

**Demographic Highlights from
Study of Somali Refugees in Toronto
Survey of 385 adults (1995)**

19-34 years old	50.0%
35-44 years old	40.0%
45-54 years old	7.0%
urbanites	75.0%
proficient in English (males)	10.0%
proficient in English (females)	13.0%
fairly proficient in English (males)	52.0%
fairly proficient in English (females)	27.0%
speak English with difficulty (males)	36.0%
speak English with difficulty (females)	51.0%
no proficiency in English (males)	2.0%
no proficiency in English (females)	9.0%
married	50.0%
single	29.0%
divorced/separated	17.0%
widowed	4.0%
live in high-rise apartment	68.0%
live in low-rise	13.0%
live in detached house	4.0%
live in semi-detached house	4.0%
boarding/rooming house/shelter	4.0%
household income <,\$20,000	64.0%
household income \$20,000-\$29,999	27.0%
household income \$30,000 +	9.0%
household income \$15,000-\$20,000 with 1-3 children	40.0%
household income \$15,000-\$20,000 with 4 or more children	25.0%
female headed households with incomes <\$20,000	73.0%
female headed households with incomes \$20,000-\$30,000	27.0%
unemployed for 3+ years	57.0%
unemployed for 1-2 years	28.0%
unemployed for less than 1 year	15.0%
rely solely on earned income	51.0%

rely solely on social assistance	49.0%
unemployed females	66.0%
unemployed males	48.0%
no formal education	4.0%
completed elementary school	15.0%
graduated from technical/vocational schools	10.0%
completed high school or college	53.0%
obtained university degree	18.0%

Demographics of the Somali Community in Metropolitan Toronto

Since 1981 there have been approximately 25,000 Somali refugees who have settled in Canada. Most live in Metropolitan Toronto. Over 80% have only been in Canada since 1988 i.e.. The majority have arrived since 1988.

The main barrier to accessing social, health and educational supports has been a lack of available information to these programs. In almost all areas of service (social, education, health), the respondents to the study attributed their inability to access programs due to not knowing that these programs existed. Those who were able to access this information and take advantage of programs, were by and large more successful in integrating into Canadian society.

Health Characteristics

- suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome characterized by depression, anxiety, lack of concentration, and physical disabilities
- many cases of abuse due to political persecution and imprisonment
- some complications in women's health due to the cultural practice of female circumcision - environmental conditions in Somalia have also attributed to G.I. disorders, especially among youth.
- mental health - alienation, anxiety, depression and isolation

Linguistic and Educational Adaptation

Refugees who came to Canada between 1981-1987 were more proficient in English than those who came after 1988. More men than women are proficient in English. Barriers to participation in language programs:

· lack information about programs	(61% of males, 32% of females)
· preoccupied by family needs	(17% of males, 47% of females)
· no spousal consent too busy at work	(0% of males, 12% of females)
· not admitted	(11% of males, 6% of females)
	(11% of males, 3% of females)

Participation in higher education by members of minority groups is viewed as important to their success in gaining social and economic equity in Canadian society. Therefore the Somali community's ability to participate in available educational programs is key to their integration and containment. In Obuko's study, the majority of Somali's interviewed had NOT pursued any formal education or upgrading in Canada. Only 25% had done so. Of this 25%, 30% were studying at the high school level, 24% were studying ESL, 46% were in colleges (N.B. 24% female, 19% male were studying at the college or university level)

Factors attributing to unemployment:

- laid off (19% of males, 8% of females)
- cannot find a job/lack employment opportunities (64% males, 49% females)
- qualifications not recognized (6% males, 8% females)
- preoccupied by family needs (0% v males, 18% females)
- lack of employable skills (0% males, 3% females)
- language barrier (5% males, 3% females)
- studying (6% males, 11% females)

Access to Initial Resettlement Services

-generally access information and services through family and community contacts -tend not to use services which provide multi-lingual services _ -barrier is often language
-more often than not the barrier to access is lack available information