

A Bio of Dr Aweys Omar Mohamoud

By

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1. Aweys Omar Mohamoud was born and bred in Aden Yabal, a district of Middle Shabelle region (*ex regione di Benaadir*) in 1960. He has completed his primary education there and, as things used to be in those days, moved to Mogadishu to undertake his post-primary education. After school, he trained as a health worker in one of the finest institutions of health-care training in Mogadishu at the time - The Health Personnel Training Institute (HPTI) near *Ospedale Martini*, and opposite the then British Embassy. The school had also another name, UNICEF, which perhaps indicates the popularity of UNICEF in those days, at least in the minds of the people. Aweys excelled in his course and was recruited as a Tutor, following his completion of the course. A few years later, he was recruited to work at the Health Education Unit in the Ministry where he again performed well and successfully won a WHO fellowship studies programme to undertake a Diploma Course in Health Education at Leeds Polytechnic (now called Leeds Beckett University (LBU) in West Yorkshire, England) in 1985/86.

2. When he completed the course in Leeds, he returned to Somalia to continue with his job but was forced by the deteriorating economic, social and political conditions of the time to leave Somalia and seek opportunity elsewhere. He then took up a job as a project officer for a rural primary healthcare programme in north Yemen run by a British development organization where he worked as a trainer/supervisor for several years with local community health workers, in the process learning much-needed Arabic.

3. Upon the outbreak of the civil war in Somalia in 1990, Aweys sought refuge in the UK with his family. As we know, there were unprecedented refugee movements fleeing mass violence from Somalia and seeking safety abroad at this point. The UK

received tens of thousands of these refugees and provided them with autonomy and dignity. Aweys and his family were among the first wave of Somali refugees who arrived in the UK.

4. With the experience of having already studied in England some years before, Aweys and his family's adaptation to life and work in the UK was less problematic. He started work as an interpreter/translator with various public authorities to earn a living, and also began a course at the Institute of Linguists in London to formally qualify for the role of Registered Public Service Interpreter/Translator. He has also taken a legal studies course at the Open University and, in the years following, has worked with criminal justice institutions (the police, the courts and the probation services) across the UK.

5. As someone who was always keen to study further, Aweys started higher degree courses at the Institute of Education, University of London (IoE is now part of the University College London, aka UCL), completing a masters' degree in education and international development, and then a PhD in the sociology of education. His doctoral research was about the children of Somali refugees as they have experienced growing up amidst marginal working-class communities and inner-city neighbourhoods in London. It focused on the major themes in the lives of these children and their families and the challenges confronting them in terms of adjustment to a new society, family and school life, education, employment, identity, goals, and aspirations.

6. I briefly quote from the acknowledgement section of his thesis which has been read by very many people online at the UCL's e-print site here, "I must mention here that my own interest in the experience of refugees from Somalia stems from very personal issues. I am a refugee from Somalia myself, and brought up my own children in the UK. The topic for this research, therefore, meshes intimately with my deepest professional, personal and social commitments. And it is this story that largely determines the theoretical and philosophical approach I adopt in this study. The moving stories my participants share with us resonate deeply with me as a fellow

refugee. I trust and hope that I have done justice to the lessons they have taught me in this research.” Aweys and his beautiful wife H. H. Elmi have raised six children, five of whom have grown up and have managed to successfully go through the education system, hold down jobs and live as productive members of society here in the UK and the EU.

7. The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) has granted full scholarship to Aweys through the Africa Educational Trust (AET) for his doctoral study at the IOE, University of London. Other scholarships he won also include an International Summer School Course at the University of Oslo in Norway, an education and international development related study tours to the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) in Paris, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), also in Paris. Aweys has also attended seminars and academic conferences in other parts of Europe and the UK including the Netherlands, and Scotland.

8. Dr. Aweys O. Mohamoud has taught Somali language and culture courses at various universities in the UK, including De Montford University, City University in London and most recently at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom in Shrivenham. He trained Ministry of Defence Personnel and diplomats, including Ambassadors, in various locations throughout the UK. In the past three years, Aweys has worked, on and off, in Somalia with various ministries and international NGOs as a technical expert, adviser and consultant. In both 2018 and 2019, he was mainly posted as an adviser at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education, a position supported by the UN’s International Organization for Migration (IoM).