



DEDICATED
TO BUILDING
THRIVING
COMMUNITIES



Impact
REPORT
2020



Table of Contents

About Us	2
Who We Serve	3
2020: A Year of New Challenges	4
The Ihsan Health Initiative	5
Engaging the Youth	8
Encouraging Civic Engagement	9
Supporting Small Businesses	10
Assisting With Basic Needs	11
Improving Health Through Innovation	14
Our Partners	15
Call or Visit Us	16



About Us

Somali Family Service of San Diego was established in 2000 as a non-profit, community-based social service organization. Since its inception, the organization has provided culturally and linguistically appropriate programs and services to members of the San Diego Somali and other refugee and immigrant communities, easing their transition and ensuring successful functioning in their new home. As an organization SFS is staffed in a manner representative of the diverse communities we serve.

Mission

Somali Family Service, guided by its community champions, empowers immigrants, refugees, and other underserved communities in San Diego through its programs that promote health, educational and economic success, and leadership development.

Vision

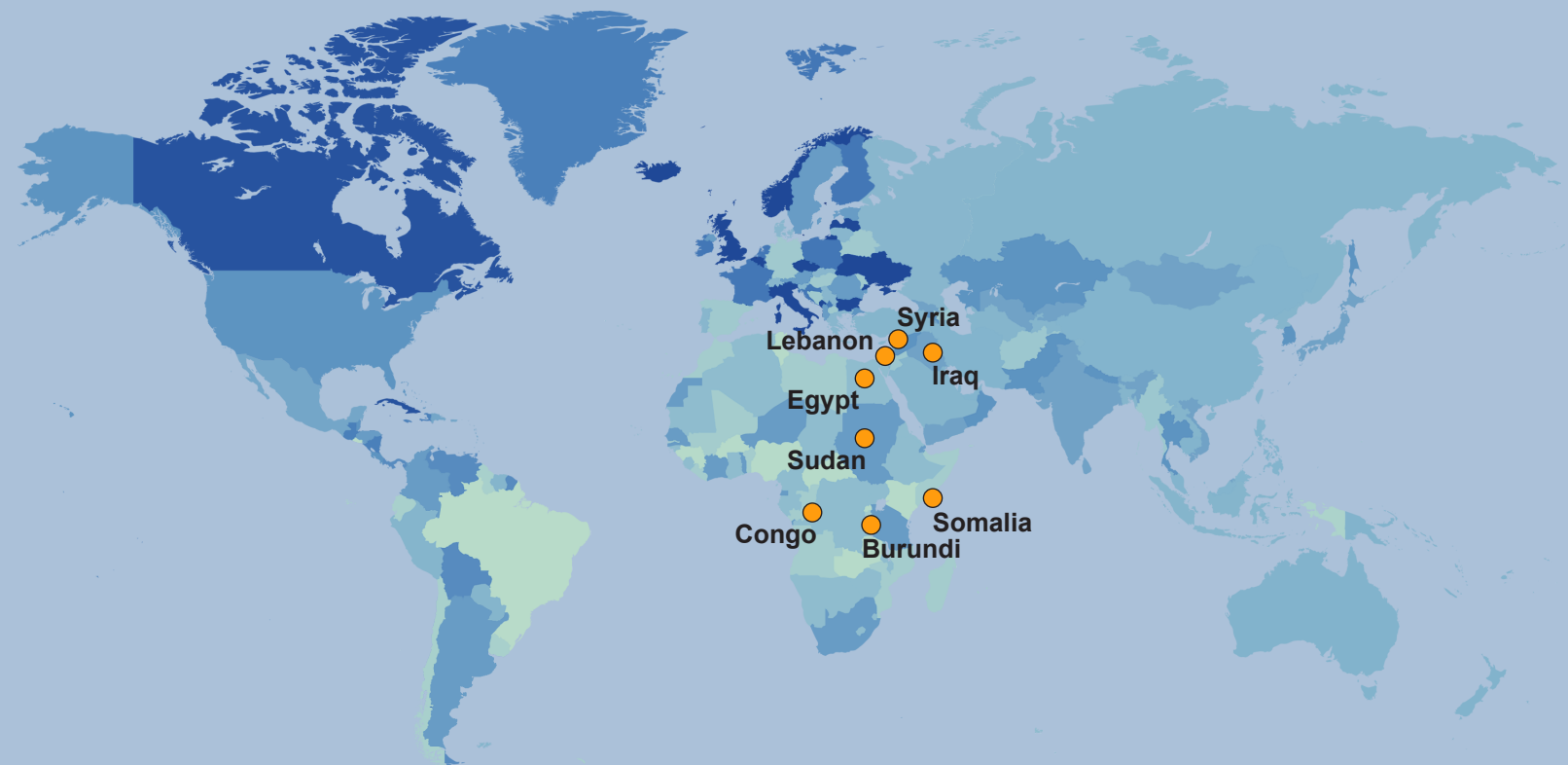
Somali Family Service envisions a better quality of life for refugees, immigrants, and other under-served communities in San Diego. This vision is reached through fostering self-sufficiency, building healthy communities, and promoting equity.

Values

- Community
- Empowerment
- Innovation
- Sustainability
- Integrity
- Collaboration

Who We Serve

We serve immigrant, refugee, and other underserved communities from various countries. In 2020, our clients were primarily from:



Our clients speak many languages, including but not limited to:

Arabic | Aramaic | Chaldean | English | French | Kinyarwanda | Kirundi | Somali | Swahili

Our services extend throughout the San Diego region, including:

Central, East, and Southeast San Diego | El Cajon | National City

2020: A Year of New Challenges

In addition to the issues that generally impact the communities we serve, we were faced with the unique challenge of addressing the social, economic, and health impacts of COVID-19 in 2020. Many community members lost their source of income, became ill, and experienced social isolation during the pandemic.

To respond to the pressing needs of the community, Somali Family Service established an emergency relief fund with help from our generous philanthropic partners. This allowed us to provide rental assistance, utility bill assistance, and assistance with signing up for CalFresh to ensure that our communities have access to healthy foods.

One client said:

“This was an immense help to get the rental assistance. I do not have section 8 assistance and my landlord wanted me to pay \$1300. Both my husband and I lost our jobs due to COVID-19, and we have 8 children to raise and support, so this has been a difficult and stressful time. Therefore, we really need the assistance of your organization and you came during the right time.”



The Ihsan Health Initiative

Funded by the County of San Diego in support of the *Live Well San Diego* Vision, the Ihsan Health Initiative aims to create empowered, informed, and healthier refugee populations in San Diego county. We do this by providing information, resources, and culturally and linguistically appropriate education to immigrant and refugee communities about important health issues including COVID-19.

In 2020, Somali Family Service hired a number of community health workers from the Arab, Congolese, and Somali communities in order to facilitate refugee community engagement and empowerment. These community health workers assist community members with finding and navigating resources, understanding educational materials and best practices, and learning how to protect themselves and their communities in the face of COVID-19.

We held **14 virtual town hall events** to educate communities on COVID-19 in their native languages

Over **200 people** attended virtual town halls

THE IHSAN
HEALTH
INITIATIVE

“The Ihsan Health Initiative includes community health workers who engage in culturally-inclusive and language-specific outreach and education,” Najla Ibrahim, Director of Health and Wellness at Somali Family Service, said. “In addition to empowering refugee communities by ensuring access to accurate information about how to prevent the spread of COVID-19, we aim to appeal to the various and unique ways everyone – whether they’re a young student, or an essential worker, for instance -- can contribute to the health and well-being of their loved ones.”

We outreached to
over **25,000**
community
members
in 2020





On the Perform Peace program:

"It's important to me because I can share my truth. It's better for myself to tell my story rather than someone else telling it."

- Amina Sharif, youth ambassador &
recent Crawford High School graduate



Engaging the Youth

Perform Peace

More than 25 high school students were served through Perform Peace, a suite of programs which includes a feature-length film and community dialogue designed to build bridges of understanding among Muslims and their neighbors in San Diego County. Somali Family Service's Perform Peace partners include the **Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice** at the University of San Diego and **Intrepid Theatre Company**. The program is funded by the **Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art**.

High school seniors who participated in the Perform Peace program had a **100% graduation rate** and **100% pursued higher education**.

NNAAC Transformative Leaders Fellowship Program

Through a partnership with **National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC)**, two young adults served as Transformative Leadership Fellows at Somali Family Service and participated in civic engagement activities including voter registration and phone banking.

Leaders engaged in **5,380 phone banking efforts** and helped register new voters.

"Although our individual votes are small, they add up and contribute to the changes we want to see made. If we skip our vote, we are wasting our opportunity to vote towards changes."

- Luke Thai, NNAAC fellow and co-valedictorian of Crawford High School

Encouraging Civic Engagement

Count Me 2020

As a Count Me 2020 coalition member, Somali Family Service joined over 100 community organizations and civic groups working to ensure a complete and accurate 2020 Census count in San Diego and Imperial Counties. As funded by the **United Way of San Diego County**, the coalition's outreach efforts focused on hard-to-count (HTC) populations -- which include people of color, immigrants, and youth, among others.

Somali Family Service hosted a census-themed car caravan, interactive webinar, and distributed census materials to clients at workshops, town hall meetings, and through social media. In partnership with Muslim American Society-Public Affairs and Civic Engagement (MAS-PACE) and Media Arts Center San Diego, SFS also produced two census-themed outreach videos in English, Somali, and Arabic languages.



Supporting Small Businesses

Building upon the resilience and entrepreneurial spirit of the communities we serve, Somali Family Service provided significant support to small businesses in 2020 through our Microenterprise Program. This year, we enrolled **29 clients** and assisted with the development of **8 new businesses**. We also held **10 workshops** on various topics including Business 101, Technological Assistance, and Marketing. These workshops were delivered in various languages to serve the many communities we support. In addition to these workshops, we provided our clients with **101 technical assistance sessions** in 2020.

119 people
attended our
microenterprise
workshops in
2020



Assisting With Basic Needs

Transportation Needs

Many of the families we serve were affected by new policies and safety regulations in response to COVID-19 in 2020 and found it challenging to navigate resources.

Families and community members needed access to transportation for essential services like grocery shopping or going to work at an essential job. To assist our community with essential needs during this time, we partnered with **Lyft** to offer free ride codes to the community throughout 2020.

We distributed **650 free ride code vouchers** to help with transportation needs

Food Security

Many of our clients struggle year round with food security issues. This situation was exacerbated in 2020 due to job losses, health issues, and financial concerns which arose due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To respond to the need for access to food, we assisted community members with CalFresh applications as well as distributing emergency funds to assist with groceries. We also developed a partnership with the Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank to distribute food to clients through 2021.

We assisted **630 individuals** with CalFresh applications

We conducted **1,916 pre-screenings** for CalFresh eligibility





Improving Health Through Innovation

The SHIFA Project

Between 2019 and 2020, Somali Family Service developed a unique audio-visually immersive educational experience for the Somali community which can be enjoyed on mobile devices, computers, or using virtual reality headsets. The goal of this educational content is to address MMR vaccine hesitancy in the Somali community, which has experienced a significant decrease in vaccination coverage over the past decade.

To create this educational experience, SFS engaged in a process of iterative co-design with the Somali community. This has allowed us to design an educational experience which is culturally and linguistically appropriate and which addresses the unique needs and concerns of this community.

Visual learning has previously proven to be effective in healthcare, especially for refugee communities with varying degrees of literacy. Additionally, virtual reality experiences have been shown to increase retention and recall of educational information. For these reasons, we believe that immersive visual education experiences can make a uniquely positive impact on health outcomes for refugees, and we plan to explore the development of additional health education using these innovative methods.

This project was generously funded by **Alliance Healthcare Foundation's** i2 Innovation Initiative.

Our Partners

Somali Family Service collaborates with a diversity of partners including academic experts, public health officials, business leaders, and community members who remain vital to the design and implementation of all programs.



An Office of the Administration for Children & Families



Growing a Vibrant Region



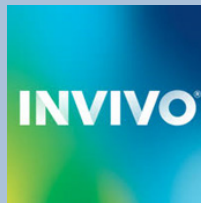
ADVANCING HEALTH AND WELLNESS FOR THOSE IN NEED



United Way of San Diego County



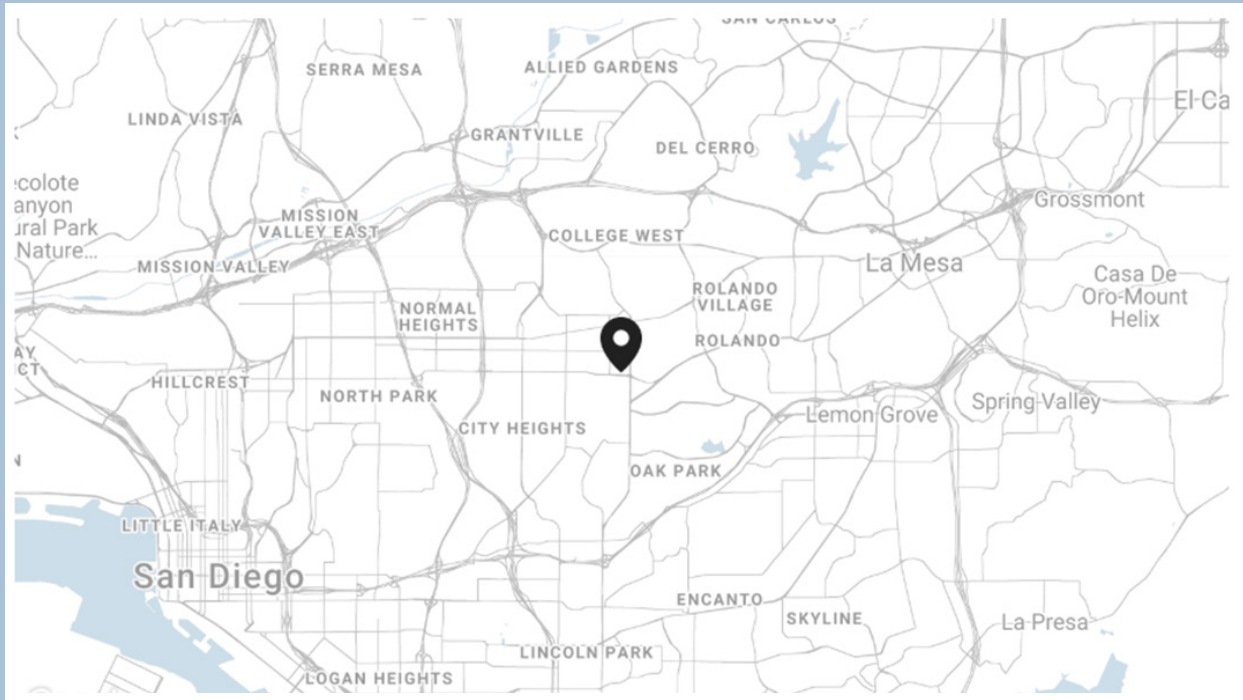
LIVE WELL SAN DIEGO



A Sempra Energy utility



Call or Visit Us



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