

Youthprise Investment in East African & Somali Youth

Youthprise invests in the future of Minnesota by investing in youth from underserved communities. We work on multiple levels: supporting nonprofit organizations that serve youth; aligning efforts through citywide and statewide initiatives; and providing opportunities directly to young people. Our work focuses on increasing young people's opportunities for social emotional learning, economic opportunity, and health and safety.



Minnesota is home to many high-potential, creative and bright Somali youth whose families and communities have greatly contributed to our international landscape. If you walk the streets of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, you can find Somali malls, cafes and organizations that are filled with a vibrant community of poets, educators and entrepreneurs. Minnesota's Somali community is a distinct and celebratory part of our global home.

Youthprise acknowledges that there are many challenges facing young people in Minnesota as it relates to terrorism-recruitment, racism, Islamophobia, and anti-immigrant sentiments. Starting from a systems change, strengths-based holistic approach to youth development, Youthprise recognizes that isolation, disconnection from community, lack of opportunities and sense of belonging, distrust, hostile environments, and high unemployment can contribute to youth being on pathways towards violence. We also know that the communities most impacted by these issues must be central to developing effective responses.

When building the capacity of youth serving organizations in Minnesota, Youthprise has long incorporated a strengths-based approach rooted in racial equity and community relationships. We invite our partners to think bigger and more positively about the ways we develop generative communities that are safe for all of our young people. Youthprise is telling a different story – a story that says it is possible to respond to national and local crisis confronting our young people by learning to work together.

Youthprise is proud to announce that we are establishing a **Somali Youth Development Fund** made possible by funding from the U.S. Department of Justice and private funders. By managing the grantmaking process for this fund, Youthprise hopes to demonstrate critical leadership on difficult issues that must be tackled in partnership with the community to support the resiliency of Somali community in Minnesota and to address structural challenges facing Somali youth.

Resilience is made possible by complex interconnected systems of support – both formal and informal. Such systems support the development of positive youth identity and create welcoming environments for the integration of immigrant youth. We are grateful for Somali and Muslim community members and faith-based organizations that have stepped up to increase community programming for Somali youth in our neighborhoods.

We proceed with much intentionality, cultural sensitivity, and care to ensure all youth can thrive by working with the community to respond to the challenges they face. Young people are Minnesota's greatest resource. We know that if we support Somali youth to thrive, then Minnesota as a state and global community will thrive as well. We ask our partners, and community members, what is the environment we are working to create together?

Minnesota is home to the largest number of Somali immigrants in the United States. The largest concentration is located in Hennepin County. This community has overcome many challenges since they began immigrating to Minnesota in the 1990s.

Youthprise's Support for East African & Somali Youth

Somali Youth Development Fund

As a partner in the Building Community Resilience initiative, Youthprise is administering the Somali Youth Development Fund, which will support positive youth development activities, community engagement, and capacity building for Somali-led community-based organizations. Youthprise is working with members of the Somali American Task Force and others to identify community needs, assets, and capacity building requirements of Somali-led nonprofits serving youth and families. With \$400,000 in U.S. Department of Justice and private funding, Youthprise will oversee a transparent and competitive grantmaking process designed to enable youth engagement, prevention, and intervention activities to help build the resiliency of the Somali Minnesotan community and address structural challenges facing Somali youth. Fundraising is continuing to add to the initiative. An RFP will be released in January 2016 and funding decisions will be made in February 2016.

Pipeline To Integration Initiative

In partnership with other local philanthropic funders, corporations and key community partners, Youthprise is supporting the Pipeline to Integration, a three-year catalytic project that aims enhance the infrastructure, management and leadership of select Somali community-based nonprofit organizations in the Twin Cities that serve Somali youth and their families. Led by TAYO Consulting Group, the project is designed to significantly improve youth programs by enhancing the leadership capacity of key organization leaders.

East African Youth at Work Initiative

This initiative is an organized, multi-institutional, culturally relevant effort that includes family, faith- and community-based organizations, schools and the private sector; and targets the urgent employment and economic needs of Minnesota's East African immigrant community. Youthprise serves as a backbone organization for three culturally specific Somali organizations – Islamic Civic Society, Ka Joog, and New American Academy – helping them to build their capacity to improve employment outcomes among Somali youth ages 14-24. The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Office of Youth Development is the major supporter of this work.

Study on Somali Youth Development in Out-of-School Time

In 2013, Youthprise commissioned Open Path Resources and Islamic Civic Society of America to gather the perspective of the Somali community on the definition of successful youth development. The study included interviews with 40 Somali immigrant youth, 25 East African community and institutional leaders, families, and faith leaders from within and outside of Somali community, both in the Twin Cities and greater Minnesota. Study respondents identified three pillars that define successful youth development in the Somali-American community: well-educated youth, youth grounded in heritage and faith, and youth engaged as active citizens in their local and global communities.

Past Grantmaking

Youthprise has a long history of supporting organizations that serve East African and Somali youth and we are committed to building the capacity of these organizations and the youth themselves to advance youth success. Since 2012, we have invested nearly \$800,000 in Somali-led organizations or culturally specific initiatives targeting the Somali community. Here is a sample of funded organizations and number of youth served.

Organizations	Number	Male	Female	Age 5-11	Age 12-17	Age 18-25
Ka Joog	515	295	220	90	365	60
New American Academy	180	99	81	30	80	60
Somali American Parent Association	140	55	85	25	80	35
African Immigrant Community Services	86	34	52	0	54	32
Shanta Link	250	100	150	0	80	125
Total Participants	1,171	583	588			