Somali Bantu Subculture

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Overview of Somali History & Geography

• Somalia is situated on east coast of Africa and its known as Horn of Africa because of its shape.
• Colonial rulers divided Somali in 5 sections: Djibouti, Ogadenia (part of Ethiopia), North Somalia, South Somalia & NFD (part of Kenya).
• Somalia (North & South) received their independence in 1960, Djibouti in 1977 from French and became separate State.
• The capital City of Somalia is Mogadishu and total population of Somalis is estimated 10 million.
Continue of the overview H&G

- Somalia covers 638,000 square km (246,300 miles) and its coastal land is more than 3,000 km.
- Somalia has one the best and longest coastal beaches in Africa.
- The climate is mostly hot (85 - 100F) and we have four seasons Gu (rainy season- March to May), Hagaa (few shower rain June to Aug.), Dair (Short rains Sept to Nov.) and Jilal (harsh dry period from Dec. to Feb).
Continue overview of H&G

• Somalia is known as one of the few nations in Africa which the majority of the population come from one ethnic group, share one culture, speak one language and believe in one Religion (Islam).
• Somalia is a member of the Arab league of Nations and also African Union and it’s one the nations that holds both cultures together.
• Somali has not central Government since Jan. 1991 when the civil war started and till today no functioning Gov’t exists.
Religion, Regions, Clan & Family

• Islam came to Somali more than 1,400 years ago, Somalis practice the Sunni sect of Islam.
• The religion requires the same dedication then as now, and it’s not altered to suit modern times and Somali people are guided by Islamic Sharia law in their daily lives.
• Islam has a five-layer foundations called the Pillars of Islam:
  1. Believing one God.
  2. Daily prayers (5 times).
  3. Fasting the month of Ramadan.
  4. Paying of Zakat (Donations)
Somali has 18 Regions (small states) and their names are: Lower Juba (where I came from), Middle Juba, Gedo, Lower Shabbeele, Banadir (Mogadishu), Bay, Bakol, Middle Shabbeele, Galgadud, Mudug, Nugaal, Bari, Sool, Sanaag, Togdeer, Awdal and Northwestern.

There are some additions (break downs) made after the civil war.

Different Regions has different resources and productions but I can divide mainly into 3 sections as Farming, Livestock and Fishing.

Somalia exports livestock, marine products and fruits (Banana) to the Arab rich countries and Europe (Italy)
Continue RRCF

- Clan (Tribe)- Somalia is composed of 5 Clans (Dir, Darod, Hawiye, Digil/Mirifle & Others-Minorities).
- Clan goes to paternal lineage as we call “Abtirsiimo”.
- Clan members abide by the social contract such as paying the blood-price and lending hand to clan members.
- Each clan elects their leader through consensus.
Continue RRCF

• Family – Compose of the parents, their children/spouses and grand children.
• Father is the head of the family - responsible for all necessities such as shelter, food, clothing, health & etc.
• Mother plays a very vital role of managing the household and ensuring the children’s immediate needs are met and teaching them to be autonomous (responsible).
Somali Bantu Sub-culture

• The Bantu compose of 6 sub-clans as:- Mashunguli, Mijindo, Manyasa, Makuwa, Mizigua and Miyao.
• The term Bantu refers to both a linguistic and an ethnic group and they are originated from an area in the central Africa.
• Approximately 400 different Bantu languages spoken in Africa.
• Somali- Bantu consider themselves as being the original inhabitants of Somalia.
• They were marginalized and segregated for many years in the social developments but always have their representatives in the various Somali Gov’ts from 1960 till 1991.
Somali Bantu…

• Bantu people are physically distinct by their kinky hair, flat nose, full lips and stout bodies. These physical generalizations are widespread, but not necessarily universal.
• Average family has 4 to 6 children.
• Bantu mostly are agrarian people who settled near the banks of both rivers (Juba & Shabeele) in Somalia.
• Mostly they came from the southern part of Somalia (Middle and Lower Juba Regions).
Somali Bantu….

- The Bantus used to work the farms of the sugar factories and banana plantations.
- They have strong sense of family and community.
- Resilient:” just like all refugees, they’re survivors”
- They are intelligent and hard working people with good work ethics.
Challenges of the Parents & Youth

• Parents: very little or no prior school experience.
• Language, weather and cultural barriers.
• Learning ESL is very difficult.
• Struggling for survival for family basic needs.
• Depends the larger Somali Communities.
• Child care, transportation issues.
• Employment is very hard to get.
For Youth…

• Cultural shock and identity crises.
• No help at home as they struggle for their home works and school projects.
• Family feud as kids side one parent.
• Role of children changes.
Useful hints

• Earn the trust of the parents as they see you respecting, listening their concerns.
• Build your own way of contacting the parents like use color codes (Green Good, Red bad) with the students agenda books.
• Be aware of kids signing their papers.
• Bending Brooks Apts. Office in Urbancrest Village Have both after school programs for the kids and adult ESL classes.
• You can meet with the parents at that facility.
Q & A = S & J
Question = Su’aal
Answer = Jawaab

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For more info please check these websites:
www.jimonet.com
http://www.somalibantu.com/
For questions and follow-up please contact:
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