

The Role of Education System in Nurturing Youth in Leadership

KEY POLICY MESSAGES:

1. Every young person has the ability and potential to be a leader. Young people can acquire leadership knowledge and skills through a number of channels such as through education, training, experience and cultural mentoring.
2. Multiple factors influence youth development and leadership. The education system is the single most important medium to support youth development and leadership so that young people can become active and contributing participants of the society and future leaders.
3. The education system promotes the engagement of young people in social and political actions at school and in the community, expands their civic participation and democratic citizenship and inspires them to become more open minded and socially responsible.
4. The education system can provide young people knowledge, values, attitudes and skills to make them resilient to violence, criminality and extremism.
5. Youth engagement and leadership education is conspicuously missing from Somali education system and Somali Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP 2018-2020). Civic and leadership education is not taught in formal primary and secondary education.
6. A significant number of young secondary school students interviewed in this study (80%) could not link the attainment of vital leadership skills and attributes such as tolerance, reasoning, critical thinking, participatory decision-making, and consensus building to their formal schooling.
7. Civic and leadership education in primary and secondary education is very vital in order to teach and motivate young people to acquire leadership knowledge and skills early in their formal education and nurture youth in leadership.
8. Somali education policy makers must develop youth development and leadership education strategies and framework to integrate the teaching of leadership knowledge and skills in various key educational stages and curriculum for children and young people.
9. Somali education policy makers must engage with different stakeholders and other segments of society such as education institutions, civil society organisations, youth and women groups, and businesses in the development of relevant education strategic policies, frameworks, and schools improvement programmes.
10. There is a need to build the technical and resource capacity of the education system institutions including the ministries of education at the regional states and federal levels and to empower them to develop, plan and deliver quality education.



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INTRODUCTION

Right to Education

Article 26 of UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that, "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages.

Education Services

The provision and delivery of education services is attained through an organised and functioning education system.

Attitudes

The education system can provide young people knowledge, values, attitudes and skills to make them resilient to violence, criminality and extremism.

The Somalia Population Estimation Survey (UNFPA 2014) indicated that 70 percent and 46 percent of Somali population were below the age of 30 and 15 respectively.⁽¹⁾ Protracted conflict, extreme poverty, and state failure are having significant impact on the lives, well-being and development of these children and young people. Today many young people face the prospect of recurring bouts of violence, vicious cycle of poverty and generational loss of opportunities such as the opportunity for formal education, training, and employment.

Article 26 of UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that, "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit".⁽²⁾

Education provides a conduit of social, cultural, economic and political development for society. It extends far beyond the basis of learning classroom subjects such as language, mathematics, science, history and arts. The provision and delivery of education services is attained through an organised and functioning education system. Education system could be defined as the formal process to cultivate a culture of learning, provide everyone (children, young people and adults) the opportunity to achieve their educational potential and spur society to develop, invent, innovate, and progress.

A body of research work in many parts of the world highlight the important role of the education system to foster and promote youth development and leadership. Introducing social responsibility and leadership to children and young people early in their formal education could

yield many benefits in terms of opening up young people's horizons, equipping them with necessary work and life skills and imbuing them with confidence, sense of self awareness, self-esteem and responsibility, honesty and personal control.

Somalia is recovering from two decades of multi-pronged crises in which public sectors such as education had borne its full brunt. Somali education system has gone through various changes and transformations in different periods since independence in 1960. In Siyad Barre era (1969 -1991), the country had seen the nationalisation and centralisation of the education system and the establishment of official script for Somali language.⁽³⁾ Although the teaching of youth leadership education had not featured prominently in the curriculum in this period, there were institution-based extra-curricular programmes, notably the Summer camp for secondary school students (Ceel Jaale) and the National Service for secondary school graduates (Gurmad), which were developed to train and equip young people with work skills and experience and support them to transition to productive adulthood. Experiential learning of appropriate youth leadership skills such as discipline, assuming responsibility, team work, constructive problem solving and decision making processes could have formed part of these programmes.

In 2012, Somalia adopted a federal system of government, which is now undergoing review and completion process. The present federal arrangement places education service design and delivery in the remit of the Federal Member States (FMS). However, due to the incomplete federal structure and the divergent security, economic and governance situations in the different States and regions of Somalia, there is no unified and standardised education system in the country.

Education Sector

At the end of 2017, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) finalised and approved the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) for 2018 – 2020.

At the end of 2017, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) finalised and approved the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) for 2018 – 2020. The plan outlined education sector priorities and set targets in “primary and secondary education, alternative basic education, technical and vocational education and other cross cutting education issues.” This strategic plan does not contain any policies and actions for youth engagement, participation, development and leadership education. (4)

SIDRA has conducted a short study on “the role of the education system in nurturing youth in leadership”. The study sought to highlight how the education system shapes the atti

tudes, knowledge, skills and competences of young people in leadership and examined the understanding of students in secondary education about leadership skills and characteristics. The policy brief reports the absence of youth leadership education in Somali education system and calls for discussion and debate on education reform to promote youth leadership in primary and secondary education. It presents practical recommendations for the development and integration of youth leadership education and leadership opportunities for young people in Somali education system.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP: KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Leadership skills are described as, “the abilities needed to take responsibility for one (actions, etc.) and to work with others in achieving goals, the ability to influence the actions of others, in either formal or informal settings.”(5,6) In recent years, research interest on youth development and leadership has increased due to the recognition of the importance of nurturing leadership in children at earlier stage. However, education analysts acknowledge the inadequacy of the current research in the field and the need to define conceptual framework for youth leadership education in primary and secondary education. Larson (2000) commented, “We have a burgeoning field of developmental psychopathology but have a more diffuse body of research on the pathways whereby children and adolescents become motivated, directed, socially competent, compassionate, and psychologically vigorous adults.”(7) Nevertheless, the debate about youth development has shifted education policy towards setting objectives for formal leadership education for children and young people.

VanLinden and Fertman (1989) stated that, “understanding and appreciating the complexity of leadership is a prerequisite to supporting and challenging teenagers to be the best leaders they can be.”(8) In other words, it will be very difficult to teach and equip young people with leadership skills without first appreciating the concept and components of youth leadership and developing education activities to teach, showcase and simulate youth leadership characteristics in schools. The understanding will take in the form of defining youth leadership education and formulating education policies and approaches to deliver it in the formal education system.

Youth development is more broadly concerned with providing children and young people a space to grow and experience real life situations, the opportunities to take part in healthy risk-taking and decision-making processes and recognition of their achievements. Other elements that are necessary for the development of young people include teaching them the ability to embark on continuous lifelong learn

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Education Channels

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Civic Leadership

The education system must contain civic and leadership education in order to achieve the goals of positive youth development and leadership.

The Spectrum

One of the starkest commonality across the full spectrum of education services in different regions of Somalia is the lack of youth leadership education.

ing and the skills to lead themselves and others such as planning, organisational and communication skills. Wide range of educational activities are required to train young people to be resilient, confident and responsible, adaptable to change and learn from their mistakes as well as to equip them with the skills to communicate effectively with others.

Every young person has the ability and potential to be a leader. The individual differences among young people in terms of abilities, talents and learning styles should never be considered on the pretext of prejudice

cial assumption that certain leadership characteristics are innate. Young people can acquire leadership skills and characteristics through a number of channels such as through education, training, experience and cultural mentoring.

Ricketts et al. (2002) suggested five components of leadership education and training for children and young people, through three stages of integration, interaction and awareness.(9) They proposed a model for developing formal leadership education curriculum for youth or adolescents in formal career and technical education programs.

Awareness: Introducing civic and leadership education to children and young people at earlier stage. Teaching them the skills in fun, creative and inspiring activities.

(Leadership characteristics such as self-awareness, respect for diversity, team work, helping others, being role model, organisational and planning skills)

Interaction: Providing children and young people safe environment to explore leadership and opportunities to reflect on their experiences.

Educational activities that involve children and young people in team work and skills to manage stress, solve problems and conflicts, and establish relationship



Integration: Exposing children and young people to experience real-life dynamics in society, practice leadership skills and make decisions. Involving young people in formal leadership positions such as student committees, school government bodies, chair duties, tutoring, etc.

(Educational, fun and inspiring activities such as debates, presentations, plays and competitions)

Figure 1: Youth Leadership Education Model adapted from Ricketts and Rudd model 2002

The above model shows that while providing leadership knowledge and information in schools can empower young people, youth development requires holistic and innovative approaches to transform young peo

ple's behaviours, attitudes and desires in relation to leadership, and education activities that equip young people with intrapersonal and interpersonal, communication, decision making and critical thinking skills.

LEADERSHIP EDUCATION IN SOMALI EDUCATION SYSTEM

The significant role of well-planned education system to nurture youth leadership, whether it is to equip young people with the knowledge and skills they need to transition to adulthood, become productive members of the society, and prepare them to assume leadership roles in companies and public institutions, cannot be overestimated. The education system must contain civic and leadership education in order to achieve the goals of positive youth development and leadership.

Somali Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2018 – 2020 (FGS MoE 2017) outlines its main objective as the establishment and delivery of “Quality education services that utilize multiple pathways to increase access to education and equip future generations with the skills and knowledge to positively contribute to the social, political and economic development of their communities and support the realization of multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”(4)

The ESSP sketches out the various education programmes and activities to realise the national education objectives but youth engagement and leadership is conspicuously missing from Education Sector Strategic Plan. One of the starkest commonality across the full spectrum of education services in different regions of Somalia is the lack of youth leadership education. This notable lacuna could be attributed to the absence of national policies and plans for teaching and promoting youth leadership in schools and as one of the constraints of the limited

institutional capacity of the Ministries of Education at FMS and FGS levels. The lack of policies and programmes to teach youth leadership skills in schools could result in many young people leaving schools and colleges without the necessary leadership knowledge, skills and experience.

SIDRA has conducted interviews with 20 students in secondary schools in Garowe city to study their understanding and appreciation of the role of education system in youth leadership and their experiences of youth leadership education in their formal education. The interview asked the young people about;

- Youth leadership education in primary or secondary school and subjects or topics that are related to youth leadership in their school
- The young people's participation and experiences in student committees or other school or community bodies
- The young people's knowledge and understanding of society, government, rule of law, democracy, economics and politics
- The young people's level of self-awareness, confidence and responsibility
- The young people's understanding of teamwork, dignity, respect for difference of opinion and disagreement, continuous education and lifelong learning

Raising Awareness

Civil society, referred to as “forms of public communication”, plays a vital role in raising awareness about social, economic, and political issues as diverse as peace and reconciliation, education, health, human rights

Youth Leadership

Ninety percent of the students could not relate youth leadership education to any subject in primary and secondary education.

Education Activities

The students support the idea of involving children and young people in the decisions that affect their education and development such education activities and school improvement programmes.

Curriculum

The education reform must ensure that the design of any new curriculum is not only developmentally appropriate but it can provide guidance on the learning opportunities for children and young people to be self-aware, confident and tolerant.

Ninety percent of the students could not relate youth leadership education to any subject in primary and secondary education. Despite the fact that education system contains some components of civic education which are taught in schools, the students indicated that teaching comprehensive civic education and youth leadership knowledge and skills is missing from Somali primary and secondary education.

While most of these young people could describe leadership characteristics of being a role model, supporting other students and having excellent communication skills, a significant number of them could not identify vital leadership skills and attributes such as tolerance, reasoning, critical thinking, participatory decision-making and consensus building.

The majority of students answered that teaching in primary and secondary schools in Somalia does not give children and young people opportunities to explore, analyse and reach conclusions but puts strong emphasis on memorising key facts and recounting what is said or taught in structured exercises.

The study revealed that students possess varied degrees of self-awareness, confidence and responsibility attributable to the normal growth, development and experiential learning of young people including through the exposure to formal education. The students support the idea of involving children and young people in the decisions that affect their education and development such education activities and school improvement programmes. They want their views to be heard and to be allowed to play meaningful role in school and in the community. All of these young people expressed their desire to learn leadership and entrepreneurial skills.

The majority of the student could describe the role of government to provide safety, security and basic

social services to its citizens but there is an apparent lack of full understanding of rule of law and democracy.

The interviews provided an insight on the absence of the means and motivations for young people in Somalia to acquire leadership skills in formal education. It showed that young persons' lack of understanding in leadership skills and characteristics could be down to the absence of youth leadership education in primary and secondary education in Somalia.

DESIGNING EFFECTIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP EDUCATION

It is difficult to assess education performance and effectiveness in different parts of Somalia due to the absence of standardised education system, policies, national curriculum and programmes of study in Somalia.

Effective youth leadership education cannot be designed in isolation but must be undertaken within the context of broader Somali education system reform. There is a genuine need to conduct comprehensive review in the education strategic policies and plans and the national curriculum to overhaul the Somali education system. Introducing civic and leadership education, diversity and tolerance, rule of law, citizen's rights and democracy in Somali education system is equally important as reforming the scope, academic content (subjects), performance, standards and assessments of the education system. The education system should provide young people knowledge, values, attitudes and skills to make them resilient to violence, criminality and extremism.

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Strategies & Frameworks

Somali education policy makers must develop youth development and leadership education strategies and frameworks to integrate the teaching of leadership knowledge and skills in various key educational stages for children and young people.

self aware, confident and tolerant.

It must also ensure the development of customised educational activities and materials that can encapsulate leadership skills and attributes, which are appropriate to different developmental stages of Somali children and young people, taking into account the differences in terms of gender, experiences, learning styles and abilities. Experiential learning of reasoning, critical thinking, taking initiative and responsibility of one's actions, exploration of options and participatory decision making should be offered in all subjects through

research, analytical work, debates, collaborative activities in groups and sharing of resources such as books and computers.

Somali education policy makers must develop youth development and leadership education strategies and frameworks to integrate the teaching of leadership knowledge and skills in various key educational stages for children and young people. The following stepwise approach can support the introduction and mainstreaming of leadership education in formal primary and secondary education:

LEADERSHIP KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS	PRIMARY EDUCATION	SECONDARY EDUCATION
Civic education	Self awareness, respect, dignity, tolerance, collaborative activities, society, diversity, disagreement, understanding and complying with the rules	Tolerance, diversity, society, government, rule of law, democracy and human rights
Reasoning, hypothetical and critical thinking	Understanding issues, finding answers and evidences, deducing meanings, exploring different possibilities and consequences, reaching conclusions and making judgements.	In-depth analysis of situations, rational thought, reflection, questioning, supporting arguments with evidences, creating hypothesis, making assumptions, working through dilemmas, reaching credible conclusions, making decisions and judgements.
Communication skills	Reading, writing, formal and informal language, language style and literacy devices, presentations, role plays	Verbal and non verbal communication skills, debates, presentations, plays and talk shows
Resilience	Choice and responsibility, coping skills, confidence and self esteem, self efficacy, problems solving, taking initiative and working in a team	Choice and responsibility, coping skills, confidence and self esteem, self efficacy, problems solving, taking initiative, team work, developing trust and relationships, learning from events and mistakes, application of best practice
Organisation and planning skills	Time management, meeting homework deadlines, organising education materials, using education resources appropriately	Time management, developing logical order, setting up timetables, systematic planning and prioritising, setting goals and targets and meeting deadlines

Table 1: leadership knowledge and skills for primary and secondary education

Policy Makers

Effective youth leadership education cannot be developed unless education policy makers engage with different stakeholders and other segments of society

ICTs

It is very vital to harness the power of ICT technology to educate, train and mobilise young people in leadership.

Leadership Skills

Many young people are leaving secondary schools without the necessary leadership knowledge and skills such as communication skills, critical thinking and coping abilities.

There is a trend in Somali education system to focus on and celebrate education achievement in sciences and mathematics and to disregard the importance of subjects, which teach leadership skills such as language and literature, history and social studies.

The advances in information and communication technology (ICT) such as the internet and social media have huge impact on children and young people. ICT keeps young people well informed about events and issues, enhances learning opportunities and facilitates sharing of ideas and thoughts. It is very vital to harness the power of ICT technology to educate, train and mobilise young people in leadership.

Community based activities such as visits and work at community projects and charity work, sports and recreational programmes, awareness campaigns, apprenticeships, work experiences and cultural mentoring are as important as school based educational activities to teach young people leadership skills.

Effective youth leadership education cannot be developed unless education policy makers engage with different stakeholders and other segments of society such as education institutions, civil society organisations, youth and women groups and businesses in the development of relevant education strategic policies and frameworks.

CONCLUSION

The evidences for the important role of the education system in nurturing youth in leadership overwhelmingly support the need for leadership education in order to teach young people about leadership knowledge and skills. Teaching these skills will undoubtedly expand young people's understanding and appreciation of leadership qualities and characteristics and make them self aware, tolerant, cooperative and resilient.

Leadership education does not feature prominently in Somali primary and secondary education or its Education Sector Strategic Plan for 2018 – 2020. Many young people are leaving secondary schools without the

necessary leadership knowledge and skills such as communication skills, critical thinking and coping abilities. Many young people did not get the means and motivations to acquire these leadership skills in primary and secondary schools.

Somali education system need comprehensive reforms not only to standardise the education service provision, delivery and evaluation but to develop, introduce and integrate civic and youth leadership education in the formal education in Somalia. This necessitates the development of strategic policies and frameworks to design and deliver effective youth leadership education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Education Plan

Somali education policy makers need to review the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP 2018 - 2020) and formulate appropriate education policies and plans for youth development and leadership.

Rule of Law

Civic education such as citizenship, the role of society and government, rule of law and democracy need to be introduced early in the formal education.

1. Somali education policy makers need to conduct comprehensive education reforms in Somali education system including, but not limited to, broadening the scope, academic content (subjects), performance, standards and assessments of the education system as well as the development, introduction and integration of civic and leadership education in formal primary and secondary education.
2. Somali education policy makers need to review the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP 2018 - 2020) and formulate appropriate education policies and plans for youth development and leadership.
3. A developmentally appropriate civic, youth development and leadership education framework must be developed and integrated in the national curriculum in order to provide direction and guidance on the teaching of these important skills in schools.
4. Civic education such as citizenship, the role of society and government, rule of law and democracy need to be introduced early in the formal education.
5. Leadership knowledge and skills such as reasoning, hypothetical and critical thinking, communication skills, coping strategies and decision making need to be taught in all subjects of primary and secondary education.
6. Young people must be involved in debates, planning and decision-making processes such as school development and improvement programmes.
7. Education policy makers must engage with education sector stakeholders and other segments of society in order to localise and implement education development.
8. Somalia international partners and others donors need to provide assistance to build and strengthen the technical and resource capacity of the education system institutions including the ministries of education at the FMS and FG levels.

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About SIDRA

SIDRA is a registered independent, **non-profit** Research and Policy Analysis Think Tank based in Garowe, Puntland, Somalia.

Our Vision

Somalia in which social justice prevails and inclusive economic growth benefits all and improves the well being of all people.

Our Mission

A centre of development and research that generates relevant and original knowledge for dynamic policy environment support, institutional capacity development and alliance.

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