

Winter 2002-2003

Himilo Newsletter

Somali Family
Care Network
(SFCN)

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Somali Family Care Network

From the SFCN President

Leadership Capacity in Local Communities

VOLUNTEERISM

The concept of volunteerism is rooted in every society's traditions. It is essentially community based and characteristically a people for people effort. It is an expression of support, solidarity and good will to give service to those in need.

The Somali physical environment is a hard one, and cooperation among communities or family units is often crucial to survival. The hardships of the Somali environment require group labor contribution and a spirit of volunteerism. This has helped to ease individual burdens and assist the individual and community in coping with some of the difficulties related to seasonal weather patterns and/or movement from place to place.

From early times, Somalis used volunteering to

assist each other as individuals and as groups, according to their recurring needs, and, on an ad-hoc basis. For example, women in the pastoral communities

assist one another in such domestic works as the fabrication of household articles like the 'kebad'. The

'kebad' is the most highly prized item in the nomadic mobile

hut (aqal). It is a mat woven with colored fiber thread and is used as a curtain and at the same time a decoration of the hut and shows the artistic capacity of women. Usually around six or seven women at a time volunteer to take part in the weaving of the 'kebad' and the whole process takes about a month to be completed.

Another example from the rural area is the practice of helping one



Raqiya D. Abdalla
SFCN President

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Volunteer Management

Recognizing Your Role

Katherine Noyes Campbell and Susan J. Ellis from [The \(Help!\) I-Don't-Have-Enough-Time Guide to Volunteer Management](#)
www.energizeinc.com

This article is designed to help you step back and examine the responsibility you have been given to lead volunteers. This process begins with understanding the basic elements of effective volunteer management. We will not discuss how to do recruitment, screening, training or record-keeping; rather, you will explore a practical strat-

egy for adapting your role so that all these tasks can get done within the constraints of your available time. If you do need to build your basic skills in volunteer program development, we can direct you to helpful resources--both books, websites, and organizations.

The basic task elements of effective volunteer

See *Volunteer* on page 2

Key SFCN Objectives

- National Resource Center
- Advocacy, Referral and Networking for SCBOs, Refugees, and Immigrants
- Technical Assistance and Capacity Building
- Training (leadership, organizational management, coalition building, conflict resolution)
- Programs for Health, Education, Youth, Crime Prevention, Parenting, and Job Skills

President (Continued from page 1)

family at a time in watering their livestock or helping one farmer to plough and seed his farm, where all the neighbors volunteer to participate in these processes.

In urban sectors of Somalia the popular system of 'iskaa wax u qabso' or self help schemes, were promoted by the government and became very important in contributing to building the country. Through this system many community members volunteered to build schools, health centers, veterinary clinics, water wells and roads according to the needs of the various regions of the country.

In our modern world, there is frequently not enough money to cover paid staff to carry out the work and mission of non profit organizations. In many cases organizations rely heavily on volunteers and community resources. Volunteers can be helpful in various capacities, from board members to ESL teachers to community outreach and as donation coordinators.

It is necessary for every organization to use volunteers as an integral part of their work and activities. Volunteers open tremendous possibilities for service enhancement and the ways in which volunteer resources can be utilized depends on the make up of the community and the focus and direction of nonprofit leadership.

Somali community organizations should develop volunteer programs in order to enable them to enhance services for their community members and should also offer opportunities for both individual and group volunteers. If they are provided the right environment, recognition and proper management, volunteer efforts will contribute to the organization's mission and tangibly improve the lives of those you help. ●

Somali Deportation Update

On January 14, 2003 Judge Marsha Pechman issued a ruling on the issue of Somali deportation. Judge Pechman ruled to 1) Continue the preliminary injunction that prevents the government from deporting people to Somalia 2) Certify a nationwide class of Somali petitioners. This ruling bars, for now, the INS from deporting approximately 2700 people across the country, in addition to the 41 Somalis in INS detention at the time of the ruling. Judge Pechman's ruling to continue the preliminary injunction was based on, in part, evidence presented that the risk of harm and irreparable injury to the Somali deportees was high, particularly due to the argument which stressed that the absence of a functioning government cannot be construed as 'acceptance' of the deportees. She commented that "the INS' interpretation of 'acceptance' is ... incredible." She was also very concerned that the INS could provide no record that previous Somali deportees had even reached their destination.

Volunteer (continued from page 1)

administration remain constant and must be accomplished regardless of the time available to do them. Unfortunately, too any people are given (and accept) the responsibility for directing volunteers without an understanding of what the job entails. Even with a written job description, major functions are all too often reduced to single words such as "recruit," "interview," "train," "recognize." This is based on two assumptions: 1) each function is relatively simple, and 2) everyone knows the work that each implies. Both assumptions are false.

It is often the case that after you decide to take on and manage volunteers you realize that you have grossly underestimated the tasks and responsibilities involved. Then you find yourself looking for shortcuts, especially if you are directing volunteers as only one task among many other tasks in your daily work.

Perhaps the most effective way to balance the demands of managing volunteers with the time available is to share the tasks with others. This "team approach" may seem simple but can be quite challenging to actually do.

Your potential for success will depend on several points:

Have you planned for your role of managing volunteers?

Make a list of volunteer duties and of your management tasks. Ask someone else to look at your list to see if you have covered the tasks for the volunteers and the tasks required to keep records of their activities, follow up on their work, and evaluate their work. The goal is to identify not only the activities but also the stages: what happens next when a particular project is finished? Do you have more duties ready, waiting and fully planned? It may seem like a lot of work but it is better to approach volunteer management this way than to be surprised by issues that are easily managed if you plan ahead.

Do you believe in the value of volunteer involvement?

In addition to specific tasks, there is another major factor in assuring successful volunteer management: attitude. This is a person-to-person job directly influenced by the amount of honest commitment you feel to volunteerism. Such commitment, in turn, may be influenced by how you came to be in the role or position of volunteer manager. Did you actively seek the role? Did you "fall into it" by accident? Were you assigned to it ("anointed")? The "anointed" often recognize that they may have been designated rather arbitrarily, and see the assignment as secondary to (and of lower priority than) their "real" tasks or jobs.

Regardless of how you came to be in charge of volunteers, the challenge is to cultivate the attitudes necessary for success:

Belief in the value and power of volunteerism.

Recognition of people's potential capabilities, rather than their formal credentials.

Desire to make the program work to its fullest potential.

Openness to tapping a variety of volunteers (different ages, backgrounds, ideas, etc.).

Willingness to stand up for the rights of volunteers.

see *Volunteer* on page 3

Volunteer (cont. from page 2)

Enjoyment of working with volunteers.

Remember the team approach to coordinating volunteers benefits the organization as much as it benefits you. You will still be in charge, but with the benefit of shared responsibility as specific tasks are delegated to others. Perhaps your co-workers can have oversight on a portion of the tasks assigned to a volunteer.

The program will be stronger because it will have gained the input of ideas and perspectives in addition to your own. You and your co-workers will share both problems and successes, resulting in real joint ownership of the results. You will avoid the trap of isolation which often comes when you are the only one who understands the job. And neither you nor the organization will fall prey to the "solo syndrome"-the perception that the success or failure of volunteer involvement rests on only one person's shoulders. Thus, from the double perspective of both time management and program development, recruiting a team to share your leadership role makes a lot of sense.

Managing volunteers may not be as easy as it sounds, but it can certainly be very rewarding. Good Luck! •

VOLUNTEERING IN THE UNITED STATES

December News Release from the Department of Labor--Bureau of Labor Statistics

Note: Data on volunteers relate to persons who performed unpaid volunteer activities for an organization at any point from September 1, 2001, through the survey period in September 2002.

About 59 million people did volunteer work at some point from September 2001 to September 2002, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported recently. These new data on volunteer service were collected through a supplement to the September 2002 Current Population Survey (CPS). That supplement has generated information from households across the country regarding the extent and type of volunteer service done through or for organizations. The survey found that slightly more than 1 in 4 persons age 16 and over volunteered.

The CPS is a monthly survey of about 60,000 households that obtains information on employment and unemployment among the nation's civilian non-institutional population age 16 and over. Some of the highlights from the 2002 data include:

- The volunteer rate was higher among women than men.
- Employed persons were more likely to volunteer than persons who were unemployed or not in the labor force.
- Among persons 25 years of age and over, the volunteer rate of college graduates was four times that of high school dropouts.
- The main organization for which the majority of volunteers worked was either religious or educational/youth-service related.
- Volunteers spent a median of 52 hours volunteering during the year.

Characteristics of Volunteers

Fifty-nine million persons, or 27.6 percent of the civilian non-institutional population age 16 and over, volunteered through or for organizations at some point during the period from September 2001 to September 2002. The incidence of volunteering was higher among women (31.1 percent) than among men (23.8 percent), a relationship that held across age groups, education levels, and other major characteristics. Among the age groups, 35- to 54-year olds were the most likely to volunteer, with 1 in 3 having donated their time. Volunteer rates were lowest among persons age 65 years and over (22.7 percent) and among those in their early twenties (18.2 percent).

Teenagers had a relatively high volunteer rate, 26.9 percent, maybe reflecting an emphasis on volunteer activities in schools. Among persons 25 years of age and over, 43.6 percent of college graduates volunteered during the year, double the volunteer rate of high school graduates with no college experience and more than four times the rate of high school dropouts.

Parents with children under age 18 were more likely to volunteer than persons with no children of that age, with volunteer rates of 36.5 percent and 23.7 percent, respectively. Volunteer rates were higher among married persons (32.7 percent) than among singles (21.2 percent) and persons of other marital status (22.1 percent).

Overall, nearly 30 percent of all employed persons had volunteered during the year. By comparison, the volunteer rates of persons who were unemployed (25.3 percent) or not in the labor force (23.7 percent) were lower. Among the employed, part-time workers were more likely than full-time workers to have participated in volunteer activities--35.5 percent and 28.5 percent, respectively.

Total Annual Hours Spent Volunteering

Volunteers spent a median of 52 hours doing volunteer activities during the period from September 2001 to September 2002. While 28.2 percent of volunteers reported spending 100 to 499 hours doing volunteer work, 21.5 percent spent only 1 to 14 hours volunteering.

Among the age groups, volunteers age 65 and over devoted the most time--a median of 96 hours--to volunteer activities. Those age 25 to 34 years spent the least time, volunteering a median of 34 hours during the year.

Number and Type of Organizations

Most volunteers provided their services through or for one or two organizations--69.1 percent and 19.3 percent, respectively. The main organization--the organization for which the volunteer worked the most hours during the year--for the majority of volunteers was either religious (33.9 percent) or educational/youth-service related (27.2 percent).

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VOLUNTEERING IN THE UNITED STATES

(continued from page 3)

Another 12.1 percent of volunteers performed activities mainly for social or community service organizations, and 8.6 percent volunteered the most hours for hospitals or other health organizations.

Older volunteers were more likely to volunteer mainly for religious organizations, such as churches, than their younger counterparts. For example, 45.2 percent of volunteers age 65 and over performed volunteer activities mainly through or for a religious organization, compared with 28.6 percent of volunteers age 25 to 34 years.

Among volunteers with children under 18 years, 45.9 percent of mothers and 37.9 percent of fathers volunteered mainly for an educational/youth-service related organization, such as a school or little league. Parents were more than twice as likely to volunteer for such organizations as persons with no children of that age. Conversely, volunteers with no children under 18 were about twice as likely as parents to volunteer for a social or community service organization, such as a homeless shelter or a senior citizen center.

Volunteer Activities for Main Organization

Volunteers performed many different types of activities. Among the more commonly reported (volunteers could report more than one activity) were teaching or coaching (24.4 percent); canvassing, campaigning, or fundraising (22.9 percent); collecting, making, serving, or delivering goods (22.2 percent); and being a board, committee, or neighborhood association member (16.3 percent). Forty-three percent of volunteers indicated that their activities fell into the "catch-all" category of organize, supervise, or help with events or activities.

How Volunteers Became Involved with Main Organization

Two in five volunteers became involved with the main organization for which they did volunteer work on their own initiative: That is, they approached the organization. Another 2 in 5 were asked to become a volunteer, most often by somebody in the organization. ●



A volunteer works with Somali women at a sewing program run by Women Concern, a Somali CBO in Nashville, TN.

Information from this release will be made available to sensory-impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-

5200; TDD message referral phone number 1-800-877-8339. To view the entire news release, please visit <http://www.bls.gov/cps>. Go to "Economic News Releases" and look under the category of "Other". The full report is available in PDF and Text formats.

SFCN Translates Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

Translation Prepared for the Brookings/SAIS Project on Internal Displacement

The Somali Family Care Network, in an effort to support the internally displaced persons living in peril in Somalia, many of whom have family members living in the United States, prepared a translation of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement into Somali in June 2002.

The Guiding Principles were borne of the need to fill the gap of protection and law as it applies to those who do not flee a country to become refugees but instead, remain or return home and become internally displaced.

SFCN immediately dispatched copies of the Principles to a conference on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) that took place in Hargeisa, Somaliland. This translation, with support from the Brookings-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement, is being disseminated to Somali NGOs and international organizations working with the displaced in Somalia in an effort to increase awareness of the rights of internally displaced persons.

The Guiding Principles are the first international standards on internal displacement and these 30 Principles re-state International Humanitarian Law (IHL), international human rights law, and refugee law by analogy.

The importance of generating a greater awareness of the Guiding Principles rests on the fact that there are approximately 400,000 internally displaced Somalis*. The Principles are currently being used throughout the world by governments, INGOs, NGOs and IDPs. They can be used in relation to many aspects of the plight of displaced persons and can serve as a tool for advocacy by IDPs and those who work with them.

Somalis, and nearly all immigrants in the United States, face a variety of stresses in addition to those experienced by everyone on a daily basis. The complexities of adapting to a new life can include language barriers, cultural adaptation difficulties, and the struggle of changing roles within family and traditional social structures. A further stressor for immigrants is a sense of responsibility (sometimes of guilt) that relatives have been left behind and are suffering in their place. Remittances sent overseas can help ease the burdens of those back home but can also place further financial stress on those struggling to adapt in their adopted country. Internally displaced persons are often more difficult to reach and therefore are less likely to receive the same level of financial support from overseas. For Somalis in the United States, the application of the Guiding Principles back home can perhaps add some small sense of security about the opportunities for protection and assistance of those in need.

If you would like to receive a copy of the Guiding Principles please contact SFCN. *(IDP data can be found at www.idpproject.org)

Capacity Building Tips

The goal in this section is to provide the SCBO with quick, easily digestible tips that can help with the many tasks associated with keeping an organization healthy and efficient.

‘Capacity building’ refers to activities that strengthen an organization and help it better fulfill its mission. Capacity-building efforts include:

- referrals • peer exchanges • publications • training
- one-on-one consulting • new equipment and staff
- Board development • leadership training • facility purchase and renovation

Capacity building professionals frequently point to Board Development as a weakness in new non-profits. This is understandable due to the many tasks that seem more pressing. As the Board is developed it is important to keep information flowing back and forth between the Director and the Board. The Board of Directors at a nonprofit organization is accountable for all aspects of nonprofit operations. It is expected to ensure that the organization operates for the public good and is publicly accountable.

The Board is responsible for fiscal oversight and acting as the trustees of the organization on behalf of its funders. The Board and its individual members should take care to avoid problems created by Board-member mismanagement, non-management, or self-dealing.

What can the Board do to help? Well, the most valuable contributions of a Board member are his or her time, attention, and energy. Initially, the Board works with the Executive Staff (the President, Vice-president) and often key employees/volunteers, to develop a Strategic Plan for the organization. The members of the Board then work with the Staff to implement that Plan. One way that Board members frequently contribute is through their own areas of expertise or through outreach to the community being served as well as the greater community. Outreach to the surrounding community involves fundraising and generating awareness of the organizations existence, goals, and activities. An active Board sends a good signal to Funders and to the community being served.

The relations between a Board and its Executive Director are among the most important determinants of an organization’s effectiveness. Some tension is appropriate, since they represent two different and necessary perspectives on the organization. However, good communication, a high level of trust, and mutual respect are extremely important. This of course is only the surface of the many activities and responsibilities for a Board. ●

{SFCN would like to thank MOSAICA, a capacity training organization based in Washington, DC, for the information used in preparing this section}

SOMALI ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE—Focus on:

Somali Foundation in Kansas City, MO

The Somali Foundation is located in Kansas City, MO, a city that is now home to nearly 1,000 Somalis, many of whom settled in the area in the late 1990s. The benefits and difficulties of starting a new life in Kansas City are similar to those experienced by Somalis in cities and towns across the United States, and many newly arrived refugees and asylees rely on a layered network of service providers to help in their transition.

One part of the national network mentioned above is the Ethnic Community Based Organization (ECBO). An ECBO is able to act as a culturally attuned outreach vehicle and service point for multiple ethnic groups or for one specific ethnic community. An ECBO can provide independent, ‘free-standing’ services of their own, and, can offer services that directly support the activities of another service organization or government entity. Formed in 1999 under the guidance of Farah Abdi, the Somali Foundation provides a variety of services. Mr. Abdi said he was motivated to form this Somali Community Based Organization (SCBO) “in response to a clear set of needs I saw around me every day.”

Somali Foundation was established to provide transportation; translation; mediation among families; orientation for newly arrived refugees; housing assistance and job placement for the Somali community of greater Kansas City, Mo. The Foundation also organizes community meetings to identify and solve problems. Many members of the community meet once a month to discuss community issues. Twice a year, the Foundation holds community picnics and also celebrates Somali religious and historical holidays.

One thing Farah Abdi says he has learned during the past three years is patience. He said he realized early on that it was better to

[Farah Abdi (left) and Abdirahman Jama of Somali Foundation attend an ORR funded SFCN regional capacity building training in Houston.]



Continued as *Organizational Profile* on next page

Organizational Profile

focus on services they could offer with no budget and only volunteer time.

Gradually, others have recognized the commitment Somali Foundation has toward assisting those in need. St. Aloysius Catholic Church in Kansas City, MO has offered an excellent office space to Somali Foundation for a greatly reduced fee which has allowed the Foundation to pursue their goals in a more structured environment. The church resides in the heart of the Somali Community therefore increasing accessibility.

The new office space allows access to three classrooms, a meeting hall, and a storeroom. The first year of occupancy is being funded through a competitive Seed Grant that Somali Foundation submitted a proposal for to the Somali Family Care Network. SFCN awarded eight Seed Grants in 2002, funds that were made available by the Office of Refugee Resettlement. In addition to office space, the grant allowed Somali Foundation to purchase one new and two used computers as well as used office desks and chairs. The new space has allowed part-time and full-time volunteers the opportunity to see more clients and expand their outreach to the community. ●

If you would like to assist their program in any way please contact the Somali Foundation at (816) 483-0310. Or contact us, the Somali Family Care Network at 703-379-5900; erobinson@somalifamily.org; or raqiya@somalifamily.org

Below: Farah Abdi shares his experiences with other SCBO leaders from around the country.



Links to Online Resources

<http://www.cool2serve.org/>

The mission of COOL (Campus Outreach Opportunity League) is to educate, connect and mobilize college students and their campuses to strengthen communities through service and action.

<http://www.energizeinc.com/art/abyd.html>

Energize, Inc. is an international training, consulting and publishing firm specializing in volunteerism. Founded in 1977, Energize has assisted organizations of all types with their volunteer efforts--whether they are health and human service organizations, cultural arts groups, professional associations, or schools.

<http://www.nonprofits.org/npofaq/>

The Internet Nonprofit Center has scores of items of information and advice about nonprofits included in its online resource chart. The items come from discussions on email lists, in Use-Net, and other sources.

<http://www.innonet.org/resources/SummaryReport.pdf>

The Innovation Network is dedicated to building skills, knowledge and processes within public agencies and nonprofits to improve their overall organizational learning and effectiveness.

<http://www.pfdf.org>

The Leader to Leader Institute has its roots in the social sector and its predecessor, the Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Non-profit Management, transferred its ongoing activities to the new identity in January 2003. The Leader to Leader Institute serves as a broker of intellectual capital, bringing together the finest thought leaders, consultants, and authors in the world with the leaders of social sector voluntary organizations.

<http://www.compumentor.org>

Compumentor is one of the nation's leading nonprofit technology assistance organizations. They offer a unique combination of hands on consulting services and online resources. Organizations can choose the types of service that fit their resources and needs.



Pictures of Somali Community Based Organization leaders participating in the SFCN Regional Capacity Building Training in Houston, TX.



SFCN's primary program is Project Himilo— 'Himilo' is a Somali word meaning "to aspire." Through this project, SFCN is establishing a strong national network of Somali Community Based Organizations (SCBOs), which will work together with service providers to foster and ensure the health and social well-being of Somali refugees resettled in the United States.

Project Himilo is made possible through a grant from the U.S. State Department's Office of Refugee Resettlement and in conjunction with the Immigration and Refugee Services of America (IRSA).

SFCN has developed a Somali Community Advisory Committee, composed primarily of Somali community leaders, to provide credibility to the project process and help raise its visibility within the Somali community. SFCN has also established a Management Advisory Group of leaders in non-profit management who have pledged their support and expertise to the project.

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.SOMALIFAMILY.ORG



Somali Family Care Network

The Somali Family Care Network, Inc., formed in February 2001, is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to helping *all* Somali groups in the United States work together to improve the support systems critical to newly settled Somali refugees.

SFCN may be new to the United States, but it is rich in the tradition of community-based development and governance through its reliance on respected elders. These men and women lend SFCN an array of special skills and backgrounds ranging from religious leaders, community organizers, teachers, health professionals, and popular singers to people with entrepreneurial backgrounds. This network, combined with SFCN's direct experience with local and national dynamics and community support, gives SFCN a unique relationship with the Somali community in the United States.