

TURKEY'S ROLE IN PUBLIC SERVICE AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN MOGADISHU



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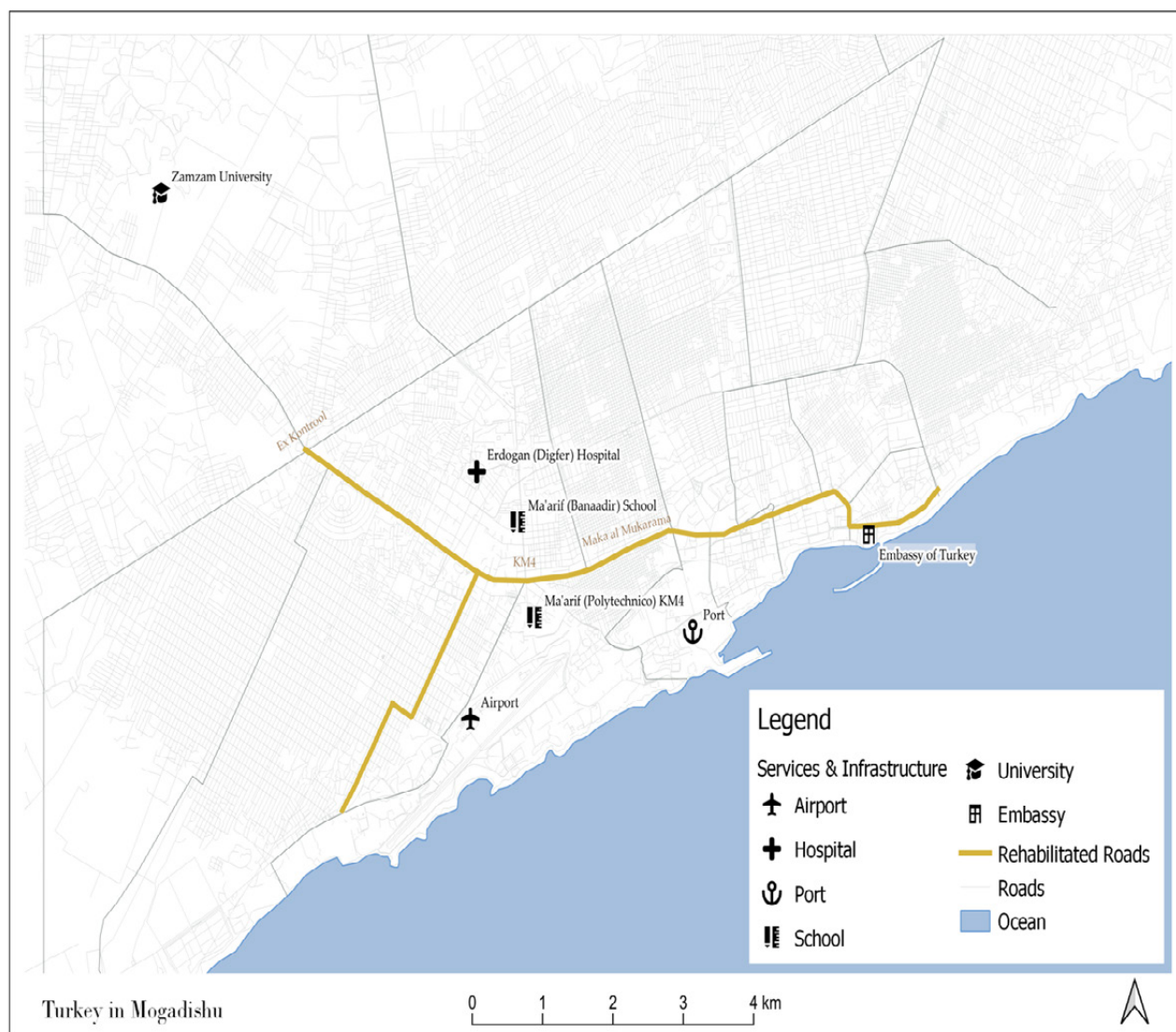
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1. Executive Summary

This study investigates the role Turkey plays in the improvement of public services and infrastructure in Somalia particularly access to health care, advancing access to education, and construction of tarmac roads and other key infrastructure in Mogadishu.

Notwithstanding the paucity of published research regarding the subject matter of this study, this paper responds to the existing gap on the Turkish role in these areas and contributes to the growing body of knowledge on Somalia-Turkey relations.

This study used qualitative research methods and conducted a total of 20 in-depth interviews with key stakeholders. In addition, desk research was conducted to complement primary sources.

The study found that Turkish organizations built/rebuilt hospitals such as Digfer (now Erdogan) hospital, which receives about 25,000 patients and perform 550 surgeries each month on average; Yardimeli hospital and 23-kilometer tarmac road in Mogadishu's center, which breathed new life into Mogadishu's people and traffic movement and business.

Further, the Turkish organization, Diyanet opened a school in 2013 that provides free schooling to orphans and children from needy families besides Maarif elite fee-paying school managed by Maarif Foundation.

The study recommends, among others, that Turkish organizations extend their services beyond Mogadishu, and the Turkish government reconsider its generous scholarship to Somali students and strike balance between social sciences programs and applied programs.

2. Introduction

Despite the multifaceted interventions in Somalia by multiple actors since the state collapse in 1991, Turkish involvement stands out. This initially began as genuine humanitarian efforts and later metamorphized into a formal engagement so that its effects are felt by the Somali populace (mostly in Mogadishu, the capital). This has made great leaps so far. The Turkish engagement came in late 2011 during which period southern Somalia was affected by severe famine wrought by the worst drought in 60 years in the country (Harte, 2012).

In the midst of this calamity, the then prime minister and now president of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, visited Mogadishu – the host of the famine-stricken people – on 19 August 2011 with a large entourage including his family, Turkish politicians, businesspeople, journalists, singers and even a reality television star (Harte, 2011). Erdogan and his delegation with the host president Sharif Sheikh Ahmed paid a visit to the camps of the famine displaced people where both Erdogan and his wife carried the bodies of the famished children in a gesture of sympathy for their enduring suffering in the glare of the global televisions (Wasuge, 2016). It was a daring visit and the first by a non-African leader to the country in two decades. It challenged the long-held and ill-conceived narrative by traditional western diplomats and NGOs based in Nairobi and beyond that Somalia is a no-go zone and sparked western envy and competition (Siradag, 2016).

In response to the humanitarian crisis, Turkish nationals collected millions of dollars of charitable aid in Turkey. Moreover, the government of Turkey provided \$122 million in humanitarian aid in 2011 (Daily Sabah, 2017). Turkish governmental organizations and humanitarian agencies heavily engaged in the efforts to alleviate the suffering included Kızılay (Turkish Red Crescent), Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), religious affairs directorate (Diyanet), IHH, and Kimse Yok Mu (KYM) to mention a few (International Crisis Group, 2012). Despite sources differ on the amount of humanitarian aid Turkey dispensed to Somalia, however, the latter became the third recipient of the Turkish assistance after Syria and Pakistan (Tank, 2013).

After its humanitarian efforts recorded success on the ground, Turkey shifted its focus to another more consequential and daunting task as of 2012: implementing a visible development project; a task, which earned it a reputation and accolade from the wider Somali people particularly Mogadishu, the capital population, for being the immediate beneficiaries of the implemented projects (VertinSunday, 2019). Sectors that benefited from developmental projects Turkey state, semi-state and non-state agencies implemented include, but are not limited to, health, education, roads, airport, and seaport.

The rebuilding of the former Digfer hospital (now Erdogan hospital) represents a trademark of Turkish developmental projects in Somalia. The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) undertook the 200-beds hospital project in Mogadishu but was built by the Turkish Housing Development Administration (TOKI) (Siradag, 2016). This Erdogan hospital was inaugurated on 25 January 2015 in a ceremony attended by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan with his host counterpart the then Somalia President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. During that, the two countries signed an agreement that set forth that the hospital will be operated jointly and that the Turkish health ministry provides around \$85.6 million of the estimated \$135.7 million of the operating budget for five years (Anadolu Agency, 2015). Importantly, it is the most modern hospital in East African and provides subsidized treatment for thousands of outpatients and inpatients from across the country (Siradag, 2016).

Turkish companies have rehabilitated and taken over the management of Mogadishu airport and port. A pivotal project is the fencing and rehabilitation of Mogadishu airport, which was financed by TIKA (International Crisis Group, 2012). To boost the airport and seaport infrastructure and the operation efficiency, the Somali government awarded long-term contracts (30-year contract for Favori LLC in June 2013 and a 20-year contract for Albayrak in October 2014) to manage Mogadishu port and Favori LLC to run Mogadishu international airport respectively (The African Aviation Tribune, 2013). However, questions were raised and suspicion clouded over the process and transparency of contract awarding (Reuters, 2015). The new airport terminal was inaugurated in 2015 by the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan alongside his Somalia counterpart Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. On its part, a 14-year agreement was awarded to Albayrak in 2020 to manage Mogadishu port came after the 2013 contract was renegotiated according to which the Turkish company would have managed the port for 20 years and this was done in compliance with Somalia's undergoing economic restructuring (Garowe Online, 2020).

Another area where the traces of Turkish involvement is clear is the education sector. Both the Turkish government and NGOs have offered full scholarships to thousands of Somalis since 2011 (Wasuge, 2016). The initial scholarship program covered primary, secondary and higher education, but later years it became limited only to higher education. Additionally, the scholarship program was run through the office of the Turkish prime minister, and in the subsequent years, a change was made to the process of the scholarship where students can personally apply for scholarships online as international students do instead of preferential treatment offered to Somalia. In 2011 alone, Turkey provided 1,200 scholarships to Somalia, which is the largest scholarship programme Turkey has ever extended to a single country and this is also for Somalia the largest scholarship it has ever received from a single country (Harte, 2012).

In addition, Turkish governmental and non-governmental organizations built new and/or rehabilitated educational facilities and run some of them. For instance, Nile Academy (affiliated with Gülen Movement) since it has started its operations in Somalia in May 2011 opened four schools, three in Mogadishu and one Hargeisa. It admitted students from kindergarten to secondary and had a girls' boarding school and a boys' boarding school (Somalia investor, 2015). However, the Somali government, after considering the Turkish request shut down the operations of the three schools and a hospital in Mogadishu run by Mr. Gulen's Nile Academy educational foundation in 2016 after Fethullah Gülen was accused of being the mastermind of the failed coup attempt in Turkey in 2016 (The New York Times, 2016).

Further, TIKA in collaboration with the Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH) launched the Somali Agricultural School in Mogadishu in December 2012 to deal with recurrent droughts in Somalia. The school has an application garden where students can practice what they are taught in the class. Many agricultural engineers graduated from the school, and it introduced new vegetables to the Somalia table such as cucumbers, Armenian cucumbers, varieties of pepper, arugula, purslane, parsley, melon, and eggplant (TIKA, 2018). Now, this school is part of the Zamzam University of Science and Technology's diverse faculties in Mogadishu, which gets general subsidies from IHH for the university and this school particularly.

Likewise, Turkey through TIKA rehabilitated 23 kilometers road, which connects many of the districts of Mogadishu. Due to this project, many businesses opened alongside the rehabilitated roads, which became a new source of income for owners and staff and tax for the government. These roads also facilitated the movement of people and traffic (Wasuge, 2016). In the same vein, the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) with the cooperation of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM) rehabilitated and constructed roads linking between Jazeera-Afgoye (1km), Jazeera-Medina (1.5 km), and Makkah Al Mukarrama-Bulahuubey (1 km). Importantly, the Turkish Red Crescent has been involved in removing the debris and cleaning Mogadishu streets (Siradag, 2016).

Nevertheless, these projects are the result of the bilateral agreements the two countries struck since 2011 and positively contributed and continue to contribute to the peace-building efforts in diverting many young people from the lure of insurgent groups and creating conditions for business growth and investment. Both countries are reaping the fruits of so far so good relations, though some quarters allege Turkey of favoring Mogadishu against the other Federal Member States (FMSs). This paper investigates the role Turkey plays in the improvement of public services and infrastructure in Somalia particularly healthcare, education, and key infrastructure in Mogadishu.

3. Methodology

Somali Public Agenda conducted this study in Mogadishu for a period of three months (March to May 2021). The researchers used qualitative research methods and conducted key informant interviews with key stakeholders. In addition, desk research was conducted to complement primary sources.

A total of 20 Key Informant Interviews were conducted for this study. All respondents of the key informant interviews were asked to discuss their relevant expertise in Turkey's public service and infrastructure projects in Somalia. SPA interviewed both Turkey and Somali informants directly involved in Turkey's development projects in Mogadishu. The in-depth interview asked relevant questions to Turkish doctors, administrators, teachers, development agencies, and Somali beneficiaries of Turkey development projects such as universities, farmers, business owners, students, and patients among others.

The study team transcribed interviews and observation notes and ensured that they are appropriately referenced and coded. Upon analyzing the data, SPA produced this paper that presents findings and recommendations on Turkey's development assistance in Mogadishu.

4. Education Sector

4.1 Turkish Scholarships

Before Turkey opened its flagship scholarship to Somalia, Somali students used to look for higher education scholarships – before and after the collapse of the central government in January 1991– from Arab countries notably Sudan, Egypt, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia. Somalis also looked for scholarships from Asian countries like Pakistan and India both of which offered minimal positions to Somali students in contrast to the former countries.

But since 2011, after Turkey's engagement in Somalia has jumpstarted, the scholarship pendulum began swinging dramatically to Turkey, which became a favorable destination to Somali students eager for higher education. Following the then Turkey's prime minister and now president visit to Somalia in August 2011 at the peak of the famine that racked southern Somalia, the Turkish government and philanthropist organizations offered a generously large number of scholarship positions to Somali students ranging from secondary to Ph.Ds. for the first time in the history of the relationship between the two states.

The number of students who went to Turkey on Turkish scholarship pursuing different levels of education from the secondary to Ph.D. stands at 5,000 in 2015.¹ The scholarships offered and some that continue to be offered are from different sources. One source is an application by students online similar to other international students. The second source was offered by Fethullah Gülen affiliated organization before their operations were suspended in July 2016; they offered a great number of scholarship positions to Somalia. The third source is the Tubitak (also known as The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey) scholarship, which is an organization that supports research. The latter offers Masters and Ph.D. scholarships. Currently, all Turkish scholarships are managed under YTB. Besides these types of scholarships, there are two other types of secondary education scholarships to foreign students, but Somali students don't benefit from such kind of scholarship because they are not aware of its existence.²

Moreover, Diyanet, which began its field operations in Mogadishu in 2012, provides local scholarships to Somali students, particularly at Mogadishu

¹ Interview with Somali Association of Turkish Graduates, Director, 10 April 2021, Mogadishu

² Interview with Somali International Relations Ph.D. candidate in Turkey, 18 April 2021, Ankara

University.³ It sponsors about a hundred students who study five faculties at the University's Sharia and Law, Health Sciences, and Engineering faculties.⁴ The sponsorship is competitive where the university presents a list of eligible students to the Diyanet, and then it screens them through intensive interviews to pick up the right beneficiaries of the scholarship.⁵

The size of the scholarships to Somali students had experienced a downturn partially because the initial special consideration formerly Turkey afforded to Somalia in terms of scholarship has wavered and now Somali students apply for Turkish scholarship like international students and go through the selection process. Additionally, many students who were awarded scholarships have migrated to Europe, creating disappointment to the organizations that offered scholarships to them. For instance, in 2012, Diyanet sent 1,000 Somali students to Turkey for secondary and university education. Some returned after finishing their studies and others migrated to Europe. About 70%-80% of the 1,000 students migrated. Only 20%-30% continued their study and returned home.⁶ According to the Somali Association for Turkish Graduates, about three thousand students returned home while some resided in Turkey and others went to other countries on varying grounds.

Since then, Turkey switched scholarship opportunities to Master and Ph.D. degree prospects. This has produced a good result as the number of students migrating to Europe reduced markedly and even of those who overstay in Turkey after finishing their studies. Graduate students (Master's and Ph.Ds.) pack their bags right after they graduate and collect their credentials believing that they will get opportunities back in the country, whereas undergraduate students have fears that they will not get employment opportunities because there are master degree holders from universities in the country who have better chances of employment.⁷

The data we collected reveals that Turkish scholarship positions to Somali students are mostly social sciences programs, which attracted and continue to attract the attention of the education policymakers, academia, and those involved in state-building efforts. After looking into why the social science programs are predominant in the scholarship quota given to Somalia and if such programs can contribute to Somalia state-building, an array of answers were provided by the interviewees we approached. One interviewee encapsulates that this tilted balance and said: *"presumably this relates to the context of Somalia*

³ Interview with Diyanet run school principal, 2 April 2021, Mogadishu

⁴ Interview with Diyanet coordinator, 28 February 2019, Mogadishu

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Interview with Somali International Relations Ph.D. candidate in Turkey, 18 April 2021, Ankara

where the country is beset with political, social and economic problems. Turkey likely wants to influence Somali politics and the economy. And for this to be achieved, they are preparing those who will be part of the decision-making process. Another likely reason for giving more social science scholarship positions is that social sciences students can be influenced compared to engineering students.”⁸

A member of the Somali Association for Turkish Graduates in Mogadishu said that the FGS's Ministry of Education raised the issue with the Turkish embassy and demanded reducing and supplanting a large number of social sciences programs with applied sciences that helps better Somalia's reconstruction and recovery from the conflict. However, the embassy explained that Somali students choose to apply to social sciences programs.

That said, Turkish scholarship graduates contribute to Somalia in different capacities. Some assumed policy-level responsibilities such as the current minister of defense and the former minister of public works of the Federal Government of Somalia. Others work as advisors for the Turkish embassy and Turkish organizations doing business in Somalia.⁹ Although these can be seen as a quick impact of Turkey's scholarships to Somalia's policy-making, the Somalis who benefited from Turkey's scholarships in decision-making positions could be more evident in the future. That the scholarships are part of Turkey's foreign policy, scholarships are seen as indicative of Turkey's strategic and long-term interest in Somalia.

4.2 Turkish Elite Private Schools In Mogadishu

Turkey organizations currently manage two private schools operating in Mogadishu. Formerly, the Turkish fee-paying schools in Mogadishu were established in 2011 by Nile Academy affiliated with the Gülen Movement. However, its operations in Mogadishu were canceled after its alleged masterminding of the failed coup attempt in Turkey in July 2016. After its expulsion from Mogadishu, the management of the schools was taken over by Maarif Foundation, a public institution established by the Turkish government in June 2015 barely a year before the failed coup attempt.¹⁰

Maarif school at KM4 former polytechnic school is only for boys and admits students from grades 5-12. It has about five hundred (500) student population along with twenty-five (25) teachers. While the Maarif school at former Benadir secondary school takes in only female students from kindergarten to grade 12 with few exceptions of about five hundred student population.¹¹

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Interview with Somali Association of Turkish Graduates, Director, 10 April 2021, Mogadishu

¹⁰ Interview with the general director of Turkish Maarif Foundation in Somalia, 19 February 2019, Mogadishu

¹¹ Ibid

Both schools adopt a mixed curriculum. They teach the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) for students from grades 1-11 while grade 12 students are taught the Somali national curriculum. Grade 1-11 students take three subjects from the national curriculum: Islamic studies, Arabic, and Somali language besides IGCSE. Students of grade 12 take further subjects along with the national curriculums like YOS and a mathematics subject, which prepares students to qualify for undergraduate Turkish scholarships.¹² These schools charge tuition fees to the students that are high given the per capita of the country. The tuition fees are different from one level to another. For example, kindergarten pupils pay \$900 per year (\$75 per month), elementary level students from preparation class up to grade 4 pay \$1,500 per year (\$125 per month); intermediate level students (grade 5-8) pay \$1,700 per year (\$141.6 per month) while secondary students (grade 9-12) pay \$ 2,000 annually (\$166.6 per month).¹³

With these high fees, they embody a favorite choice for elite families. Students enrolled at both schools come from a business class, politicians, diaspora, and high-profile employees working with international organizations. These students also come from different regions of Somalia. For instance, 70% of Maarif schools' students are local while 30% are from the diaspora. Of the 70% that are local, 40% are the children of Mogadishu elites, while 30% are from Bosaso and Garowe.¹⁴ Even though they charge costly fees, they operate at public schools they revamped. Despite the higher tuition fees, these schools are different from the other schools in respect to the IGCSE curriculum taught; teaching environment; hygiene; labs; quality lunch for students; boarding (optional); students pay school tuition fee only 10 months; class capacity is limited to 30 students maximum with modern teaching aids.

4.3 Charitable School

The Sheikh Sufi intermediate and secondary school was opened by the Diyanet in January 2013 following an agreement it sealed with the Federal Ministry of Education that laid out, among others, that Diyanet repairs the school and runs it for ten years, has the autonomy for school management but that teachers and other staff will be Somalis unless necessary. The initial idea of establishing this school was based on the idea of helping the families who cannot afford to pay school fees such as orphanages and needy people. But later on, non-orphanage students from families who can pay school fees but are interested in the quality education of the school and free boarding facility were admitted. All students to be enrolled sit for a 5-subject placement test and interview.¹⁵

¹² Interview with a teacher at Maarif schools, 20 April 2021, Mogadishu

¹³ Interview with the general director of Turkish Maarif Foundation in Somalia, 19 February 2019, Mogadishu

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Interview with Sheikh Sufi school principal, 10 April 2021, Mogadishu

As of the 2020-2021 school year, the school has an all-male 300 student body of both intermediate and secondary levels. Previously, it enrolled both genders. However, after the school classes could not accommodate both genders due to its limited space, it stopped admitting new female students and transferred existing female students to Maarif school where they continue their study with the Diyanet sponsorship. Since its opening in January 2013, five batches (177 students) have graduated from the school, and 34 students sat for the national secondary exams in June 2021.¹⁶

The school has competitive advantages. It has a free boarding facility where all students spend five days of the week; a playground for which students play 50 minutes every afternoon except on Wednesdays and a coach who supervises students; caters free meals to the boarding schools at three times a day with a break time snack interspersed. If a student falls sick and seeks treatment from Erdogan Hospital, the school management writes a letter to the hospital to make a discount for the concerned student.¹⁷ Further, before the Coronavirus pandemic, the school used to provide school uniforms, textbooks, school notebooks to the students but this has ceased due to financial difficulties.

4.4 Turkish Technical And Financial Assistance To Higher Learning Institutions – The Case Of Zamzam University

In addition to their humanitarian assistance, formal and informal Turkish organizations provide both technical and financial assistance to some of the higher learning institutions in Somalia. TIKa and IHH with the coordination of the Zamzam Foundation conducted 22 pieces of training on good agricultural practices, extension works, and enhancing agricultural production in 2013. To fight the recurrent drought and famine in Somalia and maintain food security, IHH and TIKa cooperating with Zamzam Foundation opened Zamzam University in 2014 with the faculty of agriculture as the main faculty and the first-ever greenhouse in Somalia. Through this, a controlled farming environment was introduced. At the beginning of the Faculty of Agriculture, it admitted 60 students in 2014. Fortunately, all the 60 students studied through scholarships, and 45 out of the 60 enrolled students graduated from the faculty. In addition to this, IHH equipped the university with modern agricultural and medical labs to boost the quality of the university.¹⁸

¹⁶ ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Interview with Zamzam university deputy rector, 12 May 2021, Mogadishu

Before opening the university, the lecturers to be hired at the university were sent to Turkey and were trained on how to work at greenhouses. Likewise, IHH built the agriculture infrastructure at the university. On the front of the Faculty of Medicine at Zamzam university, there are about 10 medical doctors dispatched to Turkey to pursue graduate studies (6 Master's) and (4 Ph.Ds.) particularly medical education and other medical specializations.¹⁹

As the university administration asserts, the installation of the greenhouse helped the university a lot in the sense that most of the city's agriculture students attend the faculty and these students represent 40% of the total university students. The greenhouse also embodies a model for entrepreneurs to build on students' agricultural businesses. Further, it is helpful for the students and researchers to do agricultural experiments. As part of its continued efforts, TIKA plans to establish a poultry farm at Zamzam University to produce chicken needed in the local market to substitute the imported genetically modified one.²⁰ On the other hand, IHH provides financial assistance to Zamzam University besides its technical support.²¹

19 ibid

20 Ibid

21 Ibid

5. Access To Healthcare

Somalia's federal government signed with its Turkish counterpart agreements to improve the different sectors including the health sector in 2013, which was one of the most fragile sectors in terms of providing rudimentary health care to the public. The humanitarian and health sectors became a focus for the Turkish government and agencies in which they spent the most funds during their formative years in Somalia. In 2014, nearly 70 percent of TIKa's \$8.3 million budget in Somalia went to health sector-related projects while administrative and civil infrastructure was at 20.5 percent (TIKA, 2016). Through a bilateral agreement, Turkey has contributed to improving better health care systems in Mogadishu by implementing projects that include the construction of a hospital and training of medical students and doctors (Anadolu, 2020).

The reconstruction and equipment of Erdogan Hospital (former Digfer Hospital), is a prominent example of Turkey's visible contribution to Somalia's health sector. There are also a few other health services and the construction of small clinics,

MCHs, and laboratories by the Turkish government agencies especially TIKa outside Mogadishu, especially in Wajid, Bakool, Dhusamareb, and Hargeisa. According to interviews, TIKa carried out or supported the implementation of these health services following requests from local authorities in those areas.²²

TIKA financed the construction of Erdogan Hospital and also equipped Yardimeli Hospital, the second-largest hospital built by Turkey agencies after Erdogan hospital. Erdogan Hospital was built by the Turkish Housing Development Administration (TOKİ) and is featured as the most advanced hospital in East Africa by capacity and technology. Each month, an average of 25,000



²² Interview with the secretary of the representative of TIKa Office in Mogadishu on June 6, 2021

patients are treated and 550 surgeries are performed at the hospital. There are 241 beds in the hospital service. In addition, the hospital is accessible to approximately 2 million people residing in Mogadishu and its surroundings (TIKA, 2021).

The hospital has also clinics, inpatient service, emergency service, imagery and central laboratory units, intensive care units, delivery and surgery units, and other services. The hospital is not only for treating patients but also plays a crucial role in other health-related activities such as training physicians, nurses, and other health personnel, food donations to orphanages and vulnerable communities, and IDPs according to one of the Somali doctors at the hospital interviewed.²³ A member of the management of the TIKA office in Mogadishu interviewed also stated that they have started five consecutive training for the Somali doctors in the field of surgery at Erdogan Hospital in which the first training is currently (June 2021) underway and others will follow.

Yardimeli Hospital coordinator interviewed explained how they constructed the hospital: *"When we constructed this hospital, people in Turkey said to us this is amaana (trust fund) to you. We spent over \$3 million on the construction. 90% of that money was collected from the Turkish people. TIKA gave us \$150,000 for medical equipment. Some organizations contributed a small amount of money. We did not know that the hospital will be beneficial to Somalis. We may neglect some of our responsibilities, but we work hard. One of the promises of Erdogan included that he will establish hospitals in Somalia. since 2011, we were here"*.

The other health-related projects that Yardimeli Hospital carried out included eye-operations for more than 1,000 Somalis and medical device support such as equipment ultrasound device, echocardiogram device, autoclave, anesthetics device, ventilator, and oxygen concentration device to Hargeisa State Hospital (TIKA, 2019). More recently, when the Covid-19 pandemic broke out in the country, Turkey's support to the fragile health system of Somalia included donating 5,000 locally manufactured intensive care ventilators to Somalia on May 2 2020 to assist the country's frail and overburdened health infrastructure in tackling Covid-19 (Sabah, 2020).

Despite these commendable contributions to the fragile health system of Somalia, there are some challenges and limitations that the Turks face in the provision of healthcare services in Mogadishu. First, the quality of the services that the Turkish-run hospitals provide has been lowering due to receiving patients that are beyond the capacity of these hospitals. Although they charge a modest fee, the need for quality healthcare exceeds their capacity. Those seeking healthcare spend many hours in a queue before they meet the doctors. Second, since the hospitals especially the Erdogan Hospital is a training hospital, the number of junior Somali

²³ Ibid

doctors replacing the experienced Turkish doctors have been increasing, which may have contributed to the decrease in the quality of healthcare services offered by the hospital. Third, the Turkish-run hospitals face competition from other Somali-owned private hospitals, and there are occasions that baseless and discrediting rumors against these hospitals (such as that they remove the kidneys of patients) are spread. Finally, the language also remains a communication barrier as Turkish doctors rarely communicate in English (or Somali) and need Turkish translation. Although many students have studied the Turkish language and assist the Turkish doctors and the patients, there are still some challenges since the translators cannot sometimes properly translate the pains and complaints of the patients.

6. Roads, Construction, And Rehabilitation

Before the arrival of Turkey in Somalia in August 2011 and its multi-phased assistance model, most of Mogadishu streets were pot-holed and severely damaged. Mogadishu streets are now in much better shape and recovering from decades of conflicts, wars, and destruction. After a severe famine in the year 2011, Turkey's then Prime Minister now President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited Somalia. The construction of a 23-kilometer tarmac road in Mogadishu in around 2014 was among the salient and most influential projects Turkey has implemented in its honeymoon years in Mogadishu (Wasuge, 2016). Although this road construction has contributed to the beauty of Mogadishu, the opening of new businesses, and the introduction of auto-rickshaws or Bajaj in Mogadishu, the lack of a drainage system was and remains the main criticism of Turkey's tarmac road construction.

One of the unique features of Turkey's role in the construction of roads and other buildings in Mogadishu is that Turkish engineers are on the ground. Since when Turkey started the construction of tarmac roads in Mogadishu, its engineers were working with Somali workers. More recently, a Turkish company was awarded the construction to construct the Mogadishu-Afgoi and Mogadishu-Jowhar tarmac roads. Both roads are funded by Qatar Fund for Development. The Turkish engineers and companies contracting tarmac roads in Mogadishu have been the frequent target of al-Shabaab attacks, and this security threat has significantly delayed the completion time of the Mogadishu-Afgoi road construction.

Roads are not the only constructions that the Turks do in Mogadishu. Turkish engineers constructed Turkish-run hospitals, schools, the Turkish embassy, and other Turkish facilities. Turkish mid-sized companies obtained a business opportunity in Somalia's construction sector. Turkish companies started to construct private houses in Mogadishu. A translator of a Turkish construction company interviewed stated that the company he works with, which has been operating in Mogadishu since 2013, build villas, private homes, and four to five story-buildings.²⁴ These companies demand materials from Turkey. Not only do the Turkish companies require materials from Turkey, but they also offer construction services at higher prices compared to their local competitors. An interviewee illustrated that some Turkish companies charge \$400-450 for the construction of one-meter square while the local companies charge \$300-380 for the construction of one-meter square.²⁵

²⁴ Interview with a translator of a Turkish construction company, May 10, 2021, Mogadishu.

²⁵ Ibid.



These construction companies also create opportunities for furniture companies. As a result, furniture companies run by Turks started to operate in Mogadishu. Some of these furniture companies offer customized furniture to offices and houses in Mogadishu. Their materials are from Turkey, and their price is high compared to local companies. There are also furniture companies such as Enza Home, which opened a branch in Mogadishu and sells expensive furniture from Turkey to the elite in Mogadishu as its price is only affordable to an elite few.

The Turkish construction and furniture companies are independent of the Turkish government and their motivation is purely to generate profit. Some factors motivated the increasing mid-sized Turkish construction companies doing business in Mogadishu. First, these companies capitalize on the positive perception, acceptance, and welcoming of Turkish people in Somalia. Second, there are no effective regulations that protect local competitors in Somalia. Third, these companies pay less tax and are rarely asked what they do, so their profit is much higher compared to in other countries.²⁶ The confluence of these factors is believed to have encouraged more Turkish construction and furniture companies to come to Mogadishu.

However, there are risks and challenges that these companies are facing. First, since these companies cannot do all construction work, they teach skills to the Somalis, but some of the trained Somalis leave the work when they master the skills, which takes time to get the right replacement. Second, there are Somali-run construction and furniture companies that offer similar services at a lower price and compete with these Turkish companies in Mogadishu and beyond. Third, the mobility of the Turkish nationals in Mogadishu remains limited due to the fragile security situation.

²⁶ Interview with a graduate of Turkish university in Turkey, 02 March 2021, Mogadishu.

7. Conclusion And Policy Recommendations

Although Somalia has experienced interventions from multiple actors, Turkish involvement stands out and is evident in Mogadishu. After it helped reduce the severity of the humanitarian catastrophe, it turned to other means that can make the conflict and famine-prone country leapfrog the misery and transition to stability. It gave a large number of fully-funded scholarships to Somali students at all levels of education. Turkish organizations, formal and informal, were involved in cleaning the garbage and debris piled on Mogadishu streets and followed on by the reconstruction of a 23-kilometer road that brought back the cleanliness of the city and has made the traffic and business along these reconstructed roads possible.

Turkish organizations opened schools both for-profit and non-for-profit and hospitals such as Erdogan and Yardimili hospitals. Besides these, Turkish has enterprises in construction, furniture, and other sectors. However, the Turkish presence is limited to Mogadishu where its presence area is felt by Mogadishu residents who are the primary beneficiaries of the aid and services provided by the Turkish organizations.

Key policy considerations that came out of this study are:

1. To augment its continued efforts in supporting Somalia state-building and sustaining the achieved accomplishments, the Turkish government and organizations should not limit their support and services to Mogadishu but expand the scope beyond it to reach to other relatively peaceful Federal Member States where most facilities lay in ruins due to the civil war.
2. Though the costs of the medical services by hospitals built through Turkish funds are comparatively cheaper than the private hospitals, however, they are unaffordable for the disadvantaged people, especially the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the city. To give access to health to this segment, the costs of the service should be subsidized.
3. Along with the fee-paying schools by Turkish organization(s), Turkish charity organizations should open charitable schools to give schooling opportunities to the children at the age of school whose families cannot afford paying school fees instead of distributing food aid or monthly financial subsistence. This will contribute to the contraction of the violence cycle and subsequently state-building.
4. To consolidate the relative peace and reorient the education landscape in Somalia, which is recovering from the years of civil war, the Turkish government and organizations should establish vocational schools, be it for-profit or otherwise, to

produce qualified technicians who can fill the vacuum in technical jobs, which are abundant in Somalia but occupied by foreigners hired from Somalia's neighbors, to create employment opportunity to youth and alleviate the temptation of youth to the violent armed conflicts.

5. To ensure that the fruits of its scholarship generosity are reaped and felt in Somalia, Turkey should readjust the composition of the scholarship positions to Somali students and diversify to include both social science programs and applied sciences. That is said, it should strike a balance between the number of social sciences programs and applied sciences. A diversified human capital will surely contribute to the reconstruction of Somalia.

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