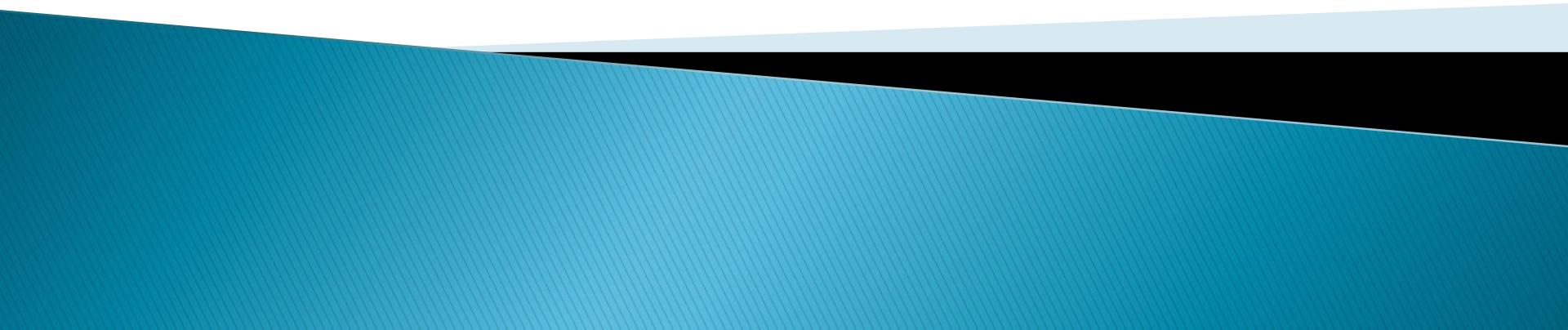


Somali People and Their Culture

An Overview



Outline of Presentation

- ▶ Somali People and Their Culture
- ▶ The Community Now
- ▶ How Do They Fare Now?
- ▶ Achievements in the Last 20 Yrs
- ▶ Community Still Faces Many Challenges
- ▶ Brief History of Somalia
- ▶ Map of Somalia
- ▶ Somali Cultural Norms
- ▶ Communication Styles
- ▶ Display of Emotions
- ▶ Management Qualities



Outline of Presentation

- ▶ Conflict in The Office
- ▶ Common Somali Phrases
- ▶ Common Somali Foods
- ▶ Somali Traditional Clothing
- ▶ Traditional Utensils and Tools
- ▶ Q & A Session
- ▶ Contact Information
- ▶ Conclusion



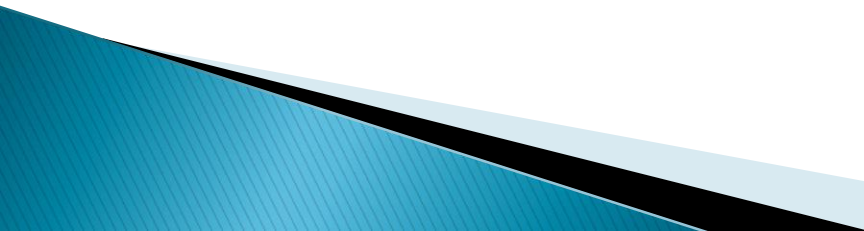
Traditional Somali shoes
made of animal hide

The Community Now

- ← Somalis in MN estimated at 80,000 to 100,000
- ← Twin Cities alone has about 60,000 to 77,000
- ← **Median Age is 19.7**
- ← Ages 5–17 years 31.2%;
- ← Ages 25–34 years 16.8%



The Community Now

- ▶ Population Distribution in MN – No reliable data!
 - ▶ Median Age = 19.7%
 - ▶ 16% <5 yrs; **31% 5-17yrs**; **17% 18-24 yrs**; 10% 25–34 yrs; 6% 35–44 yrs
 - ▶ **45% less than HS**; 26% GED/HS; 18% College/AS; 9% Bachelors Degree; 2.5% Grad or professional
 - ▶ **Median Household income = \$16,755**
- 

How Do They Fare?

- ▶ 9.5% SS income; 13.9% supplement SS income;
- ▶ **61.1% use food stamp/SNAP benefits**
- ▶ 5.2% occupy own homes; **94.8% are renters**
- ▶ 16.4% on private health coverage; **73.5% on Public Health**; 12.9 no coverage
- ▶ Poverty Rate: **64.7% families with children < 18yrs**; 49.8% with children < 5 yrs only



Achievements in The Last 20 Years


- ▶ Largest business owners in MN second only to Latinos
- ▶ Own over 600 businesses with \$164 million buying power (*Immigrant Policy Center, 2006*)
- ▶ Significant numbers are enrolled in colleges across the State
- ▶ Somali professionals are virtually in every profession – from cab drivers to educators, physicians, attorneys, etc
- ▶ They are making huge strides into politics as well
- ▶ In general, Their impact in this state is quite visible



Community Still Faces Many Challenges

- ▶ Very high unemployment, esp. among youth (no reliable data)
- ▶ Pop. 16 yrs and older unemployed = 17%:
National rate is 11%
- ▶ Higher rate of poverty (59.4%) than Asians (17.8%) and Latinos (24.4%) – *MN Budget Project 2010.*
- ▶ Divorce rate is among highest in the state (11%) – *US Census Bureau Community Survey 2010-2012*

Community Still Faces Many Challenges

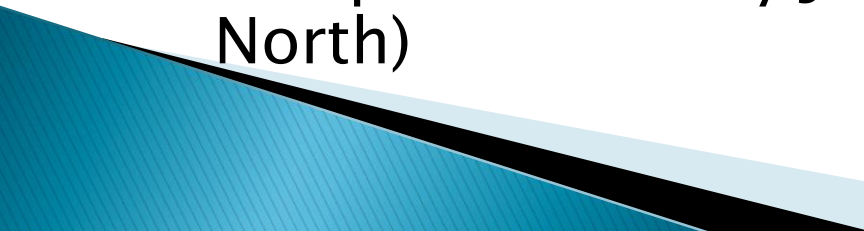
- ▶ More and more of our youth are incarcerated
 - ▶ Parent-child conflict is dangerously high and frequent
 - ▶ **Family household with children <18 is 52%**
 - ▶ High school drop out rate is close to 45%
 - ▶ Critical housing shortage for families (in shelters)
- 

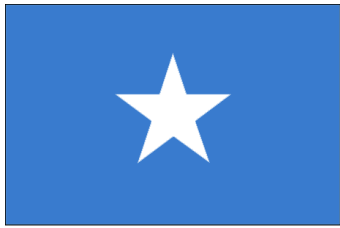
Community Still Faces Many Challenges

- ▶ Somalis often face civil rights violations in workplace, rental units, medical and educational institutions
- ▶ Community is disharmonious, lacks unified approach to address its MOST critical issues



Brief History of Somalis

- ▶ Situated in the Horn of Africa
 - ▶ Official Languages: Somali and Arabic
 - ▶ Ethnic groups: Somali (92.4%), Arab (2%) Bantu (1.8%), other (3.8%)
 - ▶ Religion: Islam 100%
 - ▶ Independence From Britain and Italy
 - ▶ Independence Day July 1st 1960 (unity of South & North)
- 

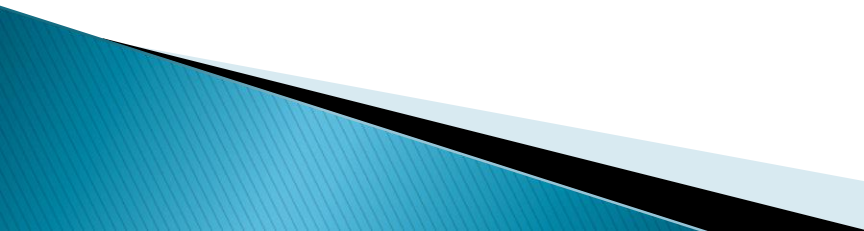


Somalia

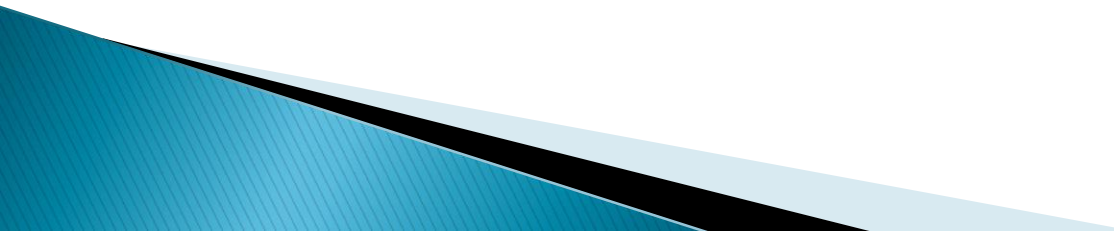
Capital: Mogadishu



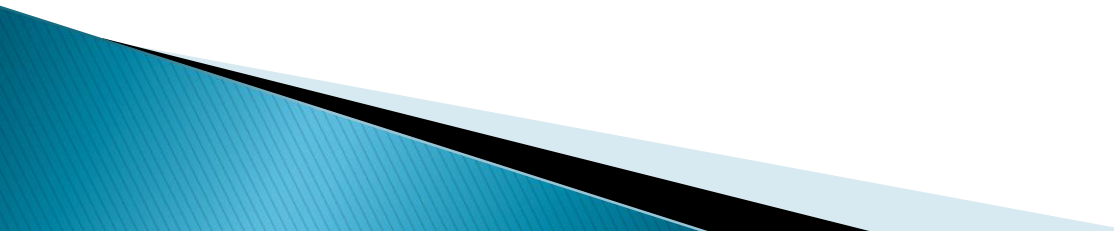
Somali Cultural Norms – Conversations

- ▶ Customary to greet with ‘How are You?’
“Sidee Tahay” (see-dae ta-hay)
 - ▶ Ask about their culture, food, family, and little humor. Somalis love to laugh and share jokes
 - ▶ With men compliment about his clothing, shoes, etc. Somalis love to be complimented
 - ▶ Are very proud people. Take pride in freedom
- 

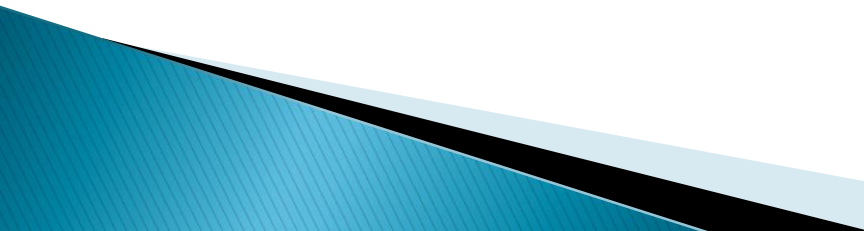
Communication Styles

- ▶ Different in Women and Men
 - ▶ Can stand in close distance, make eye contact, even touch if same Sex
 - ▶ Unmarried men and women must be respectful, professional – No touching
 - ▶ Speaker can make eye contact, hand gestures, facial expressions, as long there is comfortable distance
- 

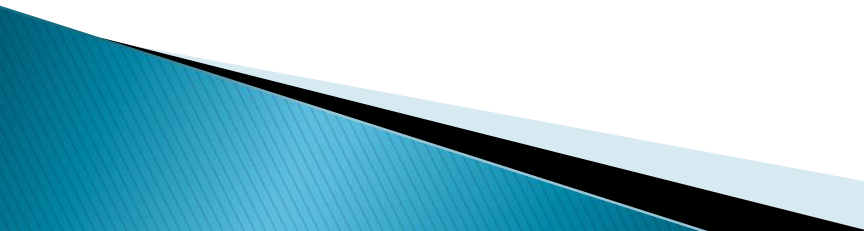
Display of Emotion

- ▶ Most of the intimate interactions are kept private
 - ▶ Somali people still keep their intimate feelings and affairs private
 - ▶ A married man and a woman would walk with each other side by side, and not cling on to one another, hold hands, etc.
 - ▶ Family Disagreements are considered to be private matters and are only dealt with behind the scenes
- 

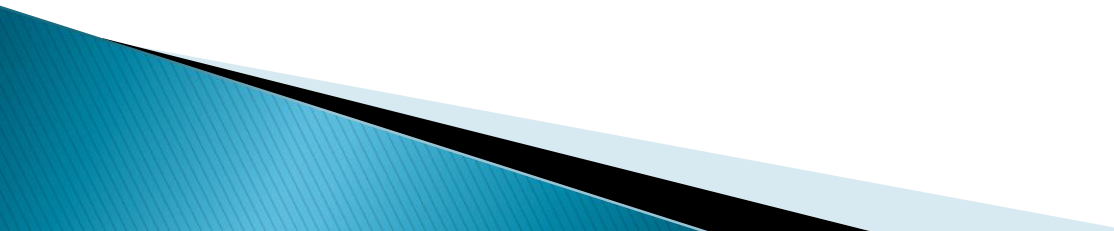
Management Qualities

- ▶ Highly regarded qualities in a Manager include respect to his/herself and also to others, good work ethics, emphatic leadership, openness to new ideas, being non-judgmental, and willingness to assist others
 - ▶ Somalis will follow their leadership
 - ▶ When one gives respect, chances are he/she will get respect in return.
- 

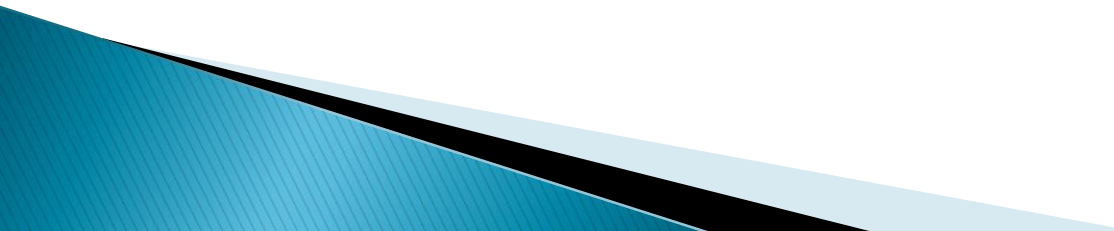
Hierarchy and Decision-making

- ▶ Somalis regard leaders as equal but with different function
 - ▶ Are quite open to communicating with their superior – more readily if same sex
 - ▶ Value their input and involvement in decision-making
 - ▶ Are quite open in expressing their views
 - ▶ Some times can be emotional – Tactful Communications help in this regard
- 

Religion, Class, Ethnicity, & Gender

- ▶ Somali culture does not discriminate based on gender, however, there are identifiable roles between genders – Islam Strictly Forbids discrimination based on sex
 - ▶ At a young age Somalis are taught to respect their elders, a rule that they honor a great deal during their adult year
 - ▶ In the workplace these attributes would have a positive impact because people respect and treat others equally based on those attitudes
- 

Relationship-building

- ▶ Not necessary to establish a personal relationship with a colleague or client before getting to business matters
 - ▶ But can one establish that by being friendly and outgoing
 - ▶ It is important to establishing trust in early stages of the relationship
 - ▶ Somalis seldom take first move to establish ties
- 

Conflicts in The Office

- ▶ Somalis prefer straight talk and acknowledgement
- ▶ Are very protective of their family and their privacy
- ▶ Women prefer women to de-escalate situations
- ▶ Guard their family issues with utmost privacy



Common Somali Phrases

Somali

Haa

Maya

Fadlan

Mahadsanid

Iska waran?

Sidee tahay?

Nabad

Waan fiicanahay (fii'anahay)

Caawi (aawi)

Immisa jir baad tahay?

Waan ku xumahay (humahay)

Maan fahmin

Magacaygu (maga'aygu) waa...

Sidee Tahay?

Ma Fiican Tahay? (*Ma fii'an tahay?*)

Goormaa Imaaneysaa?

Waa meeqa Saac? (wa meeka S'a?)

Magacaa? (maga'aa?)

Aabahaa Magacii? (Maga'ee?)

Hooyadaa Mageed? (Maga'ed?)

Caruurtaada magacood?(*Arurtada Maga'od?*)

English

Yes

No

Please

Thank you

How are you?

How are you?

Good or Fine

I am fine

Help

How old are you?

I am sorry

I don't understand

My name is...

How Are you?

Are you OK?

When Are you coming?

What time is it now?

What's your Name?

What's your Father's Name?

What's your mother's Name?

What are your children's Names?

Common Somali Foods



Somali Traditional Clothing

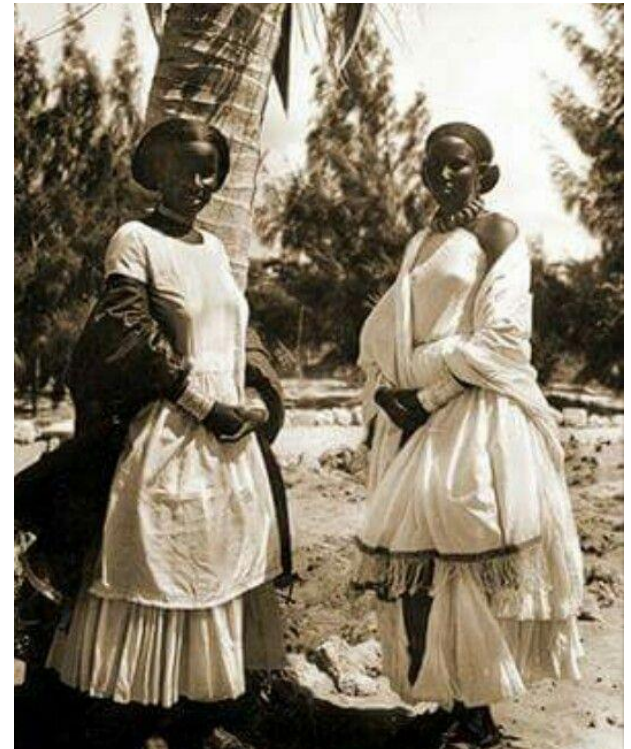


Women in *Alindi* Clothing

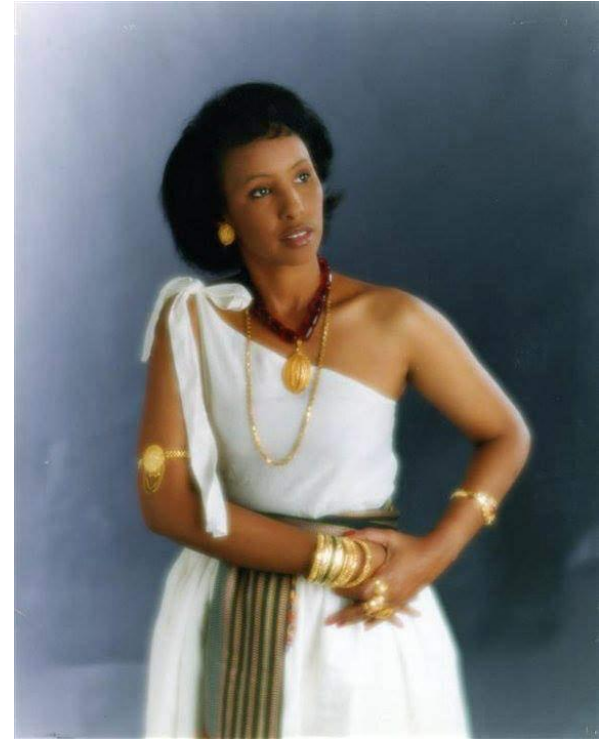


Men in *Ma'wiis, Shaal and Khamiis*

Traditional: Early 1900s – 1930s



Liberated: 1960s – Late 1980s



Traditional Tools & Utensils



Traditional Tools & Utensils



Questions?

