
The Somali Transnational Collaborative Project (STCP) Capacity Building (CB) Through Social Work Education

Dr. Nimo Bokore (Corresponding Author)

Carleton University, Canada

Mukhtaar Caabi

University of Hargeisa, Somaliland

Allan Moscovitch

Carleton University, Canada

Dr. Mitra Rahimpour

Carleton University, Canada

Eriny Awad

Carleton University, Canada

Myrna Ragheb

Carleton University, Canada

Received: September 20, 2024 Accepted: November 8, 2024 Published: November 25, 2024

doi:10.5296/ijsw.v11i2.22269

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijsw.v11i2.22269>

Abstract

Social work as a profession has the tools necessary to support and bring together not just communities but nations due to its ability to recognize and meet the needs of the people. The profession is relatively new to African countries, including Somaliland, with many of its current-day theories being borrowed from the West. We began our collaborative project in mid-2000, believing that social work in Somaliland can foster growth and nationwide capacity building. The project included the development of a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program that began in 2008 and a Master of Social Work (MSW) currently in the works. In addition to developing these programs, we have been conducting qualitative research and short surveys since 2020, focusing on the role of social work in Somaliland, the employment prospects for graduates and the benefits of indigenizing the education and expanding it to the MSW level. Our findings show the contribution of social work education and practice in addressing the specific issues related to poverty, religion, gender-related issues, disability rights, and caring for children or older adults and the need for a graduate level to address issues such as mental health and policy development. We also found that social work education and practice, despite the region's economic challenges and as a new and previously unknown discipline based on Western knowledge, contributed to the overall well-being and capacity building of the people in the area.

Keywords: Somaliland, Social Work Education, Capacity Building, Social Development, Indigenization of Social Work

1. Introduction

Somaliland as a breakaway nation is often misconceived by the West and incorrectly portrayed in popular media. The truth behind Somaliland is that it has endured years of colonization and lack of successful union with the Somali Republic since its independence in the 1960s. The ruling of a military government led by General Siad Barre and years of being under the Somaliland Liberation War resulted in instability and economic stagnation. However, it is a nation with incredible resilience due to its long-standing history and culture – all of which factor into its ability to persevere and step outside its status as a break-away region into a future as a developing nation. Since 1991, Somaliland has worked to establish itself through relative peace in the region and a few foreign trade agreements. It is currently working on securing its nationhood and autonomy. Our development of the BSW program was to support Somaliland's goals by promoting social development, advocating for equitable policies, building capacity, promoting social cohesion, supporting vulnerable populations, raising awareness of maladaptive cultural practices, and conducting social research.

1.1 The Somaliland Region

Like the Arabian Peninsula, Somaliland is enriched by thousands of years of history and culture. The ancient Egyptians considered the region "God's land" (the land of Punt). Likewise, Chinese merchants purposely visited the Somali coast in the 10th and 14th centuries to acquire luxurious and exotic items. They returned home with giraffes, leopards and tortoises to add colour and diversity to their imperial menagerie. Greek merchant ships and medieval Arab dhows plied the Somali coast, and for them, it formed the Eastern fringe of the Arabic description of "Bilad as Suda," or "the Land of the Black."

By the eighteenth century, the people in the region had developed their way of life, rooted in pastoral nomadism and the Islamic faith, until 1884, when the Somalis were colonized and divided into five separate Somali regions, which included British Somaliland (north central), French Somaliland (northeast), Italian Somaliland (South), Western Somaliland (Eastern Ethiopia, now known as Region Five), and the region known as the Northern Frontier District (NFD) under British colony and now part of northern Kenya. By 1960, two of those regions, the Italian Somaliland and British Somaliland, merged into a single independent state until 1991, when Major General Mohamed Siad Barre – the country's military ruler, was overthrown by the people and the land was divided again into the two former colonial regions until it further disintegrated into multiple self-governing tribal territories. Although unrecognized by the African Union and the United Nations, British Somaliland, now known as Somaliland, has been a peaceful democratic region since its 1991 self-declared independence from Somalia.

1.2 The People, Historical Trauma and Its Impacts

The colonial division and oppression impacted the region at large, creating a lasting generational trauma. Describing the people's experiences, Husein Bulhan (2008) describes these regional and tribal manifestations as "clan neurosis" expressed by its current use of excessive nepotism by the people in power, including the heads of the regions. The neurosis changed the people's minds, normalizing the separation and self-imposed tribal isolation and

moving them away from nation-building. In addition, this changing mindset created a new culture, moving Somalis away from communal, collaborative living with rules-based conflict resolution structures such as "*Xeer*." The development of adaptive survival skills based on tribal alliance and nepotism strengthened the emergence of "clan hegemon" with disastrous consequences as each tribe competed with the other for their benefit, choosing tribal governing rather than togetherness to build the nation (Bulhan, 2008, pp. 124-125).

The new clan-based or tribal political structure created each Somali region to be led by ill-equipped tribal elites with the support of outsiders with their regional interests. This new Somali political structure is often used to exploit the people in the name of tribal-based political or new religious ideology (Bokore, 2017; Bulhan, 2008). Somalis, haunted by the years of colonial oppression, starvation, segregation, and genocide, became emotionally sensitive to safety and chose clan reliance for protection, support and leadership (Bokore, 2012). Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart et al. (2011, p.2) define this emotional colonial hold and distraction of culture and lack of working for group interest as a response to a multigenerational pain or cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations. The development of social neuroscience explains the impact of experiencing psychological wounding as trauma gets transferred to the next generation through what is known as epigenetic adjustment, altering the DNA sequence of their unborn child and, therefore, transmitting the trauma to the next generation (Bokore, 2012 & 2017; Meaney, 2001).

The generational transference of trauma from historical wounds continues throughout the region, affecting family life with increased family violence, family separation, child abuse and male abandonment of their families. As faculty members at Carleton University School of Social Work, we saw the role of social work education and practice in making the change in Somaliland. We recognized the need to incorporate trauma-informed social work and Indigenous practices into the curriculum. The training of future MSW students is designed to use their learned skills to create individual and community treatment plans tailored to the unique needs of each community member, which can help current and future members of the society to recover and rebuild the Somaliland Nation.

2. Consultation to Expand Social Work Education

Our effort to continuously support Somaliland's social work practice is based on the School of Social Work at Carleton University's commitment to making social work education and practice applicable to the local cultures, informing social policy, community work and clinical interventions. We began exploring what indigenized social work would look like by consulting with the "University of Hargeisa" (U of H) faculty to understand the culture, the people, and how they practice Islam, one of the three main religions (the other two are Christianity and Judaism). During this consultation, we learned that even though Somalis follow tribal interests, they also practice and follow the communal living taught under the Islamic "Ummah" umbrella in which community members generally help each other during need, informing the indigenization of the social welfare system or practice. The communal living under "Ummah" is strongly aligned with tribal or family interdependency, making social work intervention, such as child protection, a communal responsibility. We learned from this consultation that since the

first cohort of the BSW program graduated and began to work in the field, the people of Somaliland started to understand and view social worker education and practice as part of a discipline fighting for equality and the protection of human rights and safeguards family cohesion under the patrilineal culture. The committee member's motivation grew even more during the consultation with graduates of the BSW program, the faculty member at U Of H and the administrative staff, who helped us in increasing our understanding of the benefits of providing further training to the social workers who now hold various professional leadership positions in the government and the community. We were particularly impressed hearing about the role social workers took in servicing the community during the famine and the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. In those difficult times, integrating culture, religion, and social work education helped social workers demonstrate the benefits of discipline to the people. From these consultations, we also recognized the gaps in service and the urgent need to expand the program to the graduate level.

3. Expanding the Social Work Graduate Program in Somaliland

In 2017, when the Hargeisa University School of Social Work asked the committee at Carleton to help them develop a graduate program, indigenizing the curriculum became part of the conversation about what the new Master of Social Work (MSW) program would look like. Based on other programs in the East African regions, such as Zimbabwe and Rwanda, social workers could help the people by responding to their social needs after going through traumatic experiences (Chitereka, 2009; Choguguzda, 2009).

We began the development of our collaborative graduate curriculum informed by Afrocentric feminism, centralizing and privileging the local knowledge, experiences, practices, and ways of being as the source of the program. Even though feminism in Africa, particularly in Somali regions, remains contentious due to the patrilineal social structure, we used it to establish indigenized social work and the need for transformative change in the discipline, as Western approaches often view local practices as unworthy of acceptable knowledge.

Our choice for feminist-informed social work education in the MSW program and practices comes from its flexibility to incorporate local and Somali knowledge, including religion/spirituality and culture. In post-colonial Africa, the need for spiritual and cultural-based social work practices began to make sense to social work practitioners and educators (Tusasiirwe et al., 2023). This new way of knowing is common in African countries, such as Zimbabwe, Rwanda, and many others, where social workers integrate their local indigenized knowledge into their field practice.

In many parts of Africa, including Somaliland, what is known through cultural learning or taught by elders to serve community members in need is now seen as pearls of wisdom and used in practice as indigenized social work. For the people of Somaliland, graduates of the BSW program reported that adding prayers or reading religious excerpts during an intervention is accepted by the people and the social workers who see them as part of the practical and indigenized way of servicing the individual or the family in need. The practice is used to build relationships, provide safety to empower and motivate survivors of traumatic events such as rape, war, gender discrimination, natural disasters, grief, loss, and distress. (Bokore, 2012; 2017;

Tusasiirwe et al., 2023).

4. The Development of a New MSW Program at The U of H

Social work in Africa is considered a young profession, as it was only introduced in the 1960s and has many regional differences (Chitereka, 2009). Many schools in the continent continue to rely on curricula modelled after the European and North American schools and follow their vision for ways of helping; one of the current arguments in the continent is indigenizing social work practice to make sense for the people (Chitereka, 2009; Ibrahima & Mattaini, 2019). As a result, we, as a committee and members of the faculty from Carleton University School of Social Work and the University of Hargeisa (U of H), began to discuss the expansion of the current BSW program. This committee comprised several faculty members at Carleton University, Somali Canadian graduates of the social work program, and some Somali Canadian community members. We agreed to help the people in the region, starting with indigenizing social work education at the MSW level to make sense to the people based on their culture and religion. The committee members began the development of the curriculum with localized needs and the resources at the U of H in mind.

The conversation between the two universities, and in 2017, the U of H School of Social Work asked the committee at Carleton again to help them develop a graduate program. That conversation led to starting the graduate program or the Master of Social Work (MSW) with indigenizing this curriculum in mind. We started looking at other African countries' social work programs designed to respond to the country's social needs, including establishing services such as child welfare, counselling and marriage guidance, administration, and drought relief. In addition to the indigenization efforts, the U of H faculty member recommended considering the Somaliland people's efforts to rebuild their education system, which is structured around self-help methods and informed by religious/cultural teaching. Therefore, we planned the development of the MSW program to be informed by these ideas included in the curriculum to meet the needs of the people. There are now over 240 students who have graduated from the BSW program, and based on the Alumni survey responses, most are interested in the MSW program.

5. A Capacity Building Training and Research at The University of Hargeisa

5.1 Training

An online conversation about faculty training and research began in 2017. We started our research study in 2020 to examine the benefits and challenges of social education and practice in Somaliland. At the same time, we planned a Capacity Building (CB) training for faculty, incorporating specific CB activities, including pedagogical in-person training for the new faculty teaching the upcoming graduate program. The training included knowledge exchange about what was learned from the bachelor's program and preparing faculty members for the new graduate program. We discussed the principles of effective teaching and designing culturally informed course content related to local needs and responding to the indigenization of the curriculum.

The knowledge exchange was informative about the region, including the role of social work

and serving a population dealing with high poverty rates, significant youth unemployment, unpredictable weather conditions, and a lack of social policies or social services to support those in need. The CB training included enhancing the self-help method currently used in Somaliland and how it can be used to find community solutions for existing social issues. During training, the importance of using the new technology (eco-justice oriented) to benefit communities trying to overcome the persistent environmental problems and famine in the regions. This conversation led to aligning the new graduate program with the 2030 National Development Objectives (NDO), which include advancing economic and social well-being for the people. The conversation included aligning social work education, practice, and research with the NDO's plan to promote inclusivity, self-reliance (personal and national resources), and building environmentally friendly sustainable development that contributes to the region's economic and social growth.

5.2 Research

We began our study life history research in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, doing multiple online interviews with faculty members in the Bachelor of Social Work program and the alums (as per Cole & Knowles, 2001). Collecting data through life history interviews took over two years due to the pandemic and other environmental challenges. While the online Zoom meeting made it easier to talk to the faculty and alums living in different time zones, discussing with ease in their own homes, it was challenging to have an extended conversation about the role of religion and culture while working with various groups due to lack of privacy own home (large families, small spaces) and the presence of fear for being overheard (Dhunpath & Samuel, 2009; Goodson & Sikes, 2001). In Somaliland, working with specific communities dealing with oppression based on tribe, gender, sexual violence, or sexuality is difficult for an open discussion, as the country is still working on improving the relationship with these groups and providing service for them. We also planned to end the data collection with a face-to-face focus group discussion with faculty and alumni groups for 2024.

6. Method

During the development of the MSW curriculum, the committee received a small amount of funding from Carleton University's Seed grant program for the research goal of exploring the benefits of social work education since its establishment in the region and to provide a capacity-building training for faculty members at the U of H who will teach the MSW courses. We recruited participants for focus group discussions and individual interviews for our qualitative study. The study participants were alumni of the School of Social Work at Hargeisa University, faculty members, and program administrators. In this study, our focus was based on two questions. (1) what does indigenized social work education and practice mean for the people of Somaliland, and (2) what does teaching indigenized social work practice look like, especially when it is integrated with Islamic and cultural teaching?

Based on the life history methodology (Cole & Knowles, 2001), we conducted multiple interviews with faculty and Alumni participants during 2020 and 2022. Two alumni and five faculty members participated in the life history method section. This allowed us to collect the stories of these trailblazers and the first social work educators and students in the Somali

regions of East Africa. The life history interviews were conducted over two years via Zoom, followed by an in-person focus group discussion and an alumni survey.

6.1 Individual Interviews

Our conceptual and methodological approach for our research project was guided by our understanding of the development and progress of social work education and practice since it began in the region in 2008. Thus, our life history research was designed to bring out the voices of the faculty, alumni, and administrative staff who started the program as faculty, students and administrators to explore their understanding of social work education, including their perspective of how the field is understood by the people and its benefits to the region's development. Our primary research questions focused on education, practice, and the region's perception of social work as a discipline.

6.2 Focus Group Discussions

We conducted focus group discussions with senior faculty members and administrative staff for in-depth conversations about social work in Somalia, including sustainable development goals and some challenges in teaching or practicing social work. As a region where the local culture is informed by religion, we explored the unique challenges experienced by faculty and former students while practicing or teaching topics such as community social work, clinical social work or policy and administration.

6.3 Alumni Survey

In addition to the individual interviews, we included a short online survey to reach out to all the alumni currently working in various regions distributed through the alumni listserv. The survey questions included their overall satisfaction with the Bachelor of Social program, their current career, and plans to return to U of H for a graduate degree in social work.

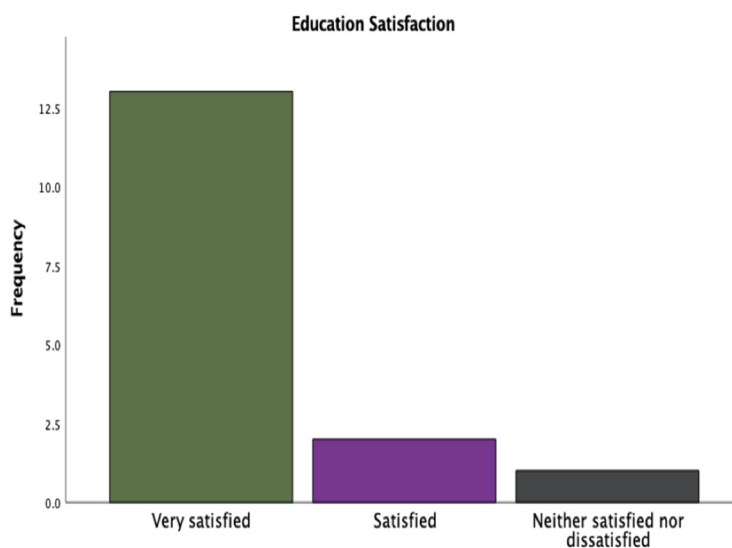
6.4 Faculty Survey Questions

We distributed a short questionnaire to the faculty before starting the focus group discussions and after the capacity-building training, asking them about the role of social work in contributing to the region's sustainable development goals and the culturally-based challenges they encounter while teaching or practicing social work. Six out of ten faculty participants responded to the two distributed questions asking about the role of social work in the region's sustainable development goals and the culturally-based challenges they encounter when teaching or practicing social work. The questionnaires were in the English Language, which is widely spoken in the region as a former British colony, and the lack of response from the participants was attributed to language barriers.

7. Findings

7.1 Alumni Online Survey

In the alumni survey, fifteen out of twenty-six participants indicated they were pleased with the education received at Hargeisa University School of Social Work's Bachelor program.



The following are excerpts from comments in the survey.

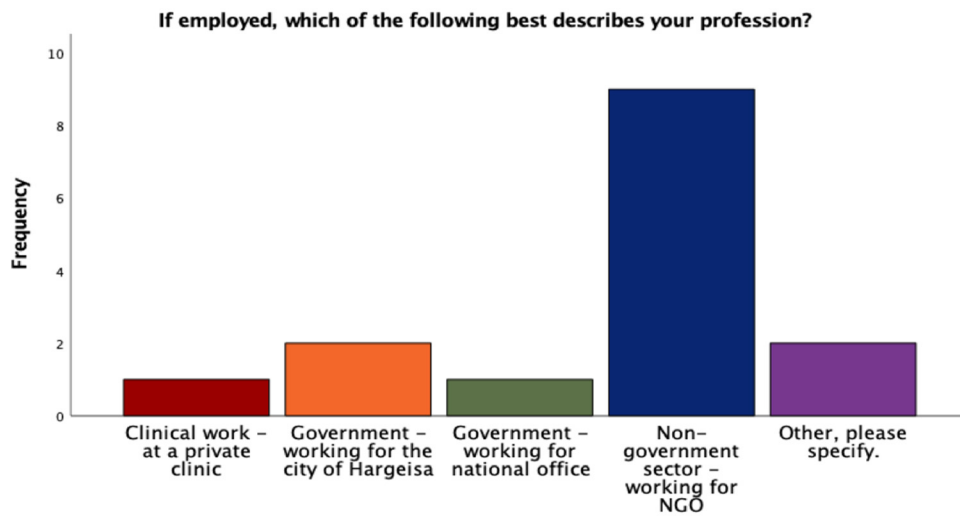
"I am always interested in social issues, and my education at the UOH School of Social Work has provided me with the skills I need to work with individuals and families."

"I gained a wide range of knowledge to qualify as a social worker working now with an NGO helping families."

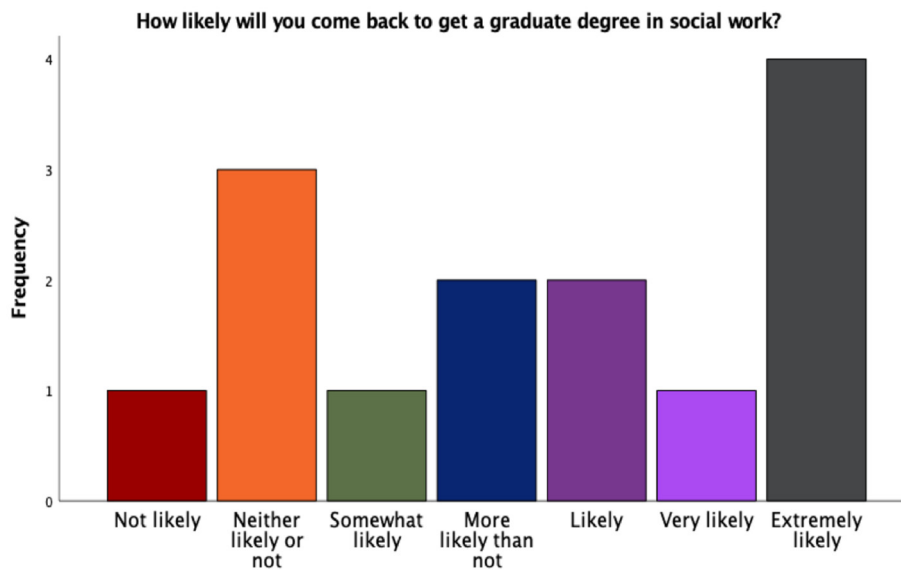
"Because I want to work with vulnerable groups to help them gain employment and food sources, I gained the knowledge I need to do the job. I now work with an NGO providing those services."

"I learned to deal with every client and help them with their needs. I also learned about mental health and now work in the mental health field."

In response to the question about current employment, out of the 26 participants who provided survey responses, nine commented on where they work, including working at various levels of the government of Somaliland.



The alum responses varied regarding how likely they were to return for a graduate degree at the U of H School of Social Work. Four out of the twenty-six indicated they are highly likely to return to get a graduate degree.



Quotes from the alum survey included,

"Because being a social worker is something I am proud of to be and love to do. I am planning to apply for the graduate program when it is open.

"I am very passionate about learning more about social work intervention as a profession needed by the communities worldwide. It has been an honour to serve my people with what I learned and make a difference in their lives."

Faculty members gave the following varied responses about the role of social work in

contributing to the region's sustainable development goals.

- It is about being involved in poverty eradication projects and self-help programs.
- It is about having quality education and jobs, which are critical for poverty eradication.
- It includes addressing the increasing need for mental health services.
- It involves addressing how to increase projects and advocating and informing the public about the benefits of gender equality.
- It collects evidence-based social work research addressing poverty, displacement, culturally based conflict resolution, and community development.
- It is about becoming involved in funded advocacy programs, if available, to promote gender and tribal equality to eliminate discrimination, violence, and stereotypes.
- It addresses the need for increased involvement of social workers with policy development for environmental justice and addressing the impact of climate change on pastoralist or farming communities.

Responding to the question about the culturally-based challenges they encounter while teaching or practicing social work, faculty members said,

- The challenge is navigating the benefits and costs of some of the cultural norms and beliefs, such as gender equality and eliminating the stigma and discrimination against minoritized ethnic groups.
- The challenge is discussing the elimination of the stigmatizing and discriminatory language built-in within Somali culture, particularly impacting marginalized groups.
- It is challenging to respect people's choice of words to motivate them to use appropriate metaphors to desensitize the use of oppressive languages for ethnic identification.
- *Teaching students about the connection between Islamic principles is not sometimes congruent with making a change following the teachings of Islam. For example, the moral principles of protecting vulnerable groups are pillars of religious and cultural teachings to make a change in stigmatizing language or identifying minority tribes.*
- The challenges of sensitivity to people's views and teaching taboo subjects such as the eradication of female genital mutilation (FGM).
- *The challenges of trying to normalize gender-based practice regarding religious freedom and choosing a dress code aligned with Islamic teachings of modesty and gender-based culture.*

7.2 Individual Interviews

Some of the participants from the alum group discussed the challenges of integrating what they learned from the textbooks into practice, as the field is new. Some social work education needs to be aligned with the local culture. For example, children's and women's rights are some of the changes they addressed. Some participants talked about understanding family issues using what they learned from Western textbooks about the field and on-the-spot interpretation of the

local culture, such as existing socially constructed family rules and responsibilities, including defining men's and women's roles within the household.

Other participants talked about how their professors taught them to work with clients with disability issues or child protection where there is no service except those provided by a few NGOs. Child protection and children's rights are other sensitive topics for social workers in Somaliland. Children's rights, as described by the Western cultural norms and policy, explain many of the methods used in Somali culture as child abuse, especially around the methods of punishment used against children for misdeeds or teaching morals. Others discussed how Islam prohibits child abuse and grants safety and protection for children's rights. Other practice-related issues the alumni's address include the challenge of providing community-based social services. Some of the participants use examples of how children are silenced by culture not to talk to strangers, which hides issues such as family violence, incest, rage, addiction, mental health and other issues the child might be dealing with at the time.

When the alumni were asked about other challenges they face in providing services related to these topics, some of them talked about the difficulty they face in discussing taboo subjects regarding minoritized groups. Somalis are seen as the lower case called "Midgan or Madhibaan- a Somali marginalized or minoritized tribal group." In practice, it is difficult to serve them despite their extreme need due to a lack of services and support systems.

The faculty members addressed topics similar to the alums's, such as the challenges and the need for indigenizing social work education and practice to inform policy and practice. They addressed the need for more funding the U of H faces, including the bare minimum facilities for learning, such as classrooms and library resources. They emphasized its impact on students, the faculty and the quality of education. They discussed their concerns about the lack of resources and the importance of knowledge creation, particularly in indigenizing social work. They saw the addition of the graduate-level program as an area that would contribute to the knowledge needed to spearhead the required community-based research to develop Indigenous social work.

7.3. Focus Group Discussions

Faculty members engaged in passionate conversations when asked how they chose the discipline and what integrating religious teachings in social work education and as part of indigenizing social work would look like. They provided the following responses to explain their career choices and the spiritual guide in teaching social work intervention practice.

- *Whoever relieves a believer's distress from the distress of this world, God will relieve him from the distress.*
- *To bring happiness to your believing brother, pay off a debt for him, or feed him with bread is a good deed.*

While discussing their limitations in translating Western knowledge into local values and practices, the faculty participants talked about the strong interest and need for indigenizing social work in Somaliland. Faculty members also demonstrated their interest in having the

freedom to translate and integrate religious teaching and cultural teaching into social knowledge and practice norms. They identified the need for teaching graduate students to use increased self-awareness and reflective practices as the starting point for indigenizing social work, paying attention to personal biases against diverse religious practices, discrimination against minoritized ethnic groups and gender equality.

Focus group participants repeatedly used the challenges of working with child protection, seniors, and those dealing with ability issues as examples. They discussed including Islamic values in the new graduate program and field practice addressing the need for child protection. Incorporating Islamic values and specialized field training, such as child development, elder care, and disability studies, will promote the community's well-being. The group discussed how Islam teaches that children are innocent and pure people and need protection from the family, the community and the nation. They used Quranic verses to explain the teaching about child protection, quoting surah AL-ISRA, "where Allah says, "Do not kill your children when in fear of poverty. We provide for them and you. Indeed, their killing is the greatest sin". Killing is a strong word used in the language and culture of the time to indicate harm. In a region where the rate of child poverty and abandonment is increasing, as seen by the number of children roaming the streets, the focus group participants discussed the integration of these Islamic and cultural teachings. Western and Islamic thoughts value the protection of children, which makes it easier to explain child safety issues.

In the discussion about social work and protecting other vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, participants talked about how they are the fastest-growing demographic in Somaliland, with no existing programs or policies to support them. They also discussed the need for elder care, quoting the following Quranic verses.

"You worship none but Him, be kind and respectful to your parents, and say a generous word to them. Moreover, act humbly to them in mercy, and say, 'My Lord, have mercy on them since they cared for me when I was small" [Qur'an, 17:23-24].

"God is He Who created you from weakness and gave you strength throughout your life" [Qur'an, 30:54].

In hadith, narrated by Abdullah ibn Amra ibn al-'As, The Prophet said: Those who do not show mercy to our young ones and do not realize the right of our elders are not from us (Sunan Abu Dawud). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "He is not of us who does not have mercy on young children, nor honour the elderly" (Al-Tirmidhi)

Allah orders us never to look down, label, or ridicule others – such as people with disabilities – because "perhaps they may be better than them." (49:11)

In Islam, disabled people have the right to be respected (49:11), and social justice is part of the human basic needs such as food and clothes (24:61) and receive treatment and rehabilitation.

Those who do not show mercy to our young ones and do not realize the rights of our elders are not from us (Sunan Abu Dawud)

As they discussed these verses, they also talked about using examples that fit the course or the topic they are discussing, finding a balance between Islamic principles and social work practice and policy-fitting international norms to safeguard vulnerable groups. They said one of the problems consistently raised by students is the challenge of integrating the long-standing communal Somali culture and tradition of care.

8. Recommendations

The study recommendations include *enhanced advocacy at the government level to increase funding for the School of Social Work at U of H to hire professional faculty members to train graduate students*. Moving away from utilizing Western methodologies in social work practice, the findings indicate that an Indigenized practice must be tailored to the unique culture, religion and needs of the people of Somaliland. *Since the development of the Bachelor Program at the U of H*, Social work education in Somaliland has created a place in the public sphere and garnered respect around practice, improving ways of doing social advocacy and community capacity building. Findings also encourage *establishing a Somaliland Social Work Association to enhance knowledge exchanges, networking, and skills-based training conferences*. An Association allows an overriding body to support professionals and community members engaging with the social services. It promotes the practitioner's accountability while providing vulnerable populations a place to report wrongdoings or malpractice. A shared association will encourage the governing body to connect with broader networks of established social work research and training. *It can organize training programs offered by international organizations to complement local needs and avoid repetition*. This allows for continuing shared knowledge across the profession while addressing needs specifically relevant to Somaliland. It increases the international and regional collaborations for a curriculum review to match program development with community needs.

The scope of this study was to explore the need for the social work profession in Somaliland through discussion with current-day social workers in the region. As we work through capacity building and collaborative curriculum development to encourage the status of social work in Somaliland, we will also continue to review the progress and the University's ability to support the ongoing growth of the goal-oriented programs for sustainable development.

9. Conclusions

It is evident from the findings that the attitude towards social work education is very positive even though the introduction of the discipline is at the introductory stage at the community and governmental level. A lack of knowledge about the discipline will continue to dissipate with the increased presence of graduates working alongside NGOs, health care centers, counselling and other contributions to society. Thus, the study indicates that Social Work education in Somaliland is necessary to teach practitioners how to work with social issues and strive to resolve conflicts to work toward eradicating poverty, mental health, child protection, elderly care, gender-based violence, and exclusion. As the demographic findings suggest, Indigenous social work education in Somaliland can also contribute to rebuilding and re-strengthening the nation.

Acknowledgement

Funding

We are extremely grateful to the Carleton University Seed Grant, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, for funding the research, to faculty members, and to the Alumni of the School of Social Work at the University of Hargeisa (U of H) in Somaliland for participating in the study and for their support.

Informed Consent

Obtained.

Provenance and Peer Review

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer-reviewed.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request.

Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare that there are no competing or potential conflicts of interest.

References

- Bokore, N. (2017). Historical Trauma, Resettlement, and Intervention Somali-Canadian Experiences. *International Migration*, 56(2), 146-162. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12418>
- Bokore, N. (2012). Suffering in silence: A Canadian-Somali case study. *Journal of Social Work Practice: Psychotherapeutic Approaches in Health, Welfare and the Community*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650533.2012.682979>
- Brave Heart, M. Y. H., Chase, J., Elkins, J., & Altschul, D. B. (2011). Historical trauma among Indigenous peoples of the Americas: Concepts, research, and clinical considerations. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 43(4), 282-290. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02791072.2011.628913>
- Brookfield, S. D. (2015). *The skillful teacher: on technique, trust, and responsiveness in the classroom* (3rd ed.). Wiley.
- Bulhan, H. A. (2008). *Politics of Cain: One hundred years of crises in Somali politics and society*. Tayosan International Publishing, Bethesda, MD.
- Chitereka, C. (2009). Social Work in a Developing Continent: The Case of Africa. *Advances in Social Work*, 10(2), 144-156. <https://doi.org/10.18060/223>
- Chogugudza, C. (2009). Social Work Education, Training and Employment in Africa: The Case of Zimbabwe. *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, 35(1), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.5070/F7351009559>
- Cole, A. L., & Knowles, J. G. (2001). *Lives in context: The art of life history research*. AltaMir Press. Kindle edition, Walnut Creek, CA.

Dhunpath, R., & Samuel, M. (2009). Life history research: Epistemology, mythology and Representation. Sense Publishers, Rotterdam, NL.

Meaney, M. J. (2001). Maternal care, gene expression, and the transmission of individual differences in stress reactivity across generations. *Annual Review of Neuroscience*, 24(1), 1161-1192. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.neuro.24.1.1161>

Tusasiirwe, S., Nabbumba, D., & Kansime, P. (2023). Religion and spirituality in social work in Uganda: Lessons for social work education. *Social Work Education*, 42(2), 202-219. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2022.2104243>.

Glossary

AAB Device: an equipment for sky.

KKD Device: an equipment for shipping.

Appendix

Appendix 1. Survey Question for Mobilephone Marketing

Appendix 2. Model of Population

Copyright Disclaimer

Copyright reserved by the author(s).

This article is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).