

LEARNING SEMINAR REPORT

Topic: What are the infrastructure support needs of Somali community organisations

Date: 21 February 2008

Introduction

Excluding CPF staff and Trustees, 15 people from 13 organisations participated in the seminar. The event began with two presentations: Mohammed Maigag from Haringey Somali Community and Cultural Association spoke about the findings from a piece of research exploring the infrastructure support needs of the Somali community; and Fawzia Adam from Refugee Aid and Development spoke about how joint/partnership work between Somali organisations can be developed and supported.

The presentation was followed by group discussions in a 'knowledge café' style, which allowed people to discuss three key questions about how employment opportunities could be improved. A list of the key issues and recommendations from each of the groups were brought together at the end of the session for wider debate.

Knowledge cafes

There were three knowledge cafes, each one focusing on a particular question. People had the opportunity to discuss all three of the questions by moving from one café table to another. The exercise ended by all participants specifying which key points in each discussion group they would give most priority to. The figures in brackets are the total number of participants who prioritised that particular issue.

Question 1: What are the Infrastructure support needs of Somali community organisations?

Key issues that arose:

- More training for management committees' roles/responsibilities (7)
- Leadership development within organisations (3)
- Role of funders in signposting to other resources (3)
- One-to-one advice from funders on application (2)
- Greater access to decision makers (1)
- Need for more external review evaluation (1)

- One-to-one support from funders local authorities (1)

Other action points/issues were:

- Second tier Somali advice agency to develop quality assurance
- Funders promote best practice to strengthen the infrastructure
- Find common and differing infrastructure needs of other SCO's and respond (but being sensitive to cultural specifics)

Question 2: How can funders support Somali community organisations other than through funding?

Key issues that arose:

- Funders could focus funding to communities working together (perhaps in a given area – community cohesion issue) and on specific issues (5)
- Grant could be made subject to staff and management committee members agreeing to training and development courses (4)
- Funders research needs (e.g. Somali community needs) and call for applications from SMO's and others to deliver services to meet the needs (3)
- Funders (and others) could engage Somali graduates as volunteers, staff, management committee members, etc (2)
- IT, premises, etc needs addressed (1)

Other action points/issues were:

- SMO's have entrepreneurial skills but need (a) developing and (b) connecting to other skills, eg marketing
- Encourage/prioritise SMO's that have non-Somalis on their management committee (and perhaps staff)
- Funders sign-post SMOs to mainstream support organisations, eg CES, Media Trust, NOVO, NAVCA, etc
- Funders could invite SMO consortia bids for specific work/defined geographical areas.
- To enable sharing of SMO/consortia good practice to SMOs and other consortia

Question 3: How can joint/partnership work between Somali organisations be developed and supported?

Key issues that arose:

- Benefits of Joint/partnership work needs to be promoted (8)
- Links for networks can be facilitated by funders e.g. website (4)

- Funding for joint works e.g. bespoke funds (2)
- Partnership work can take place between groups with similar service/age groups (2)
- Need to engage young people living with extended family (1)
- Empowering Existing forums (1)
- Power sharing (1)
- Need to become specialist (1)
- Can we breakaway from past differences e.g. clan? (1)

Other action points/issues were:

- Intergenerational differences need to be overcome
- Need to acknowledge differences
- Lack of focal points e.g Centre/Mosque
- Funding-plus support by funders
- Trust is a key factor in joint partnership
- Build on common areas both within and beyond
- Facilitate local activities on a borough level
- Need to formalise and join up local work
- Local authority/ CVS involvement as seal of approval
- Lack of Networks
- Tower Hamlets Somali Forum Works
- Consortium works for big contacts/commissioning
- Development/Service needs need to be identified
- Need to acknowledge existing work

Attendance

Speakers

Mohammed Maigag
Fawzia Adam

Haringey Somali Community & Cultural Assoc
Refugee Aid and Development

Attendees

Mulat Haregot
Ahmed Abdi
Stewart Goshawk
Sandra Davidson
Zahra Ibrahim
Eric Mesel
Russell Darbon
Abdi Hassan
Joe Dobson
Ismail Harun
Abdi Adan

Evelyn Oldfield Unit
Harrow Assoc for Voluntary Service
City Bridge Trust
City Bridge Trust
Somali Women's Association
John Lyon's Charity
Big Lottery Fund
Ocean Somali Community Association
Ocean Somali Community Association
RETI (Refugee Employment & Training)
Somali Employment and Training Project

Dahabo Guled
Victor Wilmot
Omer Ahmed
Ibrahim Elmi
Adam Dirir
Maggie Baxter
Martin Dudley

Dadihiye Somali Development Org
London Catalyst
Unite Union
Horn of Africa Refugee Welfare Group
Somali Eye Media
CPF Trustee
CPF Trustee

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