

Understanding the Impact of Culture

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University of Massachusetts Boston

Autism CARES

Bethesda, MA

June 10, 2017



Supported by grant funds from US DHHS, HRSA, MCHB T73MC00020 LEND Program



INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY INCLUSION

LEND Mission

“All children, youth, and families will live and thrive in healthy communities served by a quality workforce that helps assure their health and well being.”





Dr. Allen C. Crocker, MD
Director 1967-2008



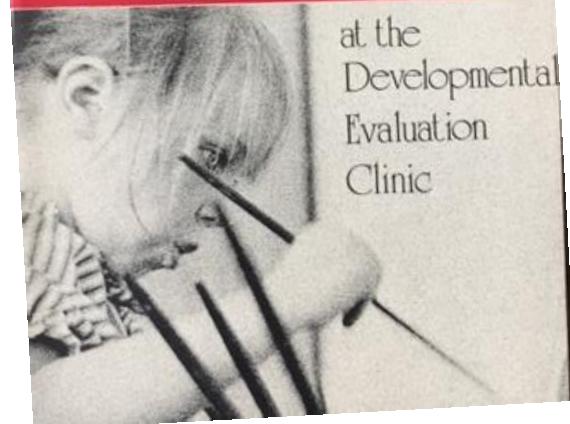
Developmental Evaluation Clinic



Children's/Boston
The Children's Hospital
Medical Center
Boston, Mass. 02115

The Training Programs

at the Developmental Evaluation Clinic



2012 Population by Race and Ethnicity

Population by Race

	Boston, MA	Massachusetts	United States
White Population	51.22%	79.19%	71.71%
Black or African American Population	25.89%	7.12%	12.86%
American Indian and Alaska Native Population	0.36%	0.29%	0.96%
Asian Population	10.05%	5.87%	5.30%
Multi-racial Population	4.34%	2.88%	3.13%
Other Population	8.14%	4.66%	6.05%

Population by Ethnicity

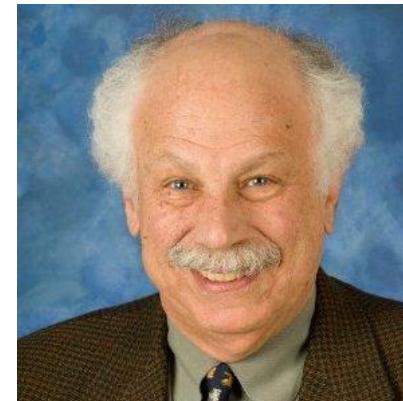
Population Hispanic	18.85%	10.40%	16.91%
Population Non Hispanic	81.15%	89.60%	83.09%

BOSTON: DBP, LEAH, Public Health

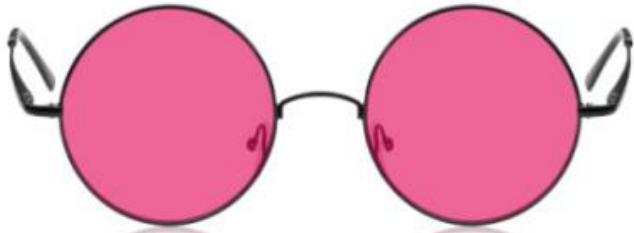
Jean
Emans



Marie
McCormick



Leonard
Rappaport



Cultural lens

LEND Faculty



LEND
BOSTON

LEND Fellows



Speakers at
LEND events



Goals of cross cultural competence

1. Feel comfortable and effective in their interactions and relationships with families whose culture and life experiences differ
2. Interact with families that enable them to feel positive about the interaction
3. Accomplish the goals that each family and provider establish

Cross Cultural Competencies

“...the ability to think, feel, and act in ways that acknowledge, respect, and build upon ethnic, (socio)cultural, and linguistic diversity”

Lynch & Hanson, 1993

Community Based Organizations

- Boston Center for Independent Living
- Eritrean Community Center
- **Somali Development Center**
- Threshold Program at Lesley University
- Family Nurturing Center
- Partners for Youth with Disabilities
- Urban PRIDE
- Multi-Cultural Independent Living Center of Boston (MCILB)
- **Haitian American Public Health Initiative**
- Massachusetts Alliance for Portuguese Speakers
- Great Wall
- Nazareth Residence for Mothers and Children



Abdi Yusuf

Renald Raphael



Mission statement

The mission of Somali Development Center is
to provide consistently excellent and
accessible community services to all Somalis
(and other African communities) in
Boston.....

The Boston Globe

Living | Arts

TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2008

A home away from home

Somali Development Center helps refugees forge a new life in Boston



By Omar Sacirbey
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

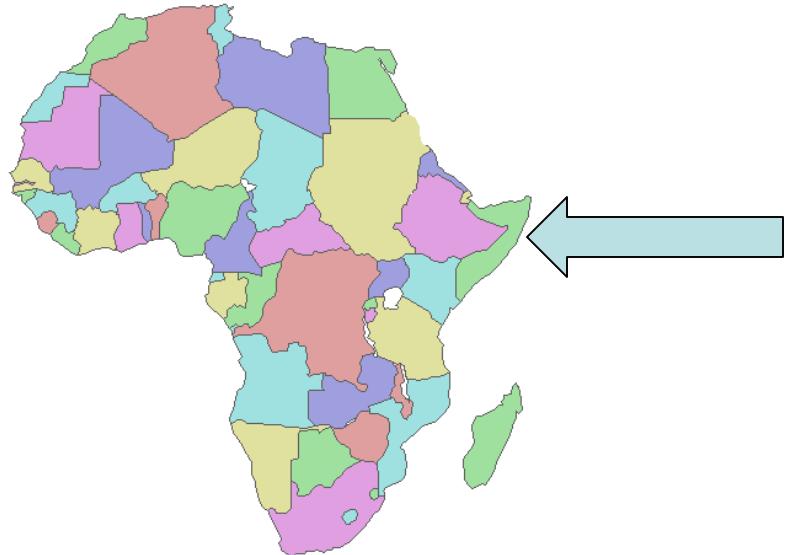
Mariam Kaabin Ahmed came home one day in 1991 and found her husband dead. He wasn't a soldier, but Ahmed suspects he was killed in one of the many random acts of violence that plagued Mogadishu as the once-prosperous capital of Somalia, and the rest of the country, descended into civil war.

Rival groups shelled each other without regard for civilians, including the family that now lives in Jamaica Plain. She fled Mogadishu with her four children, aged 3 to 15 at the time, and for the next few years they wandered from town to town, trying to go where the war wasn't. The trek took them to Ethiopia in 1998 and Egypt in 1999, where each time they stayed with other Somali refugees they knew. In Cairo, Ahmed applied to immigrate to the United States, citing her refugee status, was interviewed, and accepted. Her children decided to stay, she said; today two sons and two daughters live in Boston.

Arriving to Boston March 1, 2000, Ahmed already knew some Somalis she could stay with until finding more permanent housing. Within a few weeks, she was taking weekly citizenship classes at the Somali Development Center in Jamaica Plain that taught English, US history, government, and civics, and would eventually prepare her for her citizenship test.

Ahmed doesn't dwell on the past and dismisses her troubles to "destiny" while crediting her survival to "faith in God." When asked about her husband, Ahmed lets out a short, tired laugh and points to a headline in the Metro newspaper: "Teen shot three times on crowded Orange Line."

Sahra Elmi (above) attends a class taught by Naima Hashi (top right) at the center in Jamaica Plain.







PHOTOS BY PAT GREENHOUSE/GLOBE STAFF

Abdi Yakub (left) and Fakhir Mohamed confer after a writing exercise at a weekly US citizenship class offered at the Somali Development Center in Jamaica Plain. The center helps refugees acclimate to their new environment.

"Everybody dies. Everybody dies," she said. The display of resignation and resilience has helped many refugees from the anarchic country adjust to Boston and a handful of other North American cities that are far different from the ones they left behind. It is often a long process, one that involves challenges common to immigrants, such as language barriers, but also challenges unique to Somalis, such as learning to live in a governed society after knowing only either war or refugee camps of Ethiopia and Kenya.

"People think once somebody's already here they can easily assimilate," said Abdirahman Yusuf, who founded the Somali Development Center in 1996. He estimates that about 10,000 Somalis have arrived in New England since 1992. Many of the more recent refugees are Somali Banu, from the rural southern part of the country. "For people who have not been to school and who have never in small villages seen a doctor, country, anything is 'new,'" from refrigerators and medicine to clothing and just being part of a society where the majority of the people are of a different race and religion."



Ceding power to women

Among the issues some Somali families struggle with is whether to allow female members to work, Yusuf said. Despite financial hardship, men are sometimes reluctant to cede women the power that comes with employment or help with child

'We're not trying to Americanize them, but just give them a view of how things here work.'

NAIMA HASHI,
teacher at the Somali Development Center

care and other household responsibilities.

"Once a woman acquires skills and money, that becomes power, the roles have shifted, and many men feel uncomfortable with that," said Yusuf. "But given the right support and encouragement, many women want to work; and they're very good workers."

Many refugees, including women who have undergone female genital mutilation, take a long time to open up about their health needs, said Jennifer Abbott, a single citizenship and women's health classes at the Somali center. "I waited a year before talking about anything sensitive or having to do with reproductive health," Abbott said.

"We're not trying to Americanize them, but just give them a view of how things work here"

Naima Hashi

teacher at SDC

LEND projects with Somali Development Center

- ✓ Teaching English as a Second Language
- ✓ Citizenship Class
- ✓ Grant writing
- ✓ Nutrition
- ✓ Focus group – meaning of disability
- ✓ Legal assistance re IEPs, education rights

LESSONS LEARNED:

- ✓ Translating language is just one step necessary for effective communication
- ✓ Understanding culture in the context of disability is key to providing the most sensitive and competent care for families navigating through the medical system

- ✓ Cultural brokers are especially important to communities impacted by the need for political asylum.
- ✓ Every family is different and we have to be open to learn from them and to hear them.

Haitian-American Public Health Initiatives

Promoting the Health and the well-being of the Haitian Community since 1989

Promoting the Health and The
Well-Being of The Haitian
Community

Founded in 1989 by a group of
Haitian-American health care
professionals to address pressing
public health issues confronting
Boston's Haitian community.

Haitian American Public Health Initiative (HAPHI)

HAPHI is a minority run, non-profit agency dedicated to providing members of the Haitian-American community in Metro Boston with culturally and linguistically accessible information and services to improve their health and wellbeing.





LEND Projects with HAPHI

- ✓ Resource manual
- ✓ After school program
- ✓ Trauma group
- ✓ Dance troupe



HAPHI

Haitian-American Public Health Initiatives

*Promoting the health and
the well-being of our Community*

Dance Troupe



Haitian dances



LESSONS LEARNED:

- ✓ What you expect from a family from another country is often not what you find.
- ✓ One's own cultural beliefs and biases are hard to recognize.
- ✓ This experience has really expanded my understanding of disability and my role in it.



“Of all the forms of inequality,
injustice in health care is the most
shocking and inhumane.”

MLK

Understanding our patients,
clients and/or customers is the
key to delivering culturally
sensitive services, thus
breaking down barriers to
access and reducing disparities
in health care coverage

To learn about cross-cultural perspectives is to begin to understand the impact of culture.

