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From Failure to Flourish: Why Traditional Education Falls Short and How Conscious Discipline Can Transform It?

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Key Messages

- Children cannot learn effectively when they are hungry, unsafe, or emotionally disconnected. Somalia's high rates of food insecurity, exposure to violence, and displacement significantly hinder learning outcomes.
- Current classroom practices often rely on control and punishment. Corporal punishment remains widespread in Somali schools, despite its proven adverse effects on student behaviour and academic achievement.
- Conscious Discipline offers an alternative approach to enhancing achievement and improving behaviour. It emphasizes emotional regulation, connection before correction, and the creation of a "school family" where children feel valued and respected.
- Cultural adaptation is possible as the principles of Conscious Discipline align well with Somali communal values like unity, respect, and shared responsibility. With appropriate translation and contextualization, the Conscious Discipline model can gain acceptance and effectiveness among Somali educators and policymakers.
- Integrate social–emotional learning (SEL) into national curriculum standards and daily school routines, aligned with Somali culture and Islamic values.
- Train and support teachers and school leaders in Conscious Discipline — with ongoing coaching and a focus on adult self-regulation — to sustain practice change.
- Ban corporal punishment and replace it with restorative, connection-based discipline in school codes of conduct and inspection/quality assurance tools.
- Strengthen collaboration between government, educators, and communities to embed Conscious Discipline into Somalia's education policies, teacher training, and school improvement plans, ensuring sustainability and scalability.

Introduction

Education is universally recognized as a fundamental right for every child and a key driver of individual and national development—no child should be left behind. In Somalia, however, the learning environment remains challenged by deep-rooted structural, emotional, and psychological barriers.

The education system in Somalia stands at a critical crossroads in its effort to rebuild a sustainable and meaningful learning environment. With *ca.* 75% of the population under the age of *ca.* 30, the poor educational attainment not only jeopardises the future economic growth and national development but also puts youth at significant risk of missing their potential (World Bank, 2024). Despite gradual improvements in school enrolment and policy reform for the last *ca.* 20 years of state rebuilding efforts, access to education remains highly challenging and very limited. According to UNICEF (2024) and World Bank (2024) reports, more than 3 million Somali children are out of school, with especially low enrolment in rural areas, and among internally displaced populations (IDPs).

Sadly, school enrolment rates in Somalia are among the lowest in the world, with ca. 33% of primary school age having access to education; less than half of the unweighted average of low-income sub-Saharan countries (World Bank, 2024). Puntland's education policy review notes primary enrolment at ca. 33% and secondary at ca. 13.9%, with dropout rates increasing beyond age 10 (Puntland Facts & Figures, 2024). Although policy reforms have expanded school infrastructure in Somaliland, the net primary enrolment still hovers around ca. 25%, with significant disparities between urban and rural regions (Somaliland Ministry of Education & Science, 2022).

Access to education is NOT only the challenge in Somalia; the quality of education is equally worrying, if not worse. Many classrooms are overcrowded, poorly resourced, and staffed by underqualified teachers (World Bank, 2024). Nationally, expected years of schooling (EYS) remain extremely low at ca. 1.76 years for boys and ca. 1.48 years for girls, among the lowest in the world (IMF, 2024).

Children are frequently promoted in such environments without mastering foundational skills and competencies. In addition, over ca. 70% of Somali children live in poverty, where acute malnutrition affects over ca. 28% of children under five, directly impairing their learning abilities (UNDP, 2023; UNICEF, 2024).

Amid these challenges, the disciplinary culture in many Somali schools continues to rely on fear-based approaches, including corporal punishment, shame, and authoritarian control. It is reported that, in Somalia, *ca.* 75% of children aged between 2 and 14 years old are subjected to some form of "violent" disciplining (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment, 2020). While intended to maintain order, such practices are counterproductive, especially in fragile settings. Research shows harsh discipline undermines emotional security, lowers academic performance, and damages student–teacher relationships (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment, 2020). In the Somali context, where many children have experienced trauma, displacement, and insecurity, these practices may re-traumatize students and hinder classroom learning.

For decades, educational reforms in Somalia have emphasized curriculum design, teacher training, and school infrastructure. While these are essential and highly crucial to education, one dimension is often overlooked: children's emotional and psychological readiness to learn. For so long, children have been blamed for the failure of school systems, teachers' inaptitude, and flawed educational policies that resulted in disappointing outcomes. Indisputably, the current education system disregards both the basic psychological needs and the well-being of children. The behaviours shown by children and the poor academic performances, therefore, are merely an indication of unaddressed deeply-rooted problems and a reflection of unmet basic psychological/emotional needs of children.

The situation is further aggravated by the fact that teachers, in many Somali classrooms, confront students who are not just academically unprepared but also emotionally withdrawn, aggressive, or hyperactive. The traditional disciplinary approaches, which often rely on control and punishment, fail to address these issues and may further alienate and harm children (UNICEF: Why It Matters for Children Protection and Well-being, 2024). A fundamental change is urgently needed from managing behaviour through fear to cultivating self-regulation and responsibility through empathy and connection.

Under the grim reality of the country's harsh socio-political and VUCA economic context, we must debate the significant changes in direction dictated by the current situation and how we should instruct learning and/or educate future generations. It is high time for policymakers and education stakeholders to rethink and/or re-engineer how education is delivered and how children are educated, specifically addressing their deeply-seated basic psychological and social needs. We argue that effective learning cannot occur when children are hungry, unsafe, and emotionally disconnected. This reality demands a paradigm shift in how Somali educators approach discipline and student behaviour.

Conscious Discipline, developed by Dr. Becky Bailey (2015), offers a compelling framework and culturally adaptable model that aligns with Somali values of community, mutual care, and family aspects of culture and Islamic teachings. It is a trauma-informed, relationship-based model that emphasizes emotional safety, empathy, and self-regulation as essential conditions for learning.

Rather than reacting to misbehaviour with punishment, this approach promotes "connection before correction," helping students move from survival-based responses to executive thinking where authentic learning occurs. As a result, the Conscious Discipline approach holds potential to transform classrooms into emotionally safe environments where children can grow academically, socially, and psychologically. In post-conflict contexts such as Rwanda and South Sudan, social-emotional learning (SEL) – a basis for Conscious Discipline - has been linked to improved classroom behaviour, stronger peer relationships, and better academic outcomes (Heltne et al., 2020; Innocent & Andala, 2021).

The brief proceeds as follows: First, it presents a brief overview of the challenges facing education in Somalia regarding access, quality, and psychosocial factors affecting learners. Second, it outlines the principles of Conscious Discipline and its theoretical foundations. Third, it discusses how these principles can be localized and integrated into Somali learning environments. Finally, the brief proposes practical steps for policy adaptation, teacher training, and school-level implementation.

The State of Learning Conditions in Somalia

Somalia's education sector is emerging from decades of civil conflict, institutional breakdown, and limited public investment. Access to education remains low and uneven across the country. According to UNICEF (2024), over 3 million children are out of school, and among those who attend, many do so irregularly due to poverty, displacement, and insecurity. Girls, children with disabilities, and children in rural and conflict-prone regions face even greater barriers.

The key issue, which is often disregarded, is that the fragile infrastructure of education is not limited to buildings and materials but extends to the social and emotional environment in which learning is supposed to occur. Many classrooms are overcrowded, under-resourced, and led by undertrained teachers without systematic support.

Chronic hunger and malnutrition are widespread among school-age children in Somalia. The 2025 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report estimated that nearly 23% of the Somali population faced acute food insecurity (IPC, 2025). For school children, around 1.7 million suffer from acute malnutrition. This reality directly impairs their ability to focus, retain information, or remain awake in class. It has been scientifically confirmed that undernourished children demonstrate lower attention spans, weak memory recall, and poor problem-solving ability due to the measurable impact of hunger on cognitive functioning (Pollitt, 1994). Schools that lack feeding programs or partnerships with humanitarian organizations leave students at a disadvantage that cannot be resolved by teaching methods alone.

Children in Somalia grow up in environments shaped by the ongoing threat of violence, displacement, and trauma. Conflict, family instability, and exposure to violence, whether domestic or community-based, contribute to a lack of emotional safety. For many children, school is not a refuge but simply another location where their basic emotional needs are unmet. Maslow's hierarchy of needs places safety and belonging as foundational requirements for learning (Maslow, 1943). If a child does not feel safe physically or emotionally, their brain operates in survival mode. In this state, learning and memory are biologically suppressed (Van der Kolk, 2015). Teachers in schools often face students who seem unmotivated or disruptive, when in fact those students are functioning in a state of hypervigilance due to stress or trauma, not showing readiness to engage in learning.

In many Somali schools, discipline continues to be framed around obedience and fear rather than social-emotional development. For example, corporal punishment is still practiced in both public and private schools, often as a means of enforcing control. Consequently, this approach may produce short-term compliance and/or obedience but may most likely undermine long-term outcomes such as self-discipline, critical thinking, and cooperative behaviour. A study by the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment (2020) found that harsh discipline in schools correlates with higher dropout rates and lower academic achievement. In Somalia, where educational continuity is a huge concern, such effects can be devastating. Moreover, fear-based discipline erodes trust between teachers and students, replacing connection with anxiety.

No doubt that Somalia has recently made noticeable efforts to improve curriculum relevance, especially in religious, scientific, and vocational areas. However, there is still a lack of formal emotional or social learning components in the educational framework. For instance, emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, empathy, and self-regulation are rarely taught, let alone modelled. This gap seems a serious problem in post-conflict contexts and war-torn societies. Research from post-war regions in Rwanda and South Sudan indicates that social-emotional learning (SEL) interventions can significantly improve student engagement, peer relationships, and academic success (Heltne et al., 2020).

There is no reason that Somalia should not benefit from similar programs, adjusted to local culture, Islamic teachings, and realities on the ground.

Understanding Conscious Discipline: A Framework for Emotional Safety and Learning

Overview of Conscious Discipline

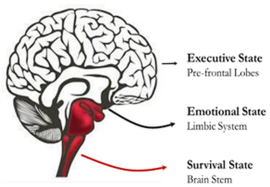
Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive, trauma-informed approach to classroom management and social-emotional learning developed by Dr. Becky Bailey (Bailey, 2015). It is designed to transform adult and child behaviour through internal self-regulation, empathy, and connection. Unlike traditional discipline models that rely on external control and punishment, Conscious Discipline builds a culture of safety and mutual respect.

The core premise is simple but powerful: children learn best when they feel safe, connected, and valued. Learning is not merely cognitive but also deeply emotional. Therefore, Conscious Discipline begins by helping adults (teachers, parents, and school heads) regulate their emotions so they can model the behaviours they want to see in children.

The Brain State Model

At the heart of Conscious Discipline is the Brain State Model, which draws from neuroscience to explain how different emotional states affect behaviour and learning (Bailey, 2015). According to this model, the brain operates in three basic states (see the figure on the right):

- Survival State (Brainstem): The fight, flight, or freeze state. When children feel unsafe or threatened, they cannot access rational thought. Their behaviour is reactive: hitting, running, and hiding.



Brain State Model

- Emotional State (Limbic System): Children operate based on feelings. They may become angry, jealous, or defensive. Logic and rules are not compelling until emotional needs are acknowledged and met.

- Executive State (Prefrontal Cortex): This is the optimal state for learning. Children can think, problem-solve, empathize, and reflect.

In this work, we encourage this model to be adapted and integrated into the Somali educational system, as many children, if not all, may be functioning in the survival or emotional state modes. This is due to the hunger, trauma, and social instability seriously affecting their lives. If educators and parents attempt to teach or discipline children who are emotionally overwhelmed, the result will likely be frustration and failure on both sides. On the other hand, Adapting Conscious Discipline may offer tools to help shift children into the executive state mode where real learning and behaviour change can occur.

Connection Before Correction

One of the key principles of Conscious Discipline is "Connection before Correction". This principle encourages educators to establish an emotional connection, and then teach appropriate behaviour rather than reacting to misbehaviour with punishment. This does not mean tolerating harmful actions, but recognizing that behaviour is communication and a signal or a cry for help. For example, a child who throws a book in class may not simply be "disobedient" but overwhelmed by stress or fear. The appropriate response should not be to shout or punish, but to first calm the child and connect emotionally ("You seem upset, I'm here to help"), and only then guide them toward better choices or behaviour.

Quite obviously, this principle resonates deeply in the Somali context, where many children have, most likely, experienced loss, displacement, or domestic instability. These children may act out not from wilful defiance, but as a cry for help – Hanlon's Razor may apply here. The principle "Connection before Correction" of Conscious Discipline is best suited to provide a framework for recognizing these signals and responding constructively to children's needs.

The School Family Model

Another key principle that Conscious Discipline promotes is the creation of a "School Family". This principle offers a safe and nurturing classroom environment that mimics the structure and support of a healthy family.

In this model, students feel seen, valued, and responsible for others. The key components of the model include practices such as:

- Morning greetings and rituals to build belonging.
- Classroom jobs that foster contribution and responsibility.
- Celebrating helpful behaviours rather than only correcting mistakes.

This model aligns well with the traditional social structures in Somalia, where extended family and community values are culturally significant. The notion of the school family approach is prone to restore a sense of belonging and purpose, especially for children who have lost family members or live in unstable households.

Adult Self-Regulation: The Foundation

The strength of Conscious Discipline is that it begins with adults, not children. In the "adult self-regulation" concept, teachers and parents are taught to develop emotional awareness and self-control to respond better to children with calmness and clarity. This is a critical departure from reactive, punishment-based methods of disciplining that are more common in Somali culture and school settings.

Deep breathing, internal reflection, and positive self-talk help adults self-regulate, manage their stress effectively, and model healthy behaviour. The idea is that "we cannot teach children to do something we do not practice ourselves," opposed to the mantra "do as I say, not as I do". In Somalia, where teachers are often overworked, underpaid, and unsupported, emotional exhaustion is understandably pervasive. The solution again is adapting Conscious Discipline as it offers practical tools to prevent burnout and restore emotional resilience among teachers and school managers.

Teaching Emotional and Social Skills

Rather than simply telling children what not to do as in the traditional way, Conscious Discipline – in contrast-explicitly teaches how to name and manage emotions; how to solve problems peacefully; and how to show empathy and care for others. These skills must be embedded into daily routines, classroom language, and modelled behaviours.

For example, A teacher might say: "You seem angry. Let's breathe together," or during conflict, students may be guided to say: "I don't like it when you take my pencil. Please ask next time." This approach encourages children to use their executive brain rather than emotional or survival states. In addition, these practices are handy and provide lifelong tools for emotional health and social cooperation, where many children grow up in high-stress environments with limited emotional vocabulary and coping mechanisms, as is the case in Somalia due to the prolonged socio-political conflicts.

Adapting Conscious Discipline to the Somali Context

Cultural Foundations and Compatibility

The principles of Conscious Discipline align closely with Somali cultural values, particularly those rooted in community, respect, and shared responsibility. Somali society strongly emphasizes kinship ties, collective identity, and mutual care. These values are evident in traditional forms of conflict resolution (xeer), the role of elders, and communal parenting practices.

While the Somali education system has gradually adopted formal schooling structures influenced by external models, Somali educators and parents continue to value discipline, character development, and moral responsibility. Conscious Discipline offers a framework that respects these goals but replaces fear-based methods with empathy, connection, and modelling of appropriate behaviour.

By reframing the approach in familiar cultural concepts such as "wadajir" (unity) and "isu-dhibrin" (compassion), the ideas of Conscious Discipline can easily gain local legitimacy and reduce resistance from educators/teachers and parents who may be sceptical of foreign educational models.

Shifting Attitudes Towards Discipline

One of the most significant challenges in introducing Conscious Discipline in Somalia may be the deeply embedded belief in corporal punishment and authoritarian discipline. Many teachers and parents believe that strict punishment is necessary to maintain order and ensure learning in Quranic madrasas and schools.

To address this, it is essential to emphasize that Conscious Discipline is not about letting children go out of control and/or doing whatever they please. Conversely, it teaches structure, boundaries, and accountability through respectful and constructive methods. Emphasizing the long-term benefits of this approach, such as improved behaviour, increased student engagement, and reduced teacher stress, can help build buy-in among stakeholders and teachers in particular.

Pilot programs can also play a key role. By implementing Conscious Discipline in a few model schools and showcasing improved student behaviour and teacher satisfaction, policymakers can see the effectiveness of the approach in action.

Teacher Training and Capacity Building

For Conscious Discipline to be successful and practically adapted, teachers must be trained in techniques and the mindset shift it requires. Many Somali teachers have not received formal training in psychology, child development, or classroom management beyond content delivery, if any. Others may be dealing with their own unaddressed trauma or stress affected by the social and political unrest that has persisted for the last three decades.

A practical solution to handle this problem is to develop a national teacher training initiative in collaboration with education ministries at various levels (Federal & State levels), NGOs, and teacher training colleges, focusing on:

- Emotional regulation strategies for teachers.
- Recognizing signs of trauma in students.
- Positive classroom management practices.
- Building safe and caring learning environments.

For the solution to be more effective, the training offered to teachers and other educators should be practical (hands-on), interactive, and continuous, not one-time workshops. Teacher support groups or peer mentoring programs can also be established to encourage reflection and reinforcement of the new approach.

Role of School Leadership and Policy

Due to their prominent authority positions, school principals and education officers are critical in shaping school culture and learning environments. Teachers may hesitate to adopt new practices such as "Conscious Discipline" without their support. School leaders should therefore be oriented to support a safe, relational school climate. At the policy level, ministries of education can support this approach by:

- Including social-emotional learning and classroom management in teacher certification requirements.
- Embedding Conscious Discipline principles in curriculum frameworks.
- Replacing corporal punishment with restorative discipline approaches in school codes of conduct.

We acknowledge that implementing such changes requires high-level coordination among all stakeholders (schools, parents, educators, and education authorities) and can set the foundation for system-wide change.

Involving Parents and Communities

There is no question that parents and community elders are essential partners in building emotionally supportive learning environments. Specifically, the extended family plays a significant role in a child's upbringing and behaviour guidance in Somali communities. Engaging parents and other family members reinforces the school's efforts, and children receive consistent messages across environments. Therefore, Conscious Discipline cannot be confined to classrooms and must extend into homes and communities.

Moreover, parent awareness programs can be delivered through local mosques, women's associations, community centers, school meetings and parent days. These sessions should focus on how parents can:

- Model calm behaviour during conflict.
- Use language that validates children's feelings.
- Set limits without fear or shame.
- Build daily rituals that promote connection, such as shared meals, greetings, and storytelling.

Strategies for Implementing Conscious Discipline in Somali Schools

Creating Safe and Predictable Learning Environments

The first step in implementing Conscious Discipline is establishing safe and predictable classrooms. Children learn best in environments where they know what to expect and feel emotionally secure.

We propose practical steps and changes that are low-cost and highly effective. For instance, the following three steps, if adapted, will help provide children with a sense of safety and autonomy, both of which are crucial for learning and behaviour regulation:

- Consistent routines: Establish a regular schedule that includes arrival activities, learning periods, meals, and closing routines. The key idea is that predictability reduces anxiety, especially for children affected by trauma.
- Welcoming rituals: Teachers can greet each child by name each morning, using eye contact and a warm tone. This simple gesture builds connection and belonging.
- Safe spaces: Designate a small area in the classroom as a "calming corner" or "peace place" where students can go to regulate their emotions. This space can include cushions, emotion cards, or breathing prompts. However, this may be restricted by the availability of school budgets and a shortage of premises.

Embedding Emotional Literacy in the Curriculum

Emotional literacy, the ability to recognize, understand, and express emotions, is central to Conscious Discipline. Many Somali children have limited emotional vocabulary due to cultural and environmental factors, making it harder for them to manage frustration, anger, or sadness.

Integrating the following practices into existing language and life skills lessons allows schools to promote emotional development without overhauling the curriculum.

- Daily feelings check-ins: Teachers can begin the day by asking students to identify their feelings using simple phrases or visual aids (e.g., happy, tired, angry, scared).
- Storytelling: Traditional Somali storytelling (sheeko) can explore emotions, moral lessons, and conflict resolution. Teachers can ask, "How do you think the character felt?" or "What could they have done differently?"
- Emotion word walls: Posting common feeling words in Somali and English helps children expand their vocabulary and recognize emotions in themselves and others.

Teaching Self-Regulation and Problem Solving

Self-regulation is not a natural skill but must be taught and practiced. In Conscious Discipline, children are encouraged to learn how to calm themselves, reflect on their behaviour, and make better choices. Classroom techniques for learning self-regulation may include:

- Breathing exercises: Regular deep breathing practice helps students calm down. Teachers can guide children to "hold clean air and release it slowly" as a visual aid to understanding deep breathing.
- Conflict resolution prompts: Encourage students to use simple scripts during conflicts, such as:
  - "I don't like it when you ..."
  - "Next time, please ..."
- Teach "Time-In" not "Time-Out": Instead of isolating students for misbehavior, invite them to the calming area (if such an area exists) to reflect and re-join when they feel ready. Exclusion does not solve the problem but rather exacerbates it.

Equipping children with such tools empowers them to handle challenges peacefully and strengthens their ability to participate meaningfully in learning.

Supporting Teachers Through Professional Development

Teachers need ongoing training and emotional support to effectively apply conscious discipline. Teaching in Somalia is already demanding due to weak educational policies, overcrowded classrooms, a lack of resources, and low pay.

The following professional training suggestions for teachers should be supported by international NGOs or national teacher training institutions, especially in pilot regions:

- Modular training programs: Teacher training should be delivered in stages, focusing on one skill or principle at a time. For example, start with "creating safe classroom spaces," then introduce "teaching calming techniques."
- Coaching and mentoring: Pairing experienced teachers with new trainees can create a peer support system and model good practices.
- Emotional care for teachers: Workshops should include time for teachers to reflect on their stress and learn self-care strategies. Emotionally regulated teachers are more effective at modelling calm and connection.

Monitoring and Feedback Systems

To measure progress and refine the approach, schools should collect basic data on the impact of Conscious Discipline practices. Such data can guide improvements and support future scaling. Simple monitoring tools might include:

- Student behaviour logs (tracking frequency of conflicts or emotional outbursts).
- Teacher reflections (weekly journals on what worked and what did not).
- Parent feedback (surveys on changes in children's behaviour at home).
- Student voices (older students can provide feedback on what helps them feel safe and supported).

Adapting to Resource Constraints

Many Somali schools operate with minimal resources, especially in rural or internally displaced persons (IDP) areas. Fortunately, Conscious Discipline does not require expensive materials. Local solutions, designed with community input, can make the approach sustainable and context-appropriate. Low-cost adaptations may include:

- Using drawings or handmade materials instead of printed posters.
- Integrating rituals into daily prayers or religious studies.
- Replacing physical calming tools with body-based techniques like stretching, posture changes, or storytelling.
- Training parent volunteers to support classroom management and emotional development.

Conclusions & Final Remarks

In a context as complex as Somalia's, where children face daily challenges from poverty, displacement, and insecurity, education cannot succeed without addressing emotional and psychological needs. A hungry, scared, or unseen child cannot learn effectively. Conscious Discipline offers a powerful model to humanize classrooms, heal trauma, and cultivate the inner capacity for lifelong learning and citizenship.

Introducing Conscious Discipline is not about importing foreign models unthinkingly. It is about recognizing that learning is cognitive, emotional, relational, and deeply human. By adapting these principles to Somali culture and realities, the country can take a significant step toward building schools where every child is truly seen, heard, and valued. If adapted and implemented, this approach can dramatically transform the education system's current unfulfilling situation to a flourishing and more productive state.

If introduced and sustained properly, Conscious Discipline can transform Somali schools and learning environments in several impactful ways:

- Improved student behaviour and engagement: Children who feel safe and connected are likelier to participate, focus, and cooperate.
- Reduced teacher burnout: Teachers equipped with emotional regulation strategies experience fewer conflicts and greater job satisfaction.
- Strengthened family-school partnerships: Learning becomes more consistent and effective when parents and schools share a common language of empathy and discipline.
- Enhanced resilience in post-conflict communities: Social-emotional learning helps children and adults heal from trauma and build constructive relationships, contributing to social cohesion and peacebuilding.

Policy Recommendations

For policymakers:

Somalia's education policymakers must integrate emotional and behavioural development into the national education strategy to scale Conscious Discipline beyond pilot projects and individual classrooms. This involves recognizing emotional safety not as an optional add-on but as a core component of learning quality and student well-being. In light of this, we recommend the following policies:

1. Develop a National Framework for Emotional Safety in Schools.
2. Incorporate social-emotional learning (SEL) into national curriculum standards.
    a. Embed emotional literacy, self-regulation, and conflict resolution in life skills and religious/moral education subjects.
    b. Develop lesson guides that align with Somali cultural and religious values.
3. Revise the national code of conduct for schools.
    a. Prohibit corporal punishment and introduce restorative discipline practices.
    b. Promote "connection-based discipline" that encourages empathy, accountability, and peer mediation.
4. Standardize teacher training in Conscious Discipline principles
    a. Include social-emotional training and certification programs in all teacher colleges.
    b. Develop professional development modules in partnership with NGOs and education institutions.

For Education Authorities and School Inspectors:

Education authorities and inspectors play a vital role in translating national policy into measurable outcomes at the school level. By embedding emotional safety and SEL into school evaluation frameworks, they can encourage relational practices, systematically monitor, and support them. Following are the key recommendations for education authorities to fully adapt Conscious Discipline in schools:

1. Support school leadership in creating relational learning environments
2. Train principals and education supervisors to model and support emotional safety.
3. Include SEL practices as indicators in school inspection and quality assurance tools.

For Head Teachers:

As the bridge between policy and classroom practice, school leaders are essential in creating emotionally safe environments where students and staff feel valued and connected. Empowering head teachers to lead with empathy and relational awareness sets the tone for school-wide transformation. Key recommendations for them are as follows:

1. Lead implementation of relational and emotionally safe school environments.
2. Support teachers in integrating SEL and Conscious Discipline practices.
3. Facilitate staff training and ongoing reflection on discipline approaches.

For Teachers:

Teachers are the primary agents of change in shaping daily student experiences. Equipping them with social-emotional skills and Conscious Discipline strategies allows them to build stronger connections, manage classroom challenges constructively, and model emotional regulation for their students. We recommend that they:

1. Participate in SEL-focused professional development and training.
2. Practice emotional regulation and connection-based discipline in classrooms.
3. Encourage empathy, safety, and cooperation among students.

For Parents and Communities:

Families and communities are children's first learning environments. Strengthening the partnership between schools and homes through awareness, collaboration, and shared language around discipline and emotional development extends the impact of SEL far beyond the classroom. Therefore, the following recommendations should be considered by education authorities, heads of schools, and all interested stakeholders:

1. Invest in community and parental engagement.
2. Launch public awareness campaigns on positive discipline and child development.
3. Build partnerships with mosques, youth organizations, and women's groups to extend emotional learning into homes and communities.

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