

Parenting input to Somali Community – Interim report 12/21 from SOCOPA



Participants completing the first course (Oct/Nov '21) with SOCOPA's Abdi, CFF's Henry, SOCOPA's Yahye and Fahia (those without certificates)

Reach: SOCOPA, Somali Community Parent' Association, reaches out inclusively to parents across the city. Course attendees live in St. Matthews, Beaumont Leys, Humberstone and Belgrave areas of Leicester, and represented many different Somali origins (from Awdal in Somaliland to South Somalia (Gedo, Lower Juba, and Mudug) from the capital Mogadishu to Puntland and those who emigrated via Europe). (N.B. SOCOPA has not previously collected reach data related to origin because of a deep commitment to anti-tribalism and knowing that even asking about geographical origin may cause suspicion and division.)

Age ranges: Parent attendees were in the age range 40+ - 50 yrs, representing large families with more than 4 children: these parents had more than 20 teenagers between them, but also younger children. The Somali facilitators in the 25-30 age range thus represented a younger viewpoint with experience of both Somali and English cultures and languages.

Value: Somali parents completing an online questionnaire rated the parenting course as excellent (80%). Parenting styles, understanding about boundaries and how to listen well were valued the most helpful issues covered.

Barriers and solutions: Low retention of Dads on the course was possibly due to the larger number of women characterising the group. Work and family and other duties affected attendance. One male participant completed the course. **Solution:** to offer Dads only course in second phase of the programme, and/or trial online provision and review take-up.

Response forms indicate that parents need training with how to deal with children with special needs. **Solution:** to offer further specific training through SOCOPA's volunteer network to this first group of parents.

During the 'train the facilitator' course a local Somali teenager was murdered, highlighting starkly to each participant how vital such courses and education is. During the parenting course issues around knife crime and racism surfaced within the families attending. **Solution:** to train Somalis to run the CFF 'Grounded' youth course to run alongside parenting courses. For relevant discussion of this issue see:

<https://theconversation.com/young-somali-men-growing-up-in-the-west-left-alienated-and-at-risk-of-violence-106664>

“My children are calmer and less stressed because I'm less stressed”

Achieved: Trained 7 facilitators (chosen as significant shakers in the Somali community, 4 men, 3 women). (Sept'21)

From the first parenting course run by CFF and SOCOPA, a network of 9+ women has formed to support each other long term and reach into the community. (Nov'21)

69% parents achieved 80 % attendance (SOCOPA staff ran a couple of catch-up sessions for participants who missed groupwork).

One attendee who had to drop out asked to attend the next course.

Unanticipated positives!

Experience of groupwork new to the community has transformed relationships and given a boost to isolated women – subsequent training for this group has been organised with local police, drug awareness agencies and a 'helping your anxious teen' session. Friendships and connections across the city will extend the reach of the initial course.

Positive mental health information has gone to a group identified as unlikely to access services.

“I'm so positive about what I've learnt, I'm passing it on to other parents”

“I'm calmer and I shout less.”

“I listen more.”

“I use 'when' and 'then' and the children do as I ask them.”

“I have a better understanding of teenage development.”

“I am clearer about what I expect my child to do.”

N.B. CFF will be presenting additional pre- and post- course data as part of joint-agency working.