

The Role of Education in Peace and State-Building in Somalia



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Abstract

This study explores the role of education in promoting peace and state-building in Somalia, a country emerging from decades of conflict. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research combines a descriptive survey of 360 Somali respondents with a content analysis of 38 primary school textbooks in Somali, Arabic, English, and social studies. The findings highlight that while Somalia's primary school curriculum incorporates peacebuilding themes, it falls short in addressing state-building topics, such as civic education and governance.

This study emphasizes the need for curriculum reform to integrate state-building content and embed peacebuilding across all educational levels. It also calls for enhanced investment in teacher training, resource allocation, and community engagement to tackle systemic challenges. Key recommendations include conducting further research, facilitating inclusive stakeholder dialogue, and expanding access to education as integral components of Somalia's post-conflict recovery. By addressing these gaps, Somalia can leverage education as a catalyst for building a more peaceful and resilient society.

Keywords: Education in Somalia, civic education, peace education, post-conflict recovery, Somalia.

1. Introduction

In Somalia, where decades of civil war, state collapse, and social fragmentation have deeply eroded social cohesion and national institutions, education carries a dual imperative: to mend divided communities and to help restore the legitimacy of governance. Over forty years of protracted conflict have left the country's education system profoundly weakened, limiting its capacity to support peace and national reconstruction. Yet amid this prolonged turmoil, education emerges as a vital avenue for hope and recovery, not only as a means of rebuilding individual lives but also as a catalyst for broader peace and state reconstruction. This dual role fosters peacebuilding by repairing fractured relationships, promoting social harmony, and advancing state-building by strengthening civic knowledge, institutional trust, and participatory governance. While peacebuilding seeks to unify communities through shared values and conflict resolution, state-building equips citizens to engage meaningfully with governance structures, uphold constitutional rights, and contribute to sustainable national development.

This study explores the transformative potential of education in Somalia, examining how it can address the deep-rooted challenges of conflict and state fragility. By investigating the role of education in peacebuilding and state-building, this research seeks to provide actionable insights for policymakers, educators, and international stakeholders working to rebuild Somalia's future.

Historically, education in Somalia reached its peak in the 1970s and 1980s, when the Somali script was introduced in 1972 and compulsory primary education was enacted through self-reliance campaigns (Cassanelli & Abdikadir, 2007; Dammak et al., 2014). However, the outbreak of civil war and then the collapse of the central government in 1991 severely damaged the education system. During this period, school

enrolment had reached its lowest point, with most schools destroyed, materials unavailable, and teachers and students abandoning the educational process (Cummings & Van Ton Ningen, 2003, p. vi). In the 1990s, Somali communities revitalized the education system, recognizing it as a fundamental human need. However, in the absence of a central authority, the system became largely privatized and has remained so to this day (Jama et al., 2020). Despite these efforts, the privatized system could not afford to provide free education for the majority of Somalis across the country (Demak et al., 2014).

Currently, participation in education in Somalia remains low compared to neighbouring countries, with a primary school enrolment rate of just 33% (UNFPA, 2016) and an adult literacy rate of approximately 24% (Country Watch, 2016, p. 260). Somalia is considered to have one of the lowest adult literacy rates in the world (African Development Bank, 2013; Mohamed & Ongubo, 2016; Williams & Cummings, 2017). Despite these challenges, Somalia has made significant strides in recovering from civil war and is now on a path toward peace and development. The gradual restoration of order, stability, and national institutions has enabled the government to take greater ownership of development activities, including education reform.

Gross (2017) argues that understanding the role of education in peace and conflict necessitates a multidisciplinary approach, encompassing sociological, historical, philosophical, psychological, cultural, religious, political, and linguistic perspectives. In line with this, Smith Ellison (2014) outlines five key roles: first, it equips individuals with skills that offer alternatives to violence; second, it provides physical, psychological, and cognitive protection for children; third, it fosters a sense of safety, stability, and self-confidence; fourth, education helps to recover opportunities lost due to conflict; finally, it contributes to the broader transformation of society by nurturing a culture of peace that undermines the roots of conflict and promotes harmony and development.

Similarly, Harris (2004) highlights a central aim of peace education theory: to cultivate environments in which people can voice concerns freely, work productively, use time creatively, uphold human rights, and resolve disputes peacefully. However, as Horner et al. (2015) observe, in the early to mid-post-conflict phases, major international peacebuilding actors have tended to prioritize "security" concerns over investments in social sectors, such as education. This is rooted in the belief that security provides the foundation upon which other progress can be built.

These perspectives go beyond the mere resolution or containment of conflict; they emphasize transforming the deeper social structures, relationships, and cultural norms that perpetuate violence. From this standpoint, sustainable peace requires educational initiatives that address structural (governance), relational (intergroup trust), and cultural (civic identity) dimensions—a conceptual framework drawn from Lederach (1995) and applied in this study to the Somali context.

Despite this, no research has systematically examined how Somalia's post-conflict curriculum engages with these dimensions, particularly in relation to state-building. This study addresses that gap through an analysis of textbooks and surveys of student perceptions, the key education stakeholder.

The aims of this study are to:

- Assess the perceptions of Somalis on the role of education in fostering peace and state-building, focusing on how education shapes attitudes toward coexistence and civic engagement.
- Evaluate the extent to which Somalia's current education system contributes to peace and state-building, with particular attention to the coverage of state-building concepts in primary school textbooks.

- Investigate effective strategies for mainstreaming peacebuilding into Somalia's education system, including curriculum design, teacher training, and community involvement.

This study employs a mixed-methods design, combining surveys with respondents and content analysis of primary school curricula. By addressing these objectives, the research aims to contribute to the ongoing rebuilding of Somalia's education system and to promote lasting peace.

2. The Role of Education in Peacebuilding and State-Building

Life inevitably involves conflicts, mistrust, incompatible interests, and perhaps even violent events. When a violent conflict breaks out, education becomes a victim, and the harm it suffers may last for a long time (Barrios-Tao et al., 2017). As a result, children in unstable conflict-affected areas are nearly twice as likely to be malnourished, three times more likely to miss out on primary education, and nearly twice as likely to die before the age of five (UNICEF, 2014).

In today's modernized world, education is widely prescribed as a solution for many problems, such as conflict (J. H. Williams & Cummings, 2017; YUSUF, 2017). It is considered a lifetime human capital investment as it brings countless benefits not only to the individual but also to the community and the nation at large (Barrios-Tao et al., 2017; Toma, 2004; Usher, 1997). This is because well-educated citizens, potentially, have the knowledge, abilities, and attitudes needed to function effectively in their society. They also learn moral principles, a proper code of conduct, and effective communication techniques, which will ultimately help them discover peaceful ways to resolve conflicts (Kapur, 2018). A growing body of studies shows that education has a direct impact on how people grow cognitively, emotionally, and psychologically, as it is a tool that helps them make sense of their surroundings and lays the foundation for

social, political, economic, and cultural development (Akhter, Iah, & Sahab, 2022; Taka, 2020).

In post-conflict societies, education plays a dual, often tension-filled, role: fostering peaceful social relations while simultaneously reinforcing governance structures. Drawing on Lederach's (1997) conflict transformation model, this study examines the role of education through three interrelated dimensions: (1) relational peacebuilding, which involves fostering intergroup trust and dialogue through shared learning experiences; (2) cultural peacebuilding, which focuses on cultivating shared identity narratives that transcend divisions rooted in conflict; and (3) structural state-building, which entails promoting knowledge of, and trust in, civic institutions and governance systems.

According to Williams & Cummings (2017), education, peacebuilding, and conflict have a startlingly close relationship. Therefore, education was one of the tools used during the two World Wars "to promote extreme nationalism through the indoctrination of youth in formal schooling" (Tinker, 2016, p. 28). Similarly, Williams & Cummings (2017) contend that providing education to countries affected by conflicts can be instrumental in building positive peace. Meanwhile, education has been used as a peacebuilding strategy in countries experiencing violent conflict, helping future generations develop conflict resolution skills to foster a culture of peace (Taka, 2020; Tinker, 2016). More specifically, education is currently viewed as playing a significant role in fostering ethnically tolerant environments, desegregating minds, enhancing linguistic tolerance, cultivating a sense of inclusive citizenship, assisting in the de-weaponization of history, and supporting national reconciliation and peacebuilding (Bickmore, 2017; Tinker, 2016). Likewise, access to education can remedy lost opportunities, aid the Government in generating peace by encouraging social growth among the citizens, and contribute to state-building (Smith Ellison, 2014).

For education to function as a peacebuilding instrument, it must not be an exclusive right of specific groups; rather, it should be widely accessible by all eligible individuals in society (J. H. Williams & Cummings, 2017). Even during conflict times, the Geneva Conventions require that the conflicting parties ensure that children under 15 years receive proper education and that the occupiers make education maintenance easier. The Conventions also require that those who are incarcerated should be given access to education, and that this access shouldn't be stopped during non-international conflict (Unicef, 2011). According to the Save The Children, the focus of peacebuilding education should be six areas, namely: a) expanding educational opportunities for the most disadvantaged groups; b) emphasizing teachers and teaching quality; c) increasing the relevance of the curricula; d) preventing education from attack; e) addressing the growing threat of emergencies; and, finally, f) allocating adequate funding for education (Wedge, 2008). Likewise, UNICEF (2014) suggests that peacebuilding programs should advocate access to education of good quality and be sensitive to conflict and contribute to peace and should increase the capacity of the educational institutions and the stakeholders, such as parents, children, teachers, and other relevant individuals, to foster peace and to avoid the causes of conflict in the societies.

A study by Smith (2011) sought to examine three perspectives on how education should function in societies affected by armed conflict. Firstly, the priority should be given to children's safety and the response to the detrimental effects of conflict, including assaults on education itself. Secondly, education should be presented to learners in a "does no harm" way. This implies that education should pay attention to the causes of societal conflict. Thirdly, educators should believe that education can "make a difference" by fostering change in societies that have experienced conflict and increasing the likelihood that peace will last. Similarly, Barrios-Tao et al. (2017) recommend that educational systems in these circumstances be sensitive to conflicts and transform community

members' structures, behaviors, and attitudes toward the absence of conflict and peace.

However, Williams & Cummings (2017, p. 137) argue that the role of education in building peace in Somalia may be compromised when the "government is absent or too weak to carry out this function". Therefore, other means of provision should be created in such situations. Otherwise, the function of education in promoting peace will be lost (J. H. Williams & Cummings, 2017). Similarly, a good number of studies assert that though education can be used as a catalyst for peace, it can also be used as a weapon for conflict (Barrios-Tao et al., 2017; Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Unesco, 2011; J. H. Williams & Cummings, 2017). This phenomenon can occur when there is inadequate education, inequitable distribution, and a 'wrong kind of education (Unesco, 2011; J. et al., 2017). Another difficulty is that it is extremely challenging to set boundaries for peacebuilding because there is no clear definition of what "peacebuilding" entails (Unicef, 2011). Moreover, there is a dearth of reliable data on how education can contribute to peacebuilding. Thus, the proponent of education as a peacebuilding tool often promotes its benefits without supporting data or a well-established theory (Akhter et al., 2022; Horner et al., 2015; Wedge, 2008). This is due to the fact that little is known about how students whose lives and education are influenced by conflict understand the role education plays in their situation (Taka, 2020).

Another important purpose of education is for state-building (Carnoy, 2014). This function can be accomplished in a number of ways, including by increasing people's understanding of governmental structures, developing group cooperation, and fostering trust in institutions and those who support them (J. H. Williams & Cummings, 2017). According to Riley (1998), the provision of education is not motivated merely by economic production; rather, it teaches learners to be trustworthy, straightforward, law-abiding, and faithful to their nation. Effective state-

building requires education systems that develop both civic knowledge and institutional trust. In this regard, Dusi, Steinbach, & Messetti (2012) argue that education plays a vital role in developing firm and resilient citizens equipped with the knowledge to adapt to inevitable changes. Therefore, education can help create active, participative, and responsible citizens who will become catalysts for all aspect of human development. As a result, it ought to be viewed as one of the tools the Government can use to succeed in the post-conflict process (Barrios-Tao et al., 2017).

3. Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods design to examine the role of education in peacebuilding and state-building in Somalia. The research operationalizes three key dimensions: the relational (survey items on intergroup trust), the cultural (textbook narratives of unity), and the structural (coded through governance content in curricula).

The researcher collected the data using questionnaires and content analysis. Content analysis focused on four subjects (Somali, Arabic, English, and Social Studies) selected for their explicit peace and state-building competencies. to address the research questions, the peace and state-building content was coded by the author based on set criteria to identify central themes. The thematic analysis uses a volume of data in an attempt to identify core meanings from that data (Boyatzis, 1998).

In the quantitative part, a survey method was employed. According to Mathiyazhagan & Nandan (2010), social science mostly relies on the survey method in its attempt to study a phenomenon. This is because it enables the researcher to cover a more comprehensive population range within a limited time and resources. Moreover, the authors also believed that a survey is the sole method of data collection when the results are generalized to the whole population. Furthermore, the results were

analysed using descriptive methods. Accordingly, this research method is "a basic research method that examines the situation as it exists in its current state" (C. Williams, 2007, p. 66). Thus, it produces the frequencies, averages, and other descriptive statistical calculations.

4. Results and Interpretation

This section presents the study's key findings on the role of education in advancing peacebuilding and state-building in Somalia. The analysis is structured around the study's three main objectives: assessing Somali perceptions of education's role in peace and state-building; evaluating the extent to which the current education system contributes to these processes; and exploring effective strategies for mainstreaming peacebuilding within Somalia's education sector.

A total of 360 Somali respondents participated in the study, representing three educational levels: secondary, undergraduate, and postgraduate levels. Undergraduate students formed the majority (70.3%, n=253), followed by postgraduate qualifications (24.7%, n=89), and a small percentage had only a secondary-level education (5%, n=18). In terms of gender distribution, male participants constituted 74.4% (n=268), while female participants made up 25.6% (n=92).

4.1 Perceptions of the Role of Education in Peace and State-Building

As shown in Table 1 below, respondents strongly perceived education's role in promoting a culture of peace, with an overall average mean score of 3.123. This suggests that, on balance, participants agreed with the statements presented. The highest mean scores were associated with items indicating that education increases psychological tranquillity, promotes peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding, and reduces chaos and insecurity. While the belief that education reduces violence and hostility

also received positive responses, its mean score was slightly lower than those of the previously mentioned items. By contrast, participants showed a more neutral stance toward the idea that education consolidates democracy through dialogue, which recorded the lowest mean at 2.90.

Table 1: Role of Education in Promoting Peacebuilding Culture

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Education reduces violence and hostility	360	1	5	3.10	1.380
2. Education consolidates democracy through dialogue	360	1	5	2.90	1.362
3. Education reduces chaos and insecurity	360	1	5	3.16	1.413
4. Education increases the psychological tranquillity of the person	360	1	5	3.22	1.381
5. Education promotes co-existence in peace and understanding	360	1	5	3.20	1.356
6. Education improves the understanding of human rights	360	1	5	3.16	1.381
Average score				3.123	

Turning to state-building, Table 2 below presents participants' responses of how effectively education teaches various state-related and civic issues content related to national identity, governance, and civic responsibility. Notably, the overall responses leaned toward disagreement on the scale,

based on a 5-point scale, as reflected in the low average mean score of 2.47, across all items.

Table 2: Role of Education in Teaching State-Related Issues

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Ways to improve your local community	360	1	5	2.64	1.226
2. How to cooperate in groups	360	1	5	2.55	1.221
3. How to contribute to solving problems	360	1	5	2.58	1.306
4. How to be patriotic and loyal to the country	360	1	5	2.41	1.353
5. The national constitution	360	1	5	1.94	1.245
6. to be concerned about the problems in my country	360	1	5	2.40	1.285
7. the rights and the responsibilities of the citizen	360	1	5	2.41	1.290
8. how the government and its institutions work.	360	1	5	2.17	1.192
9. more about the history and heroes of my country	360	1	5	3.09	1.294
10. the issues that need to be changed in our country	360	1	5	2.51	1.382
Average score				2.47	

As shown in Table 2, the findings indicate that respondents generally perceive the current education system as providing only moderate emphasis on these topics. The data reveals notable variations in how different civic concepts are addressed. Learning about the country's history and national heroes, which received the highest score, 3.09, among all items in this section, suggests this is a relative strength in civic education. In contrast, the lowest scores were observed, which is 1.94, for the national constitution and the functioning of government institutions. Other fundamental civic concepts - including knowledge of government operations, citizenship rights and responsibilities, and fostering patriotism - all fell below the midpoint, indicating room for improvement. These findings highlight potential weaknesses in how education systems prepare students for civic participation and national awareness.

4.2 The Role of Education System in Peace and State-Building

To evaluate the extent to which Somalia's current education system contributes to peace and state-building, particularly regarding the inclusion of state-building concepts in primary school textbooks, the researcher conducted a content analysis of the primary education curriculum framework, along with student textbooks from four subjects: Somali, Arabic, English, and Social Studies. The themes and corresponding codes identified across these subjects are presented below:

Unity among Somali people: This theme emphasizes that the unity is essential for national development. This unity results in harmony and togetherness, enabling citizens to defend each other, empathize with each other's problems, and work together to overcome the country's issues.

Brotherhood: This theme presents brotherhood as a fundamental value for fostering unity, mutual respect, and social harmony. The revised curriculum reinforces it across all subjects through proverbs and idioms.

Collaboration: This theme indicates the necessity of cooperation. Students are taught that one can't reach development unless other people in society accompany him/her. Therefore, it is one's interest to collaborate with others to achieve both their personal and national goals.

Sources of conflicts: The curriculum contains enough information for the learners to realize the potential sources of conflicts in Somali societies so that students can learn to avoid and warn others so that Somali society live in harmony and peace. These sources include ignorance, bad habits, revenge, abuse, injustice, and disrespect.

Honesty and trustworthiness: The curriculum teaches students traits like honesty, integrity, self-reliance, and trust. These concepts are taught in the stages of character formation to emulate them when they grow up.

Polite language: Students are encouraged to use polite language when interacting with others, including parents, peers, and elders.

Patriotism and nationalism: In the four subjects, learners are taught about their country and how to be loyal to it. Students are taught to sacrifice to their country. In lower levels, different pictures of beautiful landscapes of the country are presented to the students. Similarly, they are taught about their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

Weapons and conflicts: In this theme, the curriculum seemingly presents some issues that may contain hostility and hatred. Different weapons are mentioned in the language courses. Similarly, hostile behaviours are available in the curriculum, together with fearful concepts such as someone shot by a correctional officer.

Forgiveness: In this theme, the curriculum encourages students to be always forgiving and tolerant. These traits are like to influence their

personal decisions and their interactions within the community, ultimately contributing to a peaceful and harmonious society.

Peaceful behaviour: This theme is characterized by a substantial lexical focus on friendship, peace, and love within the curriculum. Students are encouraged to form friendships, demonstrate love for their relatives, and respect their elders. These friendly words are designed to cultivate hospitable and cooperative behaviour in learners.

4.3 Approaches for Mainstreaming Peacebuilding in Education

Table 3: Approaches to Mainstream Peace in Education

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Peacebuilding as a National Goal of Education	360	1	5	4.01	1.326
2. Peacebuilding subject in higher education	360	1	5	3.76	1.350
3. Peacebuilding learning outcome at all levels	360	1	5	3.75	1.264
4. Peacebuilding in primary subjects	360	1	5	3.56	1.440
Average score				3.77	

To identify effective approaches for mainstreaming peacebuilding in education, this study presented four strategies to participants for evaluation. The 360 respondents rated each approach using a Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). As shown in Table 3 above, the results demonstrate strong overall support for peacebuilding integration, as indicated by a mean score of 3.77 across all strategies.

The most strongly endorsed approach was "Peacebuilding as a National Goal of Education" (mean = 4.01), indicating particularly strong support for policy-level integration. The other three strategies also received positive ratings, though with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Notably, "Peacebuilding as Integrated into Primary Subjects" received the lowest score (mean = 3.56), suggesting relatively less confidence in this implementation method. A detailed breakdown of the responses for all strategies is presented below.

Strong Overall Support for Peacebuilding in Education: The average mean score of 3.77 across all items suggests that respondents largely support integrating peacebuilding into Somalia's education system. None of the proposed approaches scored below the midpoint (3.0), reinforcing the consensus on their relevance. However, the varying mean scores highlight differing levels of enthusiasm for specific strategies.

Peacebuilding as a National Goal – Highest Preference: The most strongly endorsed approach was "Peacebuilding as a National Goal of Education" (Mean = 4.01). This indicates strong support for a top-down, policy-driven approach, where peacebuilding becomes a central objective of Somalia's education sector. The high standard deviation (1.326) suggests some disagreement, but the majority lean toward strong approval. This finding aligns with post-conflict contexts where education is often seen as a tool for national reconciliation and long-term stability.

Subject-Specific and Cross-Curricular Approaches: The second and third highest-rated strategies were "Peacebuilding as a Subject in Higher Education" (Mean = 3.76) and "Peacebuilding as a Learning Outcome at All Levels" (Mean = 3.75). These results suggest that respondents see value in both dedicated peace education programs (e.g., university courses) and integrating peacebuilding skills into broader curricula. The close scores indicate that stakeholders may not strongly favor one over the other, leaving room for a combined approach.

Integration into Primary Subjects – Lowest Preference: The lowest-scoring approach was "Peacebuilding as Integrated into Primary Subjects" (Mean = 3.56). While still above the midpoint, this suggests hesitancy—possibly due to concerns about implementation challenges, such as curriculum overload. The higher standard deviation (1.440) also indicates greater variability in opinions, which may reflect differing views among educators, policymakers, and communities.

5. Discussion: Reviewing Peace and State-Building in the Curriculum

Our findings reveal significant imbalances within Somalia's education system that have implications for peace and development trajectory. On the one hand, the curriculum demonstrates considerable strength in promoting cultural peacebuilding, particularly through unity narratives that emphasize national cohesion, mutual respect, and social harmony among learners. These themes foster interpersonal understanding and a shared sense of identity. On the other hand, the system shows marked deficiencies in structural state-building components such as civic education, governance, and awareness of citizen rights and responsibilities. As a result, the education system, while promoting social harmony at the community level, fails to cultivate institutional trust or equip learners for active civic engagement, thus hindering long-term national stability and state consolidation.

In the role of Somalia's education in peace and state-building, the data showed that education promotes co-existence in peace and understanding of human rights among learners. According to Abdinoor (2008), in Somalia, education helps build the social and human capital both during times of peace and conflict. Other studies showed that the higher the level of education of the person, the lower of his/her participation in civil wars (Maber et al., 2019; J. H. Williams & Cummings, 2015).

Education is supposed to increase citizen's understanding of their rights and responsibilities towards their nation. Citizens should be exposed to as much government related topics as possible (Torney-Purta et al., 2013). However, as shown in Table 2 above, most of the respondents declared that they were not exposed to the topics they were asked. This is evidenced by the low mean average of 2.47. This means that more than 50% of the participants are on the negative side of the scale. Additionally, Audigier's (2000) framework highlights four essentials: rights/responsibilities, social relationships, historical-cultural values, and economic participation in the development of the nation.

The content analysis of the four subjects in primary education, namely the three language subjects and social studies, showed the following points:

1. Social cohesion themes: The curriculum contains many topics that highlight the importance of unity for the Somali people. Being united can lead to development and strengthen national togetherness. It portrays the Somali people as one tree with different branches and leaves—connected and interdependent. Such unity enables people to live peacefully and harmoniously, working together for the national interest over personal gain. The curriculum also encourages peaceful behaviour and inspires learners to build friendships with their peers.

2. Moral foundations: The curriculum fosters a strong sense of brotherhood and moral character among learners by emphasising interdependence through numerous proverbs, phrases, and idioms. It promotes honesty, hard work, and self-reliance, while warning against illegal activities such as theft and bribery. Additionally, it encourages polite language and respectful behaviour, particularly toward parents, elders, and individuals with special needs.

3. Collaboration: The curriculum teaches students the importance of collaboration for the individual, the community, and the nation at large. As one hand can't wash the face alone, every Somali person is indispensable in working together with fellow citizens. In a nutshell, the curriculum instils the following principles in the learners: hands work well together, helping each other, and interaction.

4. Conflict prevention: The curriculum warns students against conflicts. In doing so, it teaches them the potential sources of conflicts. It presents these sources in a suitable way for different levels of the students. More specifically, students are told that wars are created by people who are too old to fight, so that the young ones can die. Similarly, it encourages students to be more careful before making any decision. As mentioned in the analysed subjects, the following are the main sources of conflict: ignorance, limited resources, clannism, disrespect, conspiracy, injustice, violation of one's rights, bad habits, fraud, discrimination, and revenge.

5. Patriotism and civic responsibility: The analysis showed that the curriculum instils in students a love for their country and a commitment to defending it. It encourages learners to care for the natural environment in ways that ensure future generations can benefit from the same resources used today. Similarly, at the primary level, the curriculum introduces all regions and districts of the country, providing detailed information about their economic resources. Moreover, it frequently

reinforces key civic values, such as: obeying the law, paying taxes, being a good citizen, loving the national flag, following rules and regulations, and understanding the rights and responsibilities of citizens, including civil and human rights.

6. Contradictory – Weapons and Conflicts: This is the only theme that appears to contradict the goal of promoting a culture of peace among students. It includes several words and images that seem to foster hostility and fear. Although such terms are commonly used in daily life, they are better avoided in the early grades. For example, the word “fight” and its illustrations appear more than five times in Grade 1 social studies. Similarly, seven different types of weapons are mentioned in the same grade. In addition, some hostile scenarios are presented, such as a man shooting someone and a prison guard killing a man.

This study reveals that the curriculum includes strong cultural peacebuilding elements, promoting unity narratives, social cohesion, mutual respect, and conflict resolution. However, it also shows significant deficiencies in structural state-building components. There is a critical imbalance between peacebuilding (at the interpersonal level) and state-building (at the state structures level) objectives. The lack of robust civic education, governance literacy, and institutional awareness creates a fundamental gap that impedes the development of institutional trust and active citizenship. This imbalance threatens Somalia’s long-term stability and democratic consolidation.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Education is vital for peacebuilding, state-building, and social cohesion in post-conflict societies. In Somalia, decades of instability have weakened the education system, necessitating targeted reforms to make schools drivers of national recovery. In the Somali context, the transformative

potential of education depends on addressing three critical gaps: (1) structural—the development of constitutionally grounded civic curricula; (2) relational—the establishment of inter-societal collaborative learning standards; and (3) cultural—the promotion of critical engagement with historical narratives. Absent this multidimensional approach, schools risk perpetuating the very divisions they are intended to mend.

This study examined the role of Somalia's education system in peacebuilding and state-building and found that Somalia's primary education curriculum plays a significant role in promoting peace by fostering values such as unity, collaboration, and conflict resolution among learners. However, it falls short in supporting state-building, particularly in civic education, governance, and citizen rights. To address these shortcomings, the study proposes the following recommendations:

- **Civic Education and Governance Awareness:** To promote active citizenship, Somali students should receive structured civic education on governance, state institutions, and constitutional rights, and state institutions to foster active citizenship and democratic participation.
- **Peacebuilding Mainstreaming:** Institutionalize peace education as a national priority across all educational levels.
- **Comprehensive Curriculum Analysis:** This study focused on only four subjects; therefore, a broader analysis encompassing all primary and secondary school subjects is recommended to evaluate peace/state-building themes system-wide.
- **Expanding Educational Access:** A significant portion of Somalia's population has received little to no formal education. The Ministry of Education must prioritize expanding access to education to break the cycle of violence.

- **Further Research on Peace and Social Behaviour:** Despite acknowledging the role of education in promoting a culture of peace, Somalis continue to exhibit hostility in daily life. Further investigation is needed to understand why peace is not effectively practiced in society.
- **Stakeholder Engagement through Workshops and Conferences:** Education stakeholders in Somalia are encouraged to organize workshops and conferences to discuss the role of education in peacebuilding and state-building. Given its significance in fostering stability, education must remain a central topic of national discourse.

By implementing these recommendations, Somalia can harness the transformative potential of education to foster peace and state-building. As the country is on its journey toward recovery, education stands as a cornerstone for rebuilding governance, promoting social cohesion, and empowering future generations to shape a prosperous and peaceful future.

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Somali Studies: A Peer-Reviewed Academic Journal for Somali Studies is a broad scope multidisciplinary academic journal specialized in Somali studies, published annually, in print and online forms, by the Institute for Somali Studies at Mogadishu University. The journal aims to promote a scholarly understanding of Somalia, the Horn of Africa and the Somali diaspora communities worldwide. It is an open access journal, and all articles are freely available to access, print and download from the website of the institute, www.isos.so.

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Published by Institute for Somali Studies

Hodan District, Near Km4 Square

Website: www.isos.so

Email: isos@mu.edu.so

Tel/Fax: +252 1 858118

Mogadishu, Somalia