector that has been experienced throughout sub-Saharan Africa in the last two decades (Hussein, 2012; Varghese, 2007). Second, the absence of a strong central government in Somalia and the limited capacity of regional authorities have naturally led to the privatization of social services including education (Bradbury, 2007). Consequently, the growth in the private provision of higher education sector may have changed the view of higher education from a public good to a tradable commodity and thus encouraged more private players into the higher education market.

### 4.2 Number of students

Universities were asked to provide the total number of students enrolled at the time of the interview. The total number of students across all 44 universities as of June 2013 was estimated at 51,471. The highest number of these students are enrolled in universities in South-Central (25,147), followed by Somaliland (18,223), and then Puntland (8,101).

**Graph 1: Distribution of students by region**



The number of students attending universities varies greatly. Approximately 56% of all students are enrolled at just eight universities: Mogadishu University (10.2%), University of Hargeisa (7.8%), University of Somalia (7.6%), Amoud University (7.6%), SIMAD University (6.1%), Gollis University (5.4%), East Africa University (5.2%), and Plasma University for Science & Technology (5.2%). Institutions with the lowest number of students are Salaam University and

Darul Hikmah University both established in 2012 in South-Central and reported to have just 100 students each.

Universities were asked to provide the number of students enrolled in post-graduate courses. Of the 44 institutions surveyed, only six universities currently offer post-graduate courses (Amoud University in Somaliland, Mogadishu University, SIMAD University, University of Somalia and Hope University in South-Central, and Mogadishu University - Bosaso Campus in Puntland). The total number of students registered in post-graduate courses across all six institutions is currently 918 – approximately 1.2% of the overall student body.

One shortcoming of the study is that data is not disaggregated by gender and therefore neither the total number nor proportion of women in universities across South-Central, Puntland, and Somaliland can be reported. The data also does not capture drop-out rates.

### 4.3 Number of lecturers

Each surveyed university was asked to provide a total number of lecturers teaching at the institution at the time of data collection. The current total number of lecturers across all Somali universities is currently 2501 making the overall student-lecturer ratio approximately 21:1. The number of lecturers across the universities varies. Moreover, since the number of lecturers is not disaggregated by faculty, student-lecturer ratio is not a good indicator of students experience in different faculties. Table 2 below shows the number of lecturers across the eight largest universities.

**Table 2: Number of lecturers in the ten largest institutions**

HEI	Students	Lecturers	Student/lecturer ratio
Mogadishu University	5240	292	18:1
University of Hargeisa	4000	200	20:1
University of Somalia	3912	134	29:1
Amoud University	3887	212	18:1
SIMAD University	3765	165	23:1
Gollis University	2778	25	111:1
East Africa University	2700	91	30:1
Plasma University for Science & Tech.	2693	105	26:1

### 4.4 Qualification of lecturers

Institutions were also asked to provide the level of qualification of their lecturers. Of the reported 2,501 lecturers 39% were reported to have Bachelors degrees, 50% were reported to have Masters degrees, and the remaining 11% were reported to have PhDs.

There is no apparent correlation between the size of the institution and the number of lecturers holding PhDs. For example, Benadir University, which ranks 9th in terms of student numbers, has the second highest number of lecturers with PhDs (45) compared to Mogadishu University, which is the largest university but has 46 lecturers with PhDs.

**Table 3: Distribution of lecturers' qualifications in the eight largest institutions**

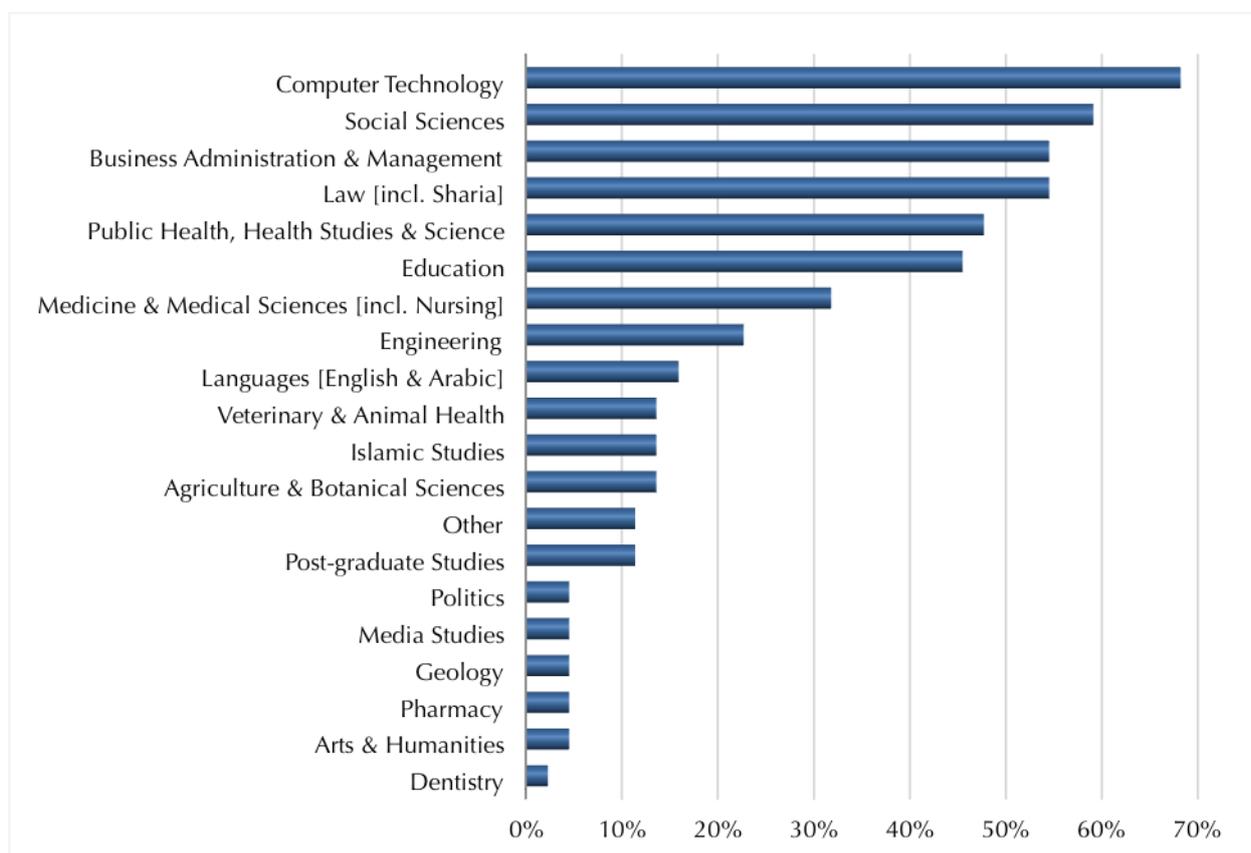
HEI	PhD	Masters Degree	Bachelors Degree	% with PhD
Mogadishu University	46	181	65	13%
University of Hargeisa	3	10	187	10%
University of Somalia	4	86	44	5%
Amoud University	10	146	56	6%
SIMAD University	16	99	50	7%
Gollis University	8	11	6	5%
East Africa University	11	52	28	4%
Plasma University for Science & Technology	15	40	50	10%

Regional differences clearly exist with regards to lecturers' qualifications. The findings suggest that universities located in Somaliland have proportionally fewer lecturers with PhDs compared to institutions in South-Central and Puntland.

#### 4.5 Faculty numbers and types

Institutions were asked to provide the number and types of operational faculties. The reported numbers of faculties varied greatly, ranging from one faculty at Garowe Teacher Education College to 15 at Amoud University. 68% of the surveyed institutions reported to offer computer-related courses, 59% offered Social Science courses, 56% offer law/Sharia courses, 55% offered business administration courses, and 48% offer variants of public health and health studies courses.

**Graph 2: Faculty distribution across surveyed HEI**



#### 4.6 Distribution of students across faculties

Given that 68% of all surveyed universities offer computer-related degrees, it is no surprise that 15% of all students registered in universities across South-Central, Puntland, and Somaliland are registered in computer-related fields. Approximately 30% are registered in variants of Social Sciences and Business Administration. Public Health and Law (Sharia) are the other popular faculties with approximately 14% and 13% of overall students respectively.

Of the reported 51,471 students, approximately 44% are enrolled in computer-related courses, and variants of business administration and social sciences courses. The implication here is that upon graduation these students will enter the labour market with similar skills which may reduce their ability to secure employment. This concentration in particular subjects may act as a bottle-neck in the economy due to the lack of a diverse range of skills – especially skills relevant to the structure of the Somali economy (i.e. skills related to the livestock sector, construction, or engineering).

Noticeable regional differences emerge in the concentration of students across different faculties (see appendix 2). For example, 81% of students registered in public health, health studies and sciences are located in South-Central whilst 79% of students registered in engineering and 74% of students registered in agriculture and other botanical sciences are located in Somaliland. The regional differences possibly reflect the emerging specialization across institutions. Specialization marks a positive evolution of the sector and will help diversify the qualifications and employment opportunities of graduates.

**Table 4: Distribution of students across faculties**

Faculty	Total no. of students enrolled	% of total no. of students
Social Sciences	8836	17%
Computer Technology	7485	15%
Public Health & Health Studies	7005	14%
Business Admin. & Management	6556	13%
Law/Sharia Studies	5339	10%
Education	4024	8%
Medicine & Medical Sciences	3554	7%
Engineering	3074	6%
Other	1370	3%
Arts & Humanities	696	1%
Post Graduate Studies	618	1%
Agriculture & Botanical Sciences	592	1%
Languages [English & Arabic]	530	1%
Islamic Studies	487	1%
Geology	451	1%
Veterinary & Animal Health	403	1%
Media Studies	151	0.3%
Pharmacy	125	0.2%
Politics	94	0.2%
Dentistry	81	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,471</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### **4.7 Facilities**

Institutions were asked to describe key facilities available for students and lecturers such as libraries (including the number of books), computer laboratories with printing facilities, and science laboratories. The findings suggest that many of the surveyed institutions are operating without adequate libraries; of the surveyed 44 institutions only 28 confirmed they had a library with the number of books ranging from 300 to 50,000. In addition, two institutions reported to have e-libraries and one institution reported to have online subscriptions to academic journals.

32 of 44 universities reported to have at least one computer laboratory with printing facilities. This finding was cross-checked with institutions that reported to deliver computer-related faculties and found that of the 30 institutions offering computer-related subjects, 24 have computer laboratories. This finding raises questions concerning the quality of such courses.

Similarly, of the 10 institutions offering variants of engineering courses, only four have science laboratories. Of the 14 universities offering medicine and other medical sciences degrees, only eight have science laboratories on their campus. However, it is worth noting that some universities offering medical courses have affiliations with local hospitals and thus use the hospital laboratories for student practical sessions.

#### **4.8 Research and publication**

The research and publication capacity of universities across Somalia is unsurprisingly low. 15 of the 44 universities suggested that they contribute to at least one academic publication with the majority of the reported publications are in social science related fields. No university reported being engaged in research activities. As publication and research are often considered a key indicator of institutional and academic capacity, it was checked whether there is an association between the number of academics holding PhDs in the institutions and the reported research and publication capacity. The data suggests that there is no apparent correlation. For example, Benadir University, one of the universities in the sample with highest number of academics holding PhDs (45) has one academic publication, whilst Gollis University, with only 8 academics with PhDs has five academic publications. Mogadishu University with 46 academics with PhDs has no academic publications.

#### **4.9 Relationships with other institutions**

Institutions were asked whether they maintain relations with institutions in the region or those outside the region. Thirty-six of the 44 universities reported having links with other institutions in the region or beyond. Interestingly, the majority of these institutions reported that the relationships were based on research exchanges. This finding raises questions about the practical benefits of these relationships as no institution reported being engaged in any research activities.

#### **4.10 Governance of the higher education sector**

One common characteristic of the higher education growth trajectory in South-Central, Puntland, and Somaliland is the diverse range of founders and owners. Some of the universities in the sample were founded by the diaspora and the local community, whilst others were founded by religious NGOs or private entities. There appears to be a degree of fluidity in the ownership of these institutions. For example, Amoud University, Hargeisa University, and Burao University were founded by diaspora and local communities but are now considered public institutions under the authority of the Somaliland government. The diversity of ownership patterns may have accentuated the limited involvement of the local authorities in the sector due to the lack of sufficient financial and human resources within

these government institutions.

Institutions were asked about the governance structures in their respective regions. 22 of the 44 surveyed universities stated that they are governed by education associations or umbrella organizations. Nine institutions stated they are entirely independent, seven institutions reported that they are governed by either the federal or the local government and one institution reported to be governed by both the federal government and education associations or umbrella organizations. Data for the remaining five universities was missing.

Even though the majority of institutions indicated that they are not governed by federal or local authorities, 84% of the surveyed institutions reported that channels of communication do exist between them and their local authorities. The majority of the institutions noted however this communication occurred only at the registration stage of the institution. Ongoing formal communications do not seem to occur. This can be explained by the absence of a governmental body overseeing higher education.

There are indications that authorities across the region are planning to be more engaged in the governance of the higher education sector. For example, one of the objectives captured by the Somaliland's Education Sector Strategic Plan 2012–2016 is to increase oversight of the functions of privately owned higher education institutions. Similar plans are listed in the Puntland Education Ministry's 5-year strategic plan.

#### **4.11 Financing structure**

Of the 22 institutions surveyed in South-Central, 14 reported depending fully on student fees for their funding. The remaining eight funded part of their operations through external aid (international NGOs, the diaspora, and Islamic NGOs). No institutions in South-Central reported to be receiving government subsidies. The situation in Somaliland is different. Although all institutions surveyed in this region also depended on student fees for a large percentage of their operational budget, all but one (Admas University) receive government subsidies. These subsidies ranged from 3% and 20% of their operational budget, although the majority fall between 3% and 5%. The situation in Puntland is similar to that of Somaliland where six of the nine surveyed institutions receive government subsidies ranging from 5% to 70% of their operational budget. (Appendix 3 provides a detailed picture of the financial structure of each of the surveyed institutions.)

Many institutions also reported that they receive support from external donors. This support ranges from 2% to 100% of operational costs. Reported external supporters include the Somali diaspora, Muslim Aid, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the European Union, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Health Organization, the Jamhuriya Foundation, Towfiq Welfare Society, and Hormuud Telecom. If the external supporters are disaggregated by region a pattern emerges. For example, Islamic donors seem to be more prevalent in South-Central compared to Somaliland and Puntland. This pattern is consistent with the observation that prolonged conflicts in South-Central restricted many western aid agencies from working in the area while many Islamic aid agencies continued working in South-Central throughout the period of instability.

#### **4.12 The needs and challenges facing HEIs**

HEIs across Somalia face great challenges, ranging from insecurity, institutional weakness, poor capacity of staff and infrastructure, limited resources, and a lack of teaching materials. Perhaps the greatest challenge is the quality of their education. That nearly 50 higher education institutions operate in a country the size of Somalia is a matter of serious concern for the education community. The majority of the surveyed institutions face similar difficulties. All 44 surveyed institutions reported the lack of sufficient financial resources as one of their

key challenges. Almost all sampled universities (96%) reported the shortage of teaching and learning materials to be another constraint, followed by insufficient basic infrastructure (89%), shortage of teaching and learning equipment (89%), shortage of qualified academic staff (89%), limited capacity of the administrative staff (86%), and the lack of university owned buildings (73%). The lack of curricula development capacity was also reported by 18% of the institutions surveyed.

Some of the reported challenges were region-specific. For example, institutions in Somaliland reported a lack of legal capacity due to Somaliland's lack of international recognition, which has constrained their ability to form meaningful relations with international partners. On the other hand, institutions located in South-Central reported that security concerns ranked high in the list of the obstacles they face.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion and policy recommendations

There has been significant growth in the higher education sector across South-Central, Puntland, and Somaliland. Although there are many positive aspects to this rapid growth given the initial conditions and recent history of the country, it raises serious concerns about the quality of education provided. This concern warrants an urgent intervention given the magnitude of challenges facing HEIs, coupled with the limited involvement and oversight of governing authorities.

The concentration of a large number of students in computer-related, business administration and social sciences courses raises crucial questions about the relevance of courses being offered and their alignment with the human resource needs of the economy and the country's development needs in general. Given the findings of this study, the following recommendations are directed to the main stakeholders of the higher education sector in Somalia: the Somali Federal Government (SFG), the regional governments (Puntland and Somaliland authorities), international donors, and the HEIs. These recommendations are by no means exhaustive. They merely reflect the findings from this study given its scope, objectives, and research questions.

### Policy recommendations

#### To the Somali Federal Government (SFG):

- Collaborate with existing educational associations and umbrella organizations to establish a cohesive national higher education policy aimed at streamlining standards, improving quality, and addressing fundamental deficiencies.
- Establish a Higher Education Board to implement, monitor, and evaluate quality standards, and develop policies that align the functions of the higher education sector with national development plans.
- Assist local and regional education authorities with capacity building efforts.
- Support HEIs throughout the country—including Somaliland—to gain access to resources and links to foreign universities.
- Provide targeted incentives to universities to improve their research and publication capacity and output.

#### To regional and local governments:

- Collaborate with existing educational associations and umbrella organizations to develop policies consistent with national policies.
- Develop institutions to monitor and evaluate quality standards of HEIs.
- Encourage local universities to forge meaningful relations with partner institutions in the region and beyond.

#### To international donors:

- Assist local and regional education authorities with capacity building efforts.
- Work with the SFG to establish national education policies that reflect the current needs of Somali society.
- Support international education focused organizations operating in Somalia.
- Continue to provide scholarships to Somali students and faculties of HEIs in Somalia.

#### To HEIs

- Develop in-house quality auditing mechanisms covering courses, teachers, and facilities.
- Work towards strengthening the capacity of teaching and administrative staff.
- Establish meaningful relations with other institutions in the region and beyond.
- Provide incentives for the academics to conduct research and produce publications.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1: HEIs surveyed by region

South-Central	Somaliland	Puntland
Indian Ocean University	Amoud University	East Africa University
Mogadishu University	University of Hargeisa	Puntland State University
Dar Al-ulum University	Burao University	Puntland University of Science & Technology
Hamar University	International Horn University	Galkayo International University
SIMAD University	Nugaal University	Garowe Teachers Education College
Islamic University	Gollis University	University of Bosaso
Benadir University	Admas University	University of Health Sciences
Kismayo University	Eelo University	Mogadishu University - Bosaso Campus
Plasma University for Science & Technology	Hope University	Maakhir University
University of Somalia	Alpha University	
University of Southern Somalia	New Generation University	
Hormuud University	Timacade University	
Jazeera University	Beder International University	
Salaam University		
Horn of Africa University		
Horseed International University		
Jamhuriya University of Science & Technology		
Hope University		
Job-Key University		
Modern University for Science & Technology		
Somali International University		
Darul Hikmah University		
<b>Total: 22</b>	<b>Total: 13</b>	<b>Total: 9</b>

## Appendix 2: Faculty types and student numbers by region

Faculty	No. of students: Total	No. of students: South-Central	% total students	No. of students: Puntland	% total students	No. of students: Somaliland	% total students
Social Sciences	8836	4961	56%	1399	16%	2476	28%
Computer Technology	7485	3583	48%	1150	15%	2752	37%
Public Health, Health Studies & Sciences	7005	5655	81%	183	3%	1167	17%
Business Administration & Management	6556	2608	40%	1594	24%	2354	36%
Law/Sharia Studies	5339	2205	41%	1481	28%	1653	31%
Education	4024	1438	36%	1012	25%	1574	39%
Medicine & Medical Sciences [Incl. Nursing]	3554	1796	51%	569	16%	1189	33%
Engineering	3074	413	13%	240	8%	2421	79%
Other*	1370	264	19%	0	0%	1106	81%
Arts & Humanities	696	696	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Post Graduate Studies	618	358	58%	138	22%	122	20%
Agriculture & Botanical Sciences	592	156	26%	0	0%	436	74%
Languages [English & Arabic]	530	330	62%	200	38%	0	0%
Islamic Studies	487	306	63%	30	6%	151	31%
Geology	451	0	0%	0	0%	451	100%
Veterinary & Animal Health	403	145	36%	55	14%	203	50%
Media Studies	151	151	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Pharmacy	125	0	0%	50	40%	75	60%
Politics	94	82	87%	0	0%	12	13%
Dentistry	81	0	0%	0	0%	81	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>51471</b>	<b>25147</b>		<b>8101</b>		<b>18223</b>	

### Appendix 3: Source of finance for HEIs

HEI	% self-funding	% gov. subsidies	% external aid
Hamar University	100	0	0
Hope University	100	0	0
Horn of Africa University	100	0	0
Indian Ocean University	100	0	0
Islamic University	100	0	0
Jazeera University	100	0	0
Job-Key University	100	0	0
Modern University for Science & Tech.	100	0	0
Plasma University for Science & Tech.	100	0	0
Salaam University	100	0	0
Somali International University	100	0	0
Darul Hikmah University	100	0	0
Dar Al-ulum University	100	0	0
University of Somalia	100	0	0
East Africa University	100	0	0
Admas University	100	0	0
Amoud University	95	3	2
Benadir University	95	0	5
Timacade University	95	3	2
University of Hargeisa	95	3	2
Alpha University	90	5	5
Beder International University	90	5	5
Gollis University	90	5	5
New Generation University	90	5	5
Hope University	85	10	5
Puntland State University	80	5	15
Puntland University of Science & Tech.	80	10	10
University of Health Sciences	80	0	20
Burao University	80	10	10
Eelo University	80	20	0
International Horn University	80	10	10
Nugaal University	80	10	10
Mogadishu University	71	0	29
SIMAD University	70	0	30
University of Southern Somalia	70	0	30
Galkayo International University	70	30	0
Mogadishu University - Bosaso Campus	70	30	0
Hormuud University	60	0	40

University of Bosaso	50	20	30
Horseed International University	40	0	60
Jamhuriya University of Science & Tech.	40	0	60
Maakhir University	30	70	0
Kismayo University	10	0	90
Garowe Teachers Education College	0	0	100
University of Bosasso	50	20	30
Horseed University	40	0	60
Jamhuriya University	40	0	60
Maakhir University	30	70	0
Kismayo University	10	0	90
Garowe Teachers Education College	0	0	100

#### Appendix 4: Faculty and student numbers

HEI	Location	Est.	No. of Faculties	No. of Students
Mogadishu University	South-Central	1996	7	5240
University of Hargeisa	Somaliland	2000	9	4000
University of Somalia	South-Central	2005	7	3912
Amoud University	Somaliland	1998	15	3887
SIMAD University	South-Central	1999	5	3765
Gollis University	Somaliland	2005	9	2778
East Africa University	Puntland	1999	8	2700
Plasma University for Science & Tech.	South-Central	2005	7	2693
Benadir University	South-Central	2002	7	1613
Admas University	Somaliland	2006	3	1431
Puntland State University	Puntland	2004	4	1375
Eelo University	Somaliland	2007	7	1340
Nugaal University	Somaliland	2004	7	1258
Somali International University	South-Central	2012	10	1125
Alpha University	Somaliland	2009	13	1072
Mogadishu University - Bosaso Campus	Puntland	2008	6	1039
Islamic University	South-Central	2001	5	1022
University of Bosaso	Puntland	2006	5	947
Horseed International University	South-Central	2011	4	882
Indian Ocean University	South-Central	1993	3	712
Hope University	South-Central	2012	6	700
Burao University	Somaliland	2004	7	700
Puntland University of Science & Tech.	Puntland	2004	9	660
International Horn University	Somaliland	2004	4	600
Galkayo International University	Puntland	2005	4	590

Modern University for Science & Tech.	South-Central	2012	5	523
Horn of Africa University	South-Central	2011	5	512
University of Southern Somalia	South-Central	2008	5	495
Jamhuriya University of Science & Tech.	South-Central	2011	4	463
New Generation University	Somaliland	2009	5	415
University of Health Sciences	Puntland	2006	7	400
Dar Al-ulum University	South-Central	1998	3	300
Beder International University	Somaliland	2012	3	300
Timacade University	Somaliland	2009	5	260
Kismayo University	South-Central	2005	4	250
Garowe Teachers Education College	Puntland	2005	1	240
Jazeera University	South-Central	2010	3	200
Job-Key University	South-Central	2012	3	200
Hamar University	South-Central	1999	3	190
Hope University	Somaliland	2008	2	182
Hormuud University	South-Central	2010	1	150
Maakhir University	Puntland	2011	3	150
Salaam University	South-Central	2010	3	100
Darul Hikmah University	South-Central	2012	2	100





