



# SOMALI HERITAGE WEEK 2018



# REPORT



The logo for Somali Heritage Week 2018 features the text "SOMALI HERITAGE WEEK 2018" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The text is centered and has a slight drop shadow. The background consists of vertical stripes in red, orange, and grey, with a pattern of thin black lines within the orange and grey stripes.

# SOMALI HERITAGE WEEK 2018

**CONNECTIVITY**

**Building Positive Connections Among Kenyan  
Communities Through Art and Culture.**





## BACKGROUND

The cultural festival that was held on the second week of October aimed to build positive connection among Kenyan communities through art and culture, address the challenges faced by the Somali community in Kenya and to celebrate Kenya's diversity.

The two days festival was composed of various activities including: forums and debates that covered various topics on:

- *Education crisis in North Eastern Kenya;*
- *Challenges faced by youth and people with special needs*
- *A debate on the Somali customary law.*
- *The role of Somali Literature in Connecting Communities.*

Prior to the event 3 workshops were held a few months before the actual heritage week which were: Four months Women and culture and Deaf Community workshop, three-day Leadership training by lecturers from Hong Kong, China and a continuous storytelling training held for twelve youths facilitated by Zamaleo Act Story tellers.

The event also featured well renown Somali entertainers and musicians amongst them being the Legendary Somali renowned songstress *Faduma Ali Nakruma* and Musician *lidle Yare* and also a great play by *Tayo group* who are known for their satire plays based on Somalis everyday life. There were various traditional dances by *Iftiin Qaran* and *Cod iyo Miro and Womens Baranbur group*. Ongoing programs that included Exhibitions, Live Art, Outside Entertainments, Open Mic, Poetry Performances, Debates, Film Screening, Comedy by Comedians from Churchill Show, Storytelling Sessions And Craft Presentation.

The event featured many different Somali traditional dances including: *Dhaanto, Jaandheer, Balaqlay*. Organized by *Awjama Omar Cultural, Research and Reading Centre* with the support of *Heinrich Boell Foundation, World Vision, Amal Express, HORMUUD Telecom and Zamzam Foundation*.

## SHW 2018 NEW PROGRAMS

### I. WOMEN AND HEARING-IMPAIRED YOUTHS CULTURAL WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS SOLD THEIR ITEMS.

Since its inception in 2016, Women and culture workshop has connected women who are struggling with unemployment from Eastleigh and its environs to potential business opportunities where they have been selling their handcrafted products. In the year 2017, the Deaf Community took part in the workshop to gain handcraft skills to enable them to integrate with the community and be productive participants within the community. For a very long time, disabled people within the Somali community have been sidelined from employment opportunities. The participants of this workshop included Disabled Youths, Widows and other women who were interested in the workshop. They were trained on various skills in a period of four months which were; Designing Hand Bags, Jewelry Making, Henna Designing, Carpet Weaving, Beading, Table Mats Weaving, Hair Braiding, Sewing, Basket Weaving and Hair Braiding.

To support and encourage the women in sustaining and growing the skills they learned, they were given a platform to sell the handmade items, and were able to generate extra income by selling them to event participants. They now generate income from the skills they learnt from the workshops.

### II. THE CULTURAL TENT- SOMALI ARTIFACTS EXHIBITION AND FOOD EXHIBITION

A tent was placed outside courtyard of the Kenya national theater which was used to show case the Somali artifacts. The Somali food was also exhibited near the hut.

### III. THE DEBATE AT THE HUT

There was a debate at the Somali hut on the role of Somali literature in connecting communities together. In discussion were notable Somalis including Somalia's former Minister Dr. Maryan Qassim.







#### IV. LIVE ART AND EXHIBITION

The art piece inside Cheche gallery were of both Somali and non- Somali artists from Kenya railways, the pieces were brought to introduce and showcase Somali visual aesthetic with live art pieces that was aimed to capture the essences of peace in relation to the theme.

#### V. SHW CONCERT

The concert was held during the closing day, attended by 370 people. The concert featured renowned Singer and actress legendary *Faduma Ali Nakruma* and Somali musician *Idle Abullahi Nune (Idle Yare)*

#### VI. STORY TELLING IN SOMALI LANGUAGE

By Huissein Abdirizak( Kabaxaay) from Dadaab Story telling under the tree was attended by the Public, Secondary and primary schools. This year's story telling was different as the event include telling Somali narratives. The students who came were allowed to tell their stories and it was a wonderful interactive story telling.

#### VII. AN INSPIRING 1 HOUR SESSION BY- ABDI BILE ABDI- SOMALIA'S 1987, WORLD CHAMPION

Somali heritage week 2018 hosted Abdi Bile Somalia's first champion of the 1500 meters race 1987 where he had an inspiring session with the youth whom were surprised to see him at the arena.

#### VIII.INSPIRATION FORUM FOR THE YOUTH BY HODAN NALAYEH, FOUNDER OF INTEGRATION TV CANADA

#### IX. THE ENTERTAINMENT AT THE SOMALI HUT

Throughout the two days there were ongoing performances and dance competitions outside courtyard near the Somali hut. Having a sound system placed near the Somali hut made it possible for the participants to play traditional Somali songs, the youth showing off their skills in different formats.



# IMPACT

The Somali heritage week's panel discussions have provided an opportunity for the community, the public discussions serve as a place where the community meet to talk about social, economic and political issues confronting our society on day to day life and finds solution to the issues.

For the last four years, Somali Heritage Week has had 812 women and youth trained in various workshops. The workshops were incredibly beneficial for the trained. For instance some youth who took part in the storytelling workshop have been invited by various organizations to perform. This year 2018, the storytellers were invited to perform during the Mogadishu Book Fair in Mogadishu and later invited to perform at the World Literacy Day in Baidao hosted by UNICEF Somalia. Also storytellers are a part of Re-imagined! A magical day of storytelling in December this year. Women and Deaf Youth are able to support their families through making handmade items now.

The deaf community can now work in Salons and employ themselves through handmade crafts. The photography workshop participants are now running YouTube channels and have been part of filming the event. These workshops have inspired them.



## ACHIEVEMENTS

- A successful networking breakfast session that was well attended
- The concert, live art, art exhibitions, food exhibition and performance outside
- Three successful workshops that were attended by Women, Youths and the Deaf community.
- Four successful panel discussions on topics led by experts that were invited by the Somali heritage week organizers. The panelist turnout was great as 99 percent of the panelists came.
- High media coverage by both international and local media
- Well attended forums.
- Well attended Open Mic entertainments at the Somali hut where youth showcased their talent in performance.
- Storytelling youth who were trained by Zamaleo Sigana ACT (a professional storytelling organization) are being hired some of the members were invited by UNICEF Somalia to participate in the world literacy day in Baidao September 8. They were also in charge of doing a training for Baidao elementary school teachers
- The book fair was great 281 titles in different languages. SHW Book Fair promoted different authors and two authors launched their books at the SHW 2018
- The festival also featured a range of high energy performances by:
  - Somali legendary Fadumo Nakrumba who flew from Mogadishu
  - Iftin Qaran Traditional Dancers
  - Comedians from Churchill show.
  - Play by the Somali Deaf Community.
  - Buraanbur performances by women's group
  - Poetry performances by well-known Somali poets
  - Play by Tayo Group
  - Performance by Idle Yare.
- "Watu Wote", An award winning Kenyan-Germany short film by Tobias Rosen was screened.
- A documentary by the Somali student's association was screened after the Friday morning panel on education crises in north eastern Kenya. The 10 minutes video was recorded by the students about the challenges the children in Dadaab camp face especially with the lack of enough teachers.
- Non-Somali communities were included in the event, there were live art and exhibition by Kenyan Artists from the Railways Art Museum. Zamaleo Storytellers performed and trained Awjama Centre Youth.
- Cod iyo Miro Womens Buraanmbur group showcased different performances on peace and culture, the poems and songs were designed to entertain and educate the audience.
- Four former Somali heritage week photography workshop participants were the main Vloggers and photographers during the event.
- A participant from Women and culture 2016 workshop has now opened a kiosk at her home in Eastleigh, Kamukunji selling her crafts, and also 3 participants from the deaf community are using the skills they learned to do freelance hair braiding and Henna designing in Eastleigh and its environs and they are hoping to open their own salon one day.





## BRIEF OUTLINE OF KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- There was a challenge with the lack of enough finances that could not allow Awjama organization to cater for the organizers remuneration thus working on zero budget.
- Due to lack of enough funding, the event was reduced to 2 days, which later lead to leaving out important forums. Also this change of program affected three schools who had confirmed to attend the event on Thursday the 11th.
- There was need for more cultural artifacts which was to be placed at the outside courtyard which the organization could not purchase due to lack of funds.
- Funding from the partners were released very late.
- The initial plan for the concert was to sell tickets to cater for the two musicians' expenses. This was not effective as the musician confirmations delayed which then lead to tickets issued one week to the event and the arrangement was done quite late
- Audience at the outside courtyard could not access programs at the theater a times when the theater was full. There was need for live streaming daylight screen outside the courtyard.
- Kenya National Theatre sound system had issues at the theater on Friday.
- The networking breakfast started late which delayed the opening ceremony.
- There was no Somali Heritage week fashion show held this year due to lack of funds, which led the organizers contacting a leading fashion “House of Idil” who couldn't take part due to late notice.





## OPPORTUNITIES

- Being the only forum, which Somali people meet to address their challenges and celebrate their heritage, the panel discussions and the debate were highly appreciated by Somali leaders, intellectuals and students who attended the event.
- The panel discussion on education crisis in North Eastern Kenya was well received by students from North Eastern Province and the members of the ministry of education.
- Isiolo, Mandera and Garissa Counties whose delegates attended the event, are interested in conducting cultural events in their Counties which they asked Awjama Cultural Center to help in organizing.
- Artfest, The Nubian Souk Festival and Rusinga Festival in Kisumu invited Awjama Cultural center for partnership.
- Dr Auma Obama's Sauti Kuu foundation invited Awjama Cultural Center partnership for an event that will be held on August 2019.
- The event was beneficial for the women and culture participants who sold their items.
- Idil Safina, founder of House of Idil fashion industry who was invited to hold the heritage week fashion show, has proposed to sponsor the even next year.

## Indicators

Day	Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Total Two days Participants
Forums	Panel on Education Crisis in North Eastern Province	Social Economic Challenges panel	
Forums	The Somali Customary Law Panel	The Role of Somali Literature in connecting communities together	
Overall day participants	721	610	1,331

## ATTENDANCES

- o The overall attendance was 1,566.
- o Attendance by 8 Public and Private Schools
- o Attendance by 65 members of the Deaf Community.
- o Attendance by politicians and community leaders including;
  - Current Isiolo deputy county governor
  - Current Kamukunji MP
  - German Embassy- Somalia
  - USA Mission to Somalia
  - Swiss Development Agency
  - USAID Somalia
  - Japan Embassy- Somalia section
  - Somali Embassy Kenya
  - Somalia's Minister of Transport & Civil Aviation - Omar Mohamed, other members of parliament and government officials.
  - Mandera, Garissa and Isiolo County representatives
  - Abdi Bile Abdi- Somalia's 1987, world champion in the 1500 metres, the first Somali to do so.
  - Hodan Naleyeh - Renown Somali inspirational speaker and the founder of Integration TV



## BUDGET

### PROJECT MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

#### 1. ASSET MANAGEMENT

- The paintings and other materials that were brought by Artist Zainab remain at Awjama Cultural Center.
- There were cultural artifacts which was purchased and were showcased during the heritage week. The items are now kept at Awjama Cultural Centre
- The Somali Hut and its equipment also remain as one of Somali heritage weeks assets.

#### 2. ISSUE MANAGEMENT

There was a planned entry fee for the concert, however this was not possible as rains begun and there were close to 300 participant who were not aware of the events ticket. We had to allow them to be in the concert.

Due to rains on the concert night, many were forced to leave since the theatre was filled up.





## COMMUNICATIONS MANAGEMENT

The event got overwhelming response from both Online and direct audience. It was advertised in many ways including Social Media, Radios and email invitations. Taking a focus on Social Media, the Social Media campaigners had strategy for advertising Somali Heritage Week on all Social Media Platform. Social Media marketing started three months to the event, the first one month was just for reminding the cultural enthusiasts that the event was on the way coming, this involved development of a #-tag, #SHW2018 One month and two weeks consistence posting of useful materials online, triggered a conversation online regarding the event. The social media campaigners also posted the event on all of the most famous event sites in Kenya. The sites included:

➤ KENYA BUZZ      ➤ NAIROBI NOW      ➤ EVENTS BRITE      ➤ EVENSI      ➤ ALL EVENT

Also the media mentions on both direct and online platforms by:

- |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. BBC TV AND RADIO | 10. IFTIIN FM       |
| 2. VOA RADIO        | 11. GOOBJOOG TV     |
| 3. KBC TV           | 12. KTN TV          |
| 4. RTN TV           | 13. CITIZEN TV      |
| 5. KALSAN TV        | 14. NTV             |
| 6. RADIO MIDNIMO    | 15. INTERGRATION TV |
| 7. STAR FM          | 16. IQRA FM         |
| 8. STAR TV          | 17. KBC RADIO       |
| 9. UNIVERSAL TV     |                     |



## LESSONS LEARNED

The food that was sold to the participant was not pre-packed which was a serious issue during lunch break as the team who were to go on stage right after lunch were delayed, next time food should be prepared and packed before lunch hour. The entertainments outside courtyard was highly appreciated by the audience, there was need for extra chairs and an MC.

In the future for the concert to be successful, Somali musicians must be on board in marketing it. The groups performing should come to the events' venue for rehearsal a day before the event starts so as to familiarize with the stage and check on the sound equipment.

## POST PROJECT TASKS

- There are no outstanding tasks.



## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Somali Heritage Week is a four-day annual cultural festival established in 2015 by Awjama Omar Cultural, Research and Reading Centre and Heinrich Boell Foundation. It was held on November 18th to 21st at Kenya National Museum. This project primarily aims to give a counter-narrative of the stereotypes about the Somali community in Kenya; to showcase and preserve the Somali culture; to enhance positive co-existence among Kenyans; promote social responsibility and celebrate dialogue; to promote peace through celebrating Somali culture with the diverse Kenyan community. The festival hopes to create a space where Somali community can meet with other communities in Kenya. While celebrating culture, it also aims to provide training opportunities to empower the youth so as not to engage in negative activities and encourage them to participate in creating their vision of a healthy and sustainable community through a creative, inclusive and reflective learning process.

Every year the organizers set a theme for the festival that is based on current issues that need to be tackled, for example, the year 2015 the festivals theme was **“Identity”: What does it mean to be a Somali-Kenyan?** It came a time when profiling the community as a terrorist was at a high rate. The 2016 theme was **“Change”: How do Communities Accept Changing Circumstances.** Somali Heritage Week 2017 the theme was **“Inclusivity”: Enhancing Inclusivity and Diversity,** and was held in October 5th - 8th at Kenya Cultural Centre, and finally Somali heritage Week 2018 theme is **Connectivity- Building Positive Connection among Kenyan Communities through art and culture.** Programs during the festival are mostly on the theme. It features Arts, dance, comedy, performing art, contemporary music, poet performances, exhibition on the theme, book fair, informative panel discussions and traditional performances.

Since the Somali Heritage Week was establish **812 youths** have benefitted from the workshops which were introduced in 2016. So far 7 different workshops have been conducted including; Social Media workshop, Women and Culture Workshop, Literary workshop, empowering youth through Art workshop, Youth involvement in politics Workshop, photography workshop and the Deaf community workshop/seminar, Storytelling and the leadership training. The woman and culture workshop is held every year.





## DELEGATES AND ACTIVITIES



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@SomHeritageWeek

 @AwjamaOrg

 Awjama Cultural Centre

Cell: 0700 009 620

email: fardowsa.awjama@gmail.com