



ISSUE 8

SOMALI GRADUATE JOURNAL 2020



**CELEBRATING
SUCCESS**

Graduate profiles
Success stories
Community perspectives

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“

Among our
graduates
are **doctors,**
engineers,
chartered
accountants,
scientists, IT
professionals,
teachers and
social workers.

”

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EDITORIAL

Assalamu alaikum

I am pleased to present another amazing collection of profiles featuring talented Somalis in Aotearoa New Zealand.



ABDIRIZAK ABDI
EDITOR

I want to thank everyone who played a role in making this 8th edition of the Somali Graduate Journal possible after a delay of a year or so to publish it.

Despite the challenges in collecting the graduate profiles, I continue to admire the level of willingness and support from the community and graduates themselves to continue with this publication for our Somali community. There is a widespread recognition of the positive impact of the journal on the community. We would have liked to have profiled all the Somali graduates, however that hasn't been possible to do so. As participation is voluntary there are always some who choose not to be in the journal for various reasons – all valid, and we respect that. Therefore, the number of graduates profiled here does not reflect the actual number who graduated in 2019/2020.

The journal, despite being affected by many Somalis who had moved to Australia, remains a viable publication as you will find Somalis studying at almost all universities and polytechnics in New Zealand. The trend in the last few years where many Somalis families had been moving to Australia for better employment prospects has all but halted now and many graduates are now choosing to remain in New Zealand. In fact we are now seeing Somali families relocating back to New Zealand – a trend that will continue we hope. We are also seeing the number of the Somali professionals steadily growing in New Zealand and this will raise the profile of the community further but more importantly it will encourage more to stay in New Zealand and seek job opportunities at home. Some of these professionals are featured in this edition. Their successes and messages of encouragement will be invaluable to the Somali students or African youth currently going through their tertiary studies with their hopes and dreams of being successful in New Zealand when they too graduate. “Success breeds more success”



SPECIAL TRIBUTE

A special tribute to my friend, Ismail Diriye who succumbed to Covid-19 last year in Somalia. He was a great community leader who did so much for his Somali community in Hamilton and the Muslim community in general before moving to Australia and from there back to Somalia to take up a regional Ministerial post. The Somali community in New Zealand and particularly in Hamilton, would like to dedicate this publication in remembrance of his foresight, leadership and the great community minded person he was. May Allah have mercy on him and grant him Jannatul Firdaus, AAMIIN.

MESSAGE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

IBRAHIM OMER

FIRST NEW ZEALAND MP
OF AFRICAN DESCENT

First I would like to congratulate those who are featured in the Somali Graduates Journal. I know us former refugees can excel at all aspects of life, once we dare to imagine ourselves in positions we have been told are out of reach.



We can see this illustrated in shining examples such as Ilhan Omar, Joe Neguse, Ahmed Hussain and Mo Farah. These are our pioneers and successful leaders who have created the keys to doors that have been previously locked.

In New Zealand, leaders in the Somali community have created organisations that have been key foundations of support and opportunities for many former refugees.

In particular, Adam Awad and Koos Ali have paved the way for many in Wellington to step up and take on various leadership roles. I look up to and have followed their footsteps through my own community work.



Ibrahim Omer

speaking in the Parliament



Reflecting back, my life has taken a dramatic turn upwards after I became a candidate for the Labour Party in the 2020 General Election.

We former refugees are quick to call New Zealand home but often hesitate to demand the Government to aid us not only to survive but to flourish. Due to the lack of representation for our people, positions in politics have been presented as of out of reach. I am happy to say that the glass ceiling has been broken and I am

anticipating our young people to dream to be future Members of Parliament, Ministers and even the Prime Ministers of New Zealand one day.

As a former Refugee, Muslim, and an African who dared to dream, I am committed to keeping the doors behind me open by imparting my knowledge and access on to our young graduates. My parting message is: if an opportunity does not exist, create it. If an idea does not exist, create it. Do not wait.

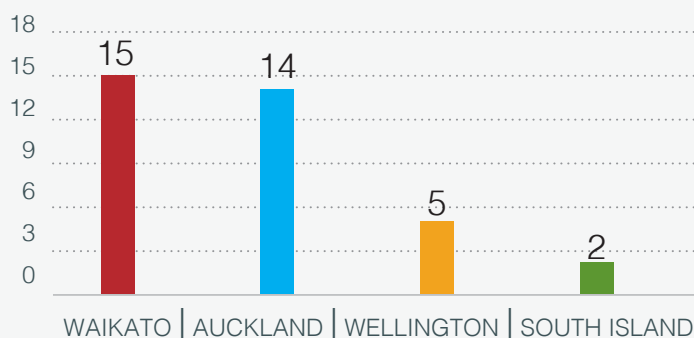


GRADUATE ANALYSIS

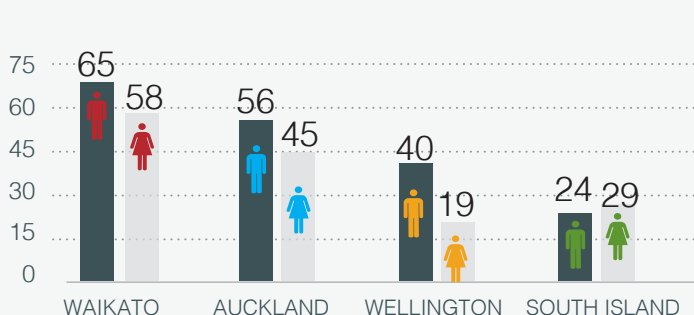
In this publication we have profiled 36 Somali graduates from around New Zealand. These are the ones we have been able to get profiles from. The 36 graduates are evenly split between the genders: 18 males and 18 females.

The following charts are a quick reference for the regional numbers and the field of study to show the wide range of qualifications the Somali graduates have pursued.

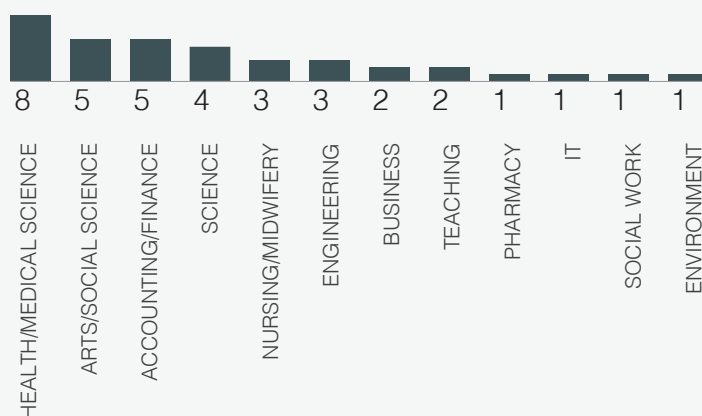
SOMALI GRADUATE NUMBERS
BY REGION 2018 - 2020



SOMALI GRADUATE NUMBERS
BY REGION 1997 - 2020

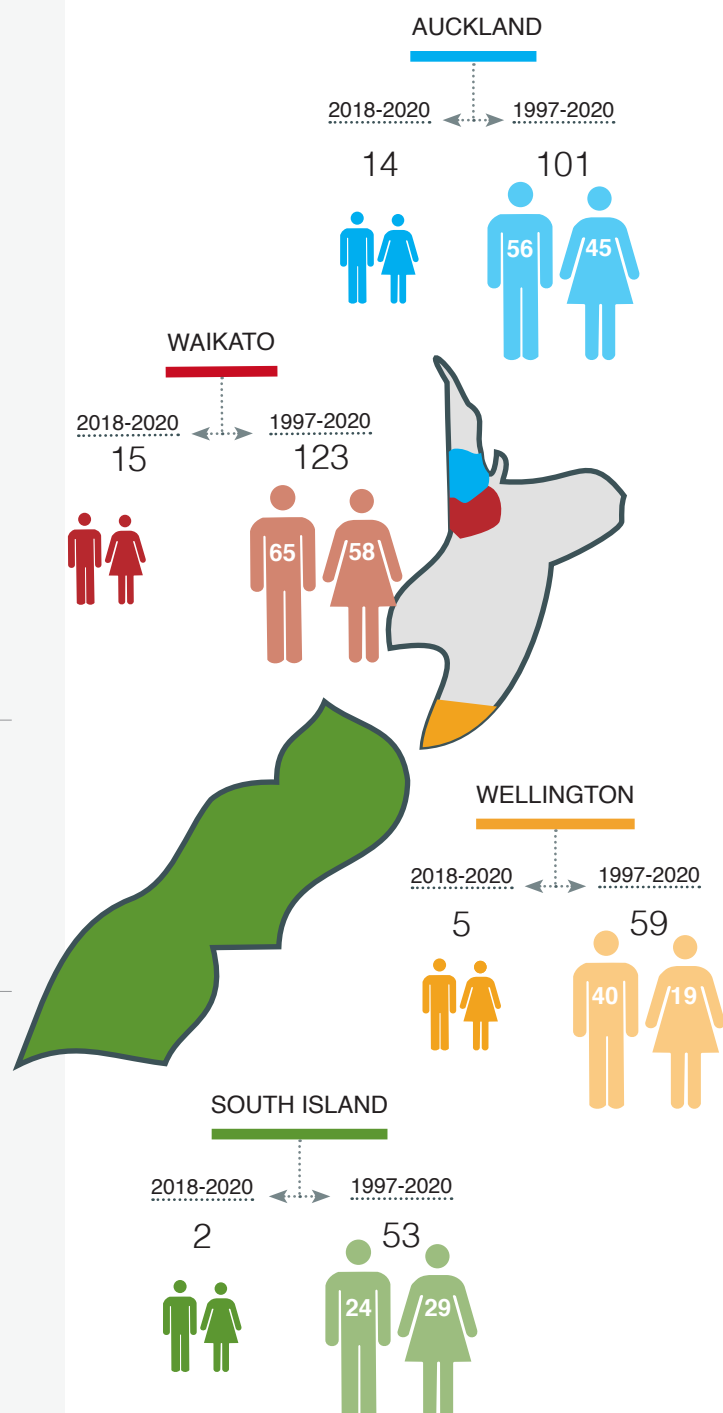


SOMALI GRADUATE
BY FIELD OF STUDY 2018 - 2020



SOMALI GRADUATES BY REGION

The graphic below shows the graduate numbers, the aggregate numbers and gender.



GRADUATE PROFILES

Abdirahman Abdisamad	10	Ahmed Abdulrahman	39
Mohamed Omar	11	Ahmed Salah	40
Soltarn Zacharia Zanzabari	12	Anzal Aden	42
Aden Farah	14	Nesra Wale	44
Liiban Abdulhakim Sharif	16	Fadumo Ali	46
Abdulaziz Mohamed Kulmiye	17	Ismahan Khalif	48
Suad Ali Abdulkadir	18	Fartun Hirsi	50
Fahima Muse	20	Maryan Ali	52
Faysal Abdi Mohamed	21	Amal Abdullahi	54
Ayaan Omar	22	Sagal Abdullahi	55
Sahra Ali	24	Adnan Abdullahi	56
Fatuma Mohamud	26	Botan Musa Botan	57
Naima Ali	28	Mohamed Ibrahim	58
Saynab Muse	30	Saynab Ibrahim	60
Najib Mohamud	32	Bahsan Ibrahim	61
Abdulqani Mohamed Muse	34	Yusuf Mohamed	62
Farhan Ased	36	Mohamed Mohamed	64
Abdifatah Abdi	38	Khadro Mohamed	65

Qualification gained:
Bachelor of Information
Technology (Majors: Networking,
Information Security and Assurance)

Tertiary education institution:
Wellington Institute of Technology
(Wellington, New Zealand)

Year of graduation:
2017

Place of employment:
Transurban (Melbourne)

ABDIRAHMAN ABDISAMAD



MY MESSAGE to my fellow somalis

My advice is to choose what you would like to study carefully and to always stay motivated. Studying can be difficult at times and there will be obstacles here and there but keep at it and always think long term. Manage your time well and put faith first then family then career and Insha'Allah all will go to plan.



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

I am planning to upskill and develop myself to become a senior/team leader in a security operations centre and work my way up to become a Cyber Security Operations Centre (CSOC) manager. It requires a great deal of effort and drive but Insha'Allah one day I will get there. And Insha'Allah along the way I hope I can be of help to our young Somali students who are considering a career in Cyber Security or IT in general.



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

Growing up, I was always fascinated by technology and slowly developed a passion for all things technological. During my high school years, I took up Information Technology (IT) as one of my elective subjects and I was good at it. When I completed high school, pursuing IT in my tertiary studies was an obvious choice for me. IT itself consists of several subfields: Networking, Programming, Software Engineering, Cyber Security etc. After a thorough research I chose Networking and Infosec as my majors and never looked back.

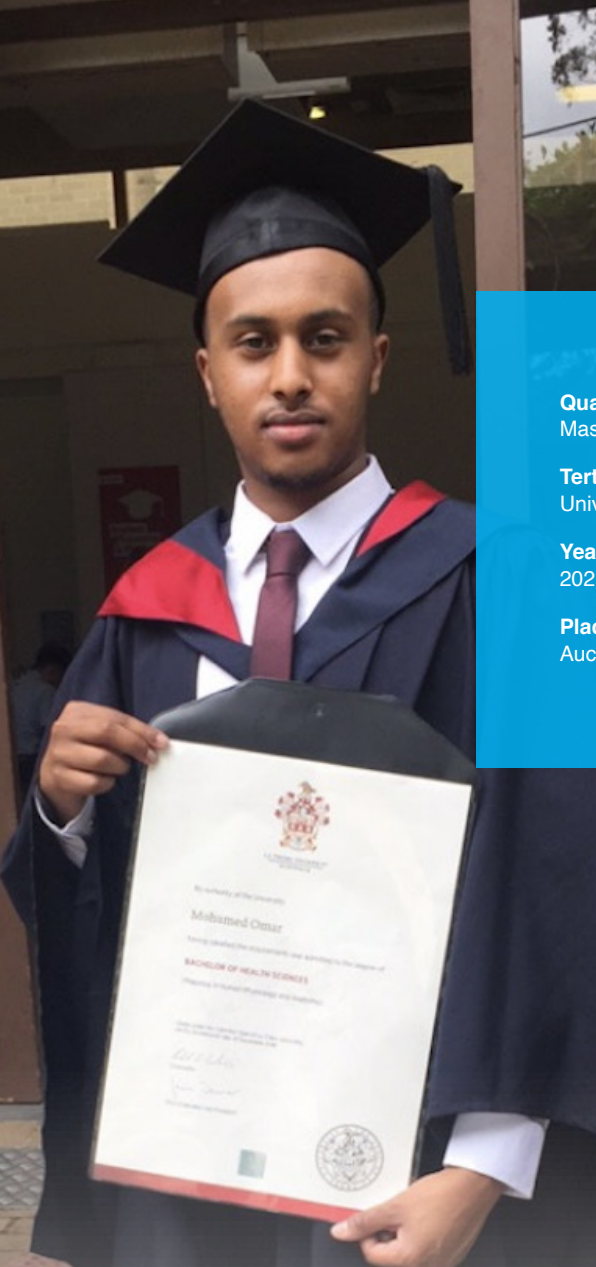
The first year of my tertiary studies was very challenging. It was totally different to what I was accustomed to but I was very motivated knowing that if I did well and got to the finish line that this would set me up for a good career. I surrounded myself with likeminded people who were already in the IT field and this motivated me more to overcome any obstacle I faced during my studies. This was extremely helpful.

With IT, technology is forever evolving and that is what I love about it; there is always something new to learn, a new technology. There are vendor certificates that I pursue to upskill and develop myself. After completing my higher education and whilst working I managed



to undertake several certifications which helped me further my career goals. These certifications include:

- Certified Ethical Hacker (CEH)
- CyberArk Certified Trustee
- CompTIA Security + Certified
- Cisco Certified Entry Network Technician



Qualification gained:
Master of Audiology

Tertiary education institution:
University of Auckland

Year of graduation:
2021

Place of employment:
Auckland DHB



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

I have a keen interest in working with paediatrics and Cochlear Implants. Looking ahead, I aspire to visit Somalia and contribute to hearing health outcomes there.

MOHAMED OMAR

MY MESSAGE to my fellow somalis

During university I learned the importance of networking amongst your faculty and volunteering - both of which help build your career. My advice to fellow Somali students thinking about tertiary education is to firstly find a passion, set timely goals and work hard to achieve them!



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

In high school I excelled in Chemistry and Biology which naturally led me to pursue a career in the health field. I obtained a Bachelor's degree in Physiology and Human Anatomy. During my undergraduate studies I shadowed different health professionals before pursuing a degree in Audiology. Audiology has a great mixture of science, technology and patient interaction. During my studies I enjoyed a good balance between research and clinical work. I was always fascinated by how small organs such as the ear, which has the smallest bone in the body, controlled many aspects of our lives including hearing and balance. During my studies, I encountered numerous challenges but overcame them with the support of family. Without my family's support, encouragement and guidance I would not be in the position I'm in today.



Qualification gained:

Bachelor of science (BSc) +
Graduate diploma in secondary
teaching (GradDipTchg)

Tertiary education institution:

University of Auckland

Year of graduation:

2013 and 2015 respectively

Place of employment:

Seeking opportunities in Africa

SOLTARN ZACHARIA ZANZABARI



MY MESSAGE
to my fellow somalis

I would encourage Somali
Youth to work and collaborate
with one another as success
is much easier when you have
others on your side.



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

I have a wide range of interests and
could not fit them all into this section. At
the present moment I am wanting to be
gainfully employed in any sector which will
increase my depth of experience and set
me up in my career, whatever that may be!



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

Salaam, I represent the early cohort of Somalis to arrive in New Zealand following the onset of civil war. Although small, the Somali community during the early 1990's in Auckland was tight-knit and largely concentrated together. This created a strong sense of safety and in retrospect was a great place to be for a young person who'd just fled war, famine and total chaos.

Although I largely hold fond memories of growing up in New Zealand, I can safely assume that the pressures of everyday life in New Zealand were mostly felt by our care-takers (and sometimes our older siblings). These issues ranged from lack of employment, dealing with a tight housing market and (perhaps the most overarching) the language barrier that disempowered many would-be heads of families. However, it wasn't until I got to university and assumed full control of my independence that I realised the inequities that exist for minority groups, such as the one I belong to, particularly within the realm of access to quality education and finding employment. My decision on what to study was easy because I always enjoyed science related subjects at school so I enrolled in a bachelor of science. The only legitimate concern that hung over my head throughout the duration of my qualification was what to do job-wise with my qualification. When I completed my qualification, I was none the wiser on what I wanted to do so I chanced on the opportunity to enrol in a teaching diploma soon after, believing (naively at the time) that it was where I could enact the most change.

The exposure to classroom teaching from the position of a teacher during my teaching placements made me reflect upon my own experiences within New Zealand's education system. In retrospect it was perhaps the single most stressful time of my life and one which was exacerbated by the fact that once again I was going

through this journey alone and the only difference this time around was the added responsibility of being a teacher as opposed to a student. At the time I was perhaps one of a few people from my community who were studying in the field of education, and perhaps, the only male teacher. Most enviably, however, was the fact that many of my kiwi colleagues in the programme had largely come from families where the adults (or in some cases even siblings) were veterans in the teaching profession. Admittedly this led to times where I questioned if I really did belong and could compete in this cohort.

In the end it was my inbuilt determination and stubbornness that took me across the finish line of my degree. Disappointed in my experiences, I made the decision to seek out teaching opportunities abroad. Since returning to New Zealand a short while later, I have worked in fields outside my profession and in a way, I am thankful, as these experiences have made me a well-rounded individual.

The experience of doing my qualifications allowed me to at least reflect, be critical and have an awareness of issues relating to inequities that exist in New Zealand's education system. This was my take away message and it is one that I am currently using as a source of motivation as I seek out teaching opportunities in Africa!

Lastly, I want to say that whilst my experiences may sound horrible to readers, I am thankful that I am qualified at the very least and I don't in any way want to discourage anyone from pursuing university level study or to enter the education field. That is clearly not my intention here. In fact, the lack of educators we have from our community should be a source of encouragement. At the end of the day my experiences are mine alone and just as I cherish mine you should cherish yours!



ADEN FARAH

Qualifications gained:

Master of Chemical and Bioprocess
Engineering (Distinction)
Bachelor of Engineering (Honours)
Diploma (Science and Technology)

Name of tertiary institution:

Massey University

Year of graduation:

2018

Place of employment:

Worley (WorleyParsons)



FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

I have a keen interest in business and am currently working on a few projects outside of work with the help of successful entrepreneurs, to whom I am forever indebted. Moreover, I have a voracious appetite for leadership and personal development in order to become an impactful person.



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

A first, perhaps like many of you, I did not know what I wanted to do or should do at University. I started with a Software Engineering degree but soon found that I did not possess the Zen-like patience demanded by computer coding – given my choleric personality, I am naturally under-furnished in the patience department.

Eventually, I made my peace with a degree in Chemical Engineering which has favoured me with an excellent job at a major company. I subsequently obtained a Master degree in the same field. In retrospect, if I could defy the principles of General Relativity and the linearity of time, I would probably have seen through my Software degree for I know now that it offers a greater flexibility of the working-lifestyle.

The greatest challenge was deciding not to quit, which can be a lonely decision: in my class, we had no less than 230 students, and yet, less than 45 graduated. I was neither the most talented nor the most favoured in circumstance; I merely accepted the price to pay and kept my eyes on the prize. I certainly could not have done this without the help from Allah and my beloved family.



MY MESSAGE

My limited capacity to write does not permit me to express and exercise the solemnness that I feel right now. Rarely in any time, have I been afforded the glorious opportunity of sharing with my fellow countrymen and women. Our forefathers fought with gallantry and honour for the independence and the freedom of our nation; and yet, I cannot help but feel we have failed to live up to their ideals. Far too long, has our nation been bogged down by petty tribalism, bigotry, and prejudice.

Accordingly, if we are to rise once more as a nation and as a people; if we are to harness our abundant resources to create an order of plenty for all of our people; and if we are to reclaim in our righteous place on the world's stage as a respected and honoured nation, we must not only transcend the crippling legacy of tribalism and division, we must unite around a common purpose, a purpose that is beyond our individualistic, community, or clan causes. We also ought to be model citizens in Aotearoa (New Zealand); we ought to be taxpayers, not tax eaters, and we ought to be the first to contribute and the last to demand.

For those of you who are contemplating whether to pursue a tertiary education, I beseech you to develop and personalise a clear DEFINITENESS OF PURPOSE and a formidable, emotionally imperative WHY FACTOR. In other words, have a meaningful and a clear answer to the question: why do you wish to study?

In my opinion, albeit our family hold in their hearts what they deem to be best for us, it is not good enough to assert that you will seek higher education only because it happens to be the wish of your family. Rather, seek education because YOU want to make a difference; seek education because YOU want to be an example for your people; seek education because YOU want to make a meaningful contribution to society; seek education because YOU want to build your self-belief, conquer your fears and doubts. To achieve your education aspirations, you do not have to be some kind of super-genius, overzealous person; you merely need to be an average one who works on a consistent basis, but you do need good reasons for wanting to do it in the first place.

In closing, let me caution and warn you that even if you reach the summit of your education, you will not have been exposed to some essential life skills. Unfortunately, the education system, even at PhD level, does not offer arguably the most valuable skillset in life: emotional intelligence and people skills. As such, it is your responsibility to educate and elevate yourself by cultivating a habit of perpetual personal development. The legendary Jim Rohn said about personal development "You can HAVE MORE than you've got because you can BECOME MORE than you are; unless YOU CHANGE how you are, you will always have what you've got."

LIIBAN ABDULHAKIM SHARIF

Qualifications gained: Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) Majoring in Construction

Name of tertiary institution: Auckland University of Technology

Year of graduation: 2019

Place of employment: Home Health and Safety Testing LDT (HHAST)

“ MY MESSAGE:

A word of advice to my fellow Somali students is to never give up and to keep going till the end. There will be barriers along the way, but always remember to put Allah first in whatever you do and know that hard work pays off. Don't let anyone tell you that you cannot do it because you are capable of achieving anything that you set your mind on.

🎯 FUTURE ASPIRATIONS:

As a new graduate, my future plans include getting the right work experience that enables me to get to the position that I have envisioned for myself. I'm also planning to further my education to gain a master degree in the future. I am hoping that one day I can return to my motherland and create good infrastructure for the Somali people, as a means of giving back and providing opportunities for others.



🔍 MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

Arriving in New Zealand in 1997 with my family at a younger age meant I had more time to adjust to the schooling system in the new country (Aotearoa). I began schooling at primary school, intermediate and all the way through to high school. I then enrolled at AUT after my high school.

Firstly, I want to say thanks to Allah the Almighty SWT for giving me this ability, blessing me, shaping me, testing me, and for allowing me to be a role model and inspire those around me. Secondly, I want to thank my parents who have inspired, motivated and disciplined me throughout all the good and difficult times when I needed words of

encouragement and useful advice. I can humbly and genuinely say without them, I wouldn't be the man I am today.

My passion for problem solving and figuring how things work, along with a curious mindset led me to engineering. I also was influenced by my parents to go along with studies. For instance, my parents always insisted that I should attend university and make something of myself because they never had the opportunity. With the help of Almighty Allah I have achieved my goal of becoming a Construction Engineer. AUT gave me a lot of potential to hone my hobbies & interests.

Qualifications gained:
Bachelor of Arts

Name of tertiary institution:
Auckland University of
Technology

Year of graduation:
2020

Place of employment:
Waitemata District Health Board.



MY MESSAGE to my fellow somalis

To strive in acquiring knowledge and
associate themselves with people who
would improve their lives.

ABDULAZIZ MOHAMED KULMIYE



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

Asalam Aleykum. When I arrived in New Zealand I was not eligible for a student loan, but that did not stop me from pursuing my studies. I enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts with a major in International Studies. I used to work full time and paid for 2 papers per semester. I wanted to challenge myself and once again enrolled in my second degree which was Bachelor of Law. After 2 years I was eligible for a student loan and that took off some of the pressure. In 2017 I was awarded the Dean's Award for excellence in the International Studies major. In 2019 I decided to finish the BA, so that I would have ample time to concentrate on my law degree. Currently I work at the Waitemata District health Board in Auckland as a Cultural Case Worker and enjoy the work I do while studying for my law degree. In 2019 I also did my internship at a reputable law firm in Auckland, where I learnt a lot about resilience and working under pressure. I'm forever grateful to the lawyer who gave me the opportunity to work at his firm. I also would like to thank my family for the support and allowing me to go to university while being the breadwinner. I have volunteered in many programmes with our Somali community here in Auckland and enjoyed every bit of it. I urge my fellow Somalis to concentrate on education and also educate their children because it is a big opportunity we have here in New Zealand. My advice is, whatever age you are, learning is a lifelong endeavour and we should strive to acquire knowledge and use that knowledge in contributing to New Zealand's wellbeing, the country that you now call home.

Wabillah Towfiq



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

Inshallah, to work here in New Zealand and volunteer to mentor the youth in doing the right thing and succeeding by themselves. I believe life is not about you, others matter and we should intervene whenever our youth go astray.

SUAD ALI ABDULKADIR

MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

Assalamu alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh, my name is Suad and I am part of the 2018 graduate class.

I moved to New Zealand at the age of five. As a young child, I have always enjoyed school and knew I wanted to do something with my life that would be fulfilling and allow me to have many opportunities to prosper. However, it wasn't until my final year of high school and seeking guidance from the careers counsellor that I started to have somewhat of an idea. The counsellor advised me to sign up for the David Johnston scholarship that was being awarded to students wanting to pursue a career in either science or nursing. I figured I would test my luck and apply, because why not. I would never in 100 years believe I could win this award and therefore knew not to take this blessing for granted. I enrolled myself into the nursing program, which at the time I did not think would be the right fit for me. I have always been drawn to biological sciences, the human body and the dynamic field of health but when I started my clinical placement interacting with patients and gaining hands on experience, I started

to enjoy nursing. I was interested in the different aspects, nursing can offer such as medical, surgical, community nursing, mental health and generic. Like all undergraduate programs, studying was difficult with many long hours, no social life and trying to meet deadlines but in the end it was worth it. After completing my degree, I was lucky to be chosen for the new graduate program at Waikato Hospital and embark on my journey as a surgical Registered Nurse. Nursing has allowed me to follow the patient journey from start to finish and provide compassionate and holistic care that has made a positive impact on people's lives which has been rewarding to see. I have encountered many challenges in my career such as running emergencies, caring for palliative patients and their families, trauma, severe burns, coordinating, facilitating care with other members of the multidisciplinary team and so much more. Nursing is a unique field that allows you to learn, grow as a person and has many different career paths to choose from. It has helped me gain critical and lifelong skills that I can utilize not only in my professional life but in my personal life as well.



...take chances, risks and never be discouraged

Qualifications gained:

Bachelor of Nursing

Name of tertiary institution:

Waikato Institute of Technology

Year of graduation:

2018

Place of employment:

Waikato Hospital

**FUTURE ASPIRATIONS:**

Currently, I have completed my postgraduate certificate in health science and inshallah will someday go onto the diploma and master's program when I have gained more experience and figured out what speciality I enjoy the most. In the meantime, I want to enter other areas of nursing such as cardiothoracic, critical care units and explore travel nursing to gain a wider perspective and enhance my current knowledge and skill set.

**MY MESSAGE:**

I would encourage the younger generation to take chances, risks and never to be discouraged by others. It is important for the youth to recognise and appreciate the bravery of our parents when moving to a western country and not let their sacrifices go to waste. Especially, since we are very fortunate to attend school, gain skills and knowledge whereas others may not be so lucky. University isn't an easy journey, it takes a lot of patience, effort, determination and resilience. Therefore, it's important to find something you're passionate about, rather than doing something to please others. Take your time in choosing your career, explore options, travel, volunteer and gain work experiences. Have faith in yourself, Allah's swt plan and the rest will come easy.

by others...



FAHIMA MUSE

Qualification gained:

Bachelor of Health Science majoring
in Occupational Therapy

Tertiary education institution:

AUT

Year of graduation:

2017

Place of employment:

Community Occupational Therapist in
Greenlane Clinical Centre



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

Assalamu Alaikum. My name is Fahima Muse and I graduated from the Bachelor of Health Science in Occupational Therapy (AUT). The reason for my choice was because I've always had an interest in helping people. I'm currently working as a community OT. My role is to assess clients' abilities, help them gain or regain skills and recommend adaptations to equipment in environments such as their own home. I really enjoy my line of work because I get to help clients that have all sorts of disabilities, injuries and who are in palliative care.

Getting education has always been a core value in my family which is why I'm grateful to my parents. They have worked so hard for me and my siblings in order for us to have a better future. Without the support of my family I would not be where I am today.



MY MESSAGE

Getting a bad grade isn't the end of the world.
Don't stress over something you can't control

Remember to learn & to embrace challenges
rather than avoiding them. Don't forget getting
an education is so important as you will gain
useful skills and knowledge.



FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

(Insha'Allah) To continue working as
an occupational therapist and help
the community and to complete my
masters.

For my long term goal, I hope to go
back to Somalia and contribute to their
healthcare.



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

My future aspiration is to work as a scientist in one of the leading firms.



MY MESSAGE

Without you taking the chance, there is nothing worthwhile in life. With coherence, do what you feel passionate about. Never listen to those who tell you that your ambitions and dreams cannot be accomplished. My advice for the youth, "always respect and be kind to your parents. Paradise is under your mothers' feet and your father is the door through which you will enter Paradise"

Qualification gained:

Bachelor of Science (Majoring Biological Sciences)

Name of tertiary institution:

University of Waikato

Year of graduation:

2018

Place of employment:

Post Graduate study

FAYSAL ABDI MOHAMED



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

When I got to NZ, I remember staring at my friends around me, not knowing what they were talking about. English was never my second language, but it was a bit of a struggle to learn how to read, write and speak. I had an interest in the orchestration of the cosmos and the existence of various organisms when I was growing up. So, I took biology, chemistry, physics and English in high school. These topics reinforced my interest in science. Biochemistry and microbiology were my favourite domains.

The secret to becoming a good person is hard work. Initially, it was not easy to achieve NCEA levels 1, 2 and 3, but I pushed myself to obtain them. In my final year I set 5 NCEA exams, including biology and astronomy scholarships, it was a pretty good challenge. Due to my share of diligence, it was a simple transition from secondary to tertiary education. I am thankful to Allah, as without his help, I would not have got to where I am now.

AYAAN OMAR

Don't limit your
options, and take
every opportunity
you are given



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

My name is Ayaan and my parents migrated to New Zealand in 1994. I was born and raised in New Zealand.

Throughout my educational years I didn't have much of an idea as to what I wanted to study. After years of going back and forth between trying to decide what career choice I wanted, I decided to pursue a bachelor in Science. I was excelling in Science in high school therefore I was certain that this was an area that I was interested in studying.

University was quite the experience and nothing like what I had expected. It was a period that allowed me to learn so much about myself and others. There were definitely times where it was difficult but it only taught me to push myself even harder. I believe that going to university is an opportunity for an individual to not only grow but also to push their boundaries. Persistence in conjunction with sheer determination will enable you to obtain your ambitions and exceed your own expectations. It is a time where one can make friends and pursue their future and their goals.

After university I worked at Hill Laboratories for a year where I was able to gain experience in both the pesticide residue and trace elements laboratory. I was not only given the ability to implement the skills I

had attained from university but also gain insight into a variety of laboratory work. I had the opportunity to utilize the resources given to me and work closely alongside technologists and methodologists. During this time, I progressed my skills and expertise in both teams. Following this I pursued an overseas experience in Canada where I worked in the ski resorts. I was able to travel around Canada and America before returning home before Covid became more prevalent. Currently, I work as a laboratory technician at Tatua Co-operative Dairy Company where I work in the chemistry and microbiology laboratories. This mainly consists of conducting a variety of tests to find out the integrity of the company's products. Also, participating in root cause analysis and liaising with the production team on quality issues.

**Qualifications gained:**

Bachelor of Science (Majoring in biology)

Name of tertiary institution:

University of Waikato

Year of graduation:

2019

Place of employment:

The Tatua Co-operative Dairy Company Limited



MY MESSAGE to my fellow somalis

My advice to the younger generation is not to limit your options and to take every opportunity you are given. Do not feel as if you are going to be stuck in the area you decide to study. Your career path will change at some point in your life and that is something that should be embraced. You never know what will interest you and you have a lifetime to figure everything out. Don't put too much pressure on yourself, as long as you work hard and take the right steps to achieve your goals.



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

My future aspirations include furthering my experience as a laboratory technician and ultimately entering different industries to expand my knowledge. I would like to get into data analysis or work my way up to quality assurance. Additionally, I may possibly look into postgraduate studies.



SAHRA ALI



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

My educational and career choices have led me to choose a path in Business Studies. I have always wanted to explore and learn the different dynamics of Business Studies. Growing my passion has always been influenced by business and that's why I took the unconventional route to Business Studies majoring in Accounting. What motivated me to study business majoring in Accounting was that it's a solid study area. By doing Business Studies, you develop skills that are relevant for almost any kind of work. My area of interest has allowed me to contribute effective and efficient work methods. My trick is to recognize what is important and focus on that. I approach everything



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

My future aspiration includes furthering my studies and expanding onto different areas of studies to build my education background.

Qualifications gained:

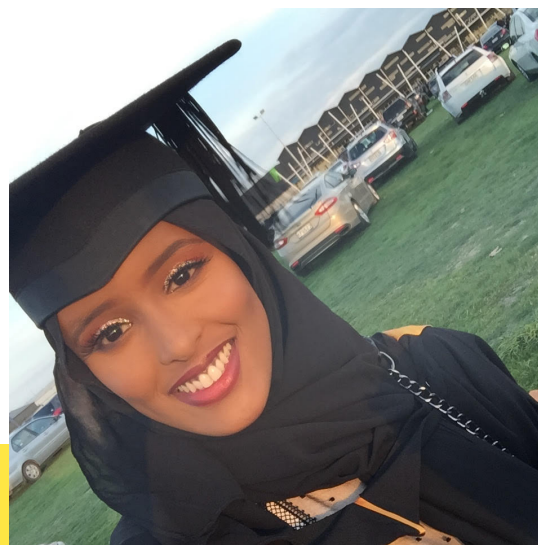
Bachelor of Business Analysis Majoring in Accounting

Name of tertiary institution:

University of Waikato

Year of graduation:

2019



I do systematically. I always look for ways to simplify, and I question everything I do.

During my time in university I learned that time is the most important aspect, ensuring that you excel in your university work enables you to have more control of your time management. Building an excellent habit of time management helps to clear your vision, purpose and productivity. Another challenge that I have overcome during my time in university is don't become complacent, take action! When you begin to take action on the goals you want to accomplish and the things you are passionate about it leaves little room for distraction. Throw away the excuses and stop waiting

for the perfect time to get started on that assignment. Another challenge I've encountered while studying was in teamwork, which has made me look at things from new perspective, teamwork is an essential virtue regardless of whether you are in a business school, it can be a tricky skill to develop, hence it is essential that you develop teamwork skills. Also be aware that the mixture of students in your program will be diverse, which means that they could be from various ethnicities, walks of life and with different personalities. Developing teamwork skills will help you during your time in university as well as in the professional world.

**MY MESSAGE:**

My advice for future students is to firstly take time to ponder on what you really want to make out of yourself. Make sure that you find your passion and your area of interest before you enrol in University. Also, it's important that as an individual you have eagerness to learn, active participation and intensive focus and have an unlimited passion for learning. The desire to learn skills that are useful to others will be beneficial, always participate actively in class, and will surely share your opinions and focus intensively on one task for a long time period.

FATUMA MOHAMUD

Qualifications gained:

Bachelor Midwifery

Tertiary education institution:

Wintec

Year of graduation:

2021

Place of employment:

Middlemore Hospital, Counties Manakua DHB



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

Salam. My name is Fatuma. I arrived in New Zealand in 2009, I did my intermediate and high school education here. In high school I enjoyed science and in my last year of high my biology teacher suggested that I should join an after school Advance Biology that she taught, so I did 2 hours of Advance Biology class after school, which I really enjoyed. My love of biology attracted me towards a career in the health field. I then came across Adna Aden (Allah Yerham) a midwife who built a maternity hospital in Somalia and started midwifery training programmes to combat the country's high maternity mortality rates. I was lucky enough to get a full scholarship (Sir Robert Jones Scholarship) upon graduating high school, so I started my midwifery degree bright eyed and bushy tailed, in my second year I failed a paper which meant I had to step out of the programme, sit an entrance exam and return the following year, this was the biggest challenge I faced, as I had always excelled in school, and this took a toll on my self-confidence, however I decided that I wasn't going to let failure stop me, so I worked fulltime and studied obsessively to pass the entrance exam, I passed the exam and returned to midwifery in 2019. I had the privilege of being awarded the Janine Goodley award for midwifery in the same year, for providing exceptional tertiary care.

In my last year of studies, I did a 6 week rural placement in Whakatane, which was an eye opener, I grew immensely both professionally and personally, and while the degree has certainly been challenging, with full on placement, being on call for 24hr in addition the usual studies, it expanded my horizons and allowed me to grow more than I had ever imagined. Next year I will be joining a graduate programme in Middlemore hospital and hope to give back to the Somali community, Insha'Allah.



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

My professional plans include pursuing postgraduate studies, so I can specialise in complex care within midwifery. I would like to undertake some volunteer work back home in Somalia, which has been my dream since starting my degree. A short term plan I have is setting up maternity resources that are accessible to Somali women, in the form of antenatal education classes or a website.



MY MESSAGE:

We don't have the privilege of sitting idle and don't nothing, our parents have made enormous sacrifices for us to have a better life and better opportunities, our parents had to survive but we must thrive. Make use of your time and don't pay attention to anything that doesn't add value to your life. Work hard, ask for help and don't ever let failure or fear stop you.

NAIMA ALI

Qualification gained:
Master of Human Rights (Honours)

Name of tertiary institution:
Auckland University of Auckland

Year of graduation:
2018

Place of employment:
Mount Roskill Grammar School



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

After completing my bachelor's degree, I knew I wanted to pursue further education. However, I felt the need to work and apply what I have studied in my bachelor degree into practice. After working for over 5 years and being involved in many projects that have awesome social impact with credible organisations such as Refugees as Survivors New Zealand (RASNZ), Auckland Council and NZ Human rights /Race Relations Commissions, I felt the urge to pursue my passion and enrol in further studies in the field of Human Rights. Also, I believe Human Rights play a holistic and vital role in the current unpredictable circumstances and the United Nations agenda to "end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all by 2030" through the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. When I discovered that AUT provides a Master of Human Rights, I felt it was the most relevant, useful and exciting programme to enrol in. I could not pass on the opportunity to further empower and enrich my

personal development journey, which will enable me to empower others in the future. With challenges, everything happens for a reason so I am also learning to embrace the challenges I encounter as it makes me resilient and helps me identify what I am capable of.

I practice the values of E Tu Whanau which is similar to our Islamic and cultural values, and as a Rangatahi Leader of Peace Action Leadership Movement Symposium (PALMS), I try to use my leadership skills and commitment to social justice to support vulnerable former refugee/migrant and Muslim whanau and Rangatahi to achieve their potential, build leadership/ confidence whilst strengthening their cultural identity. With these roles, I've had the opportunity to become a community delegate at 9th Asia Pacific Mediation Conference in Jeju Island, South Korea and a youth delegate at a Human Rights Conference in Istanbul, Turkey.



FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

I would like to continue to work in my Puketāpapa community to advocate, support and empower others and to utilize the skills I have learnt over the years. In addition, I will be looking for career opportunities with NZ Human rights Commission, United Nations and Immigration NZ.



MY MESSAGE

Support fellow students and empower each other, find a good mentor, and learn to understand other people's diverse perspectives as it will give you a new angle on life. Always ask for support when you need it and lend a hand to support others too. Take the opportunity to join relevant clubs and programmes. I've enjoyed getting out of my comfort zone, and participating in these supportive and creative communities. I was one of the co-founders of the AUT African Students Club, and also joined Debate magazine and AUT's Muslim Students Association. Through these activities, I met lifelong friends, and was able to connect with external organisations and become involved in leadership programmes and youth awards like the Office of Ethnic Community's inaugural Young Leaders Auckland Programme, Project Tamkin and being awarded the Auckland City for Peace Youth Award.

SAYNAB MUSE



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

My name is Saynab Mohamed Muse, I come from Somalia. My family moved here in 1998. I started falling in love with photography when I was in year 9 at high school, I enrolled in year 11 to 13 to do photography. I went to Unitec for one year of certificates which was good for my experience before starting my Bachelor degree. During my Bachelor years, I learnt a lot about photography and filming. In my first year I did general studies on hand making and continued more of that in my second year, the third year focused on a big project on photography and filming.

I love taking photographs of my family because they are important to me and these portraits represent my culture. I want to show others my perspective, so they understand about my culture and my ideas of family documentary. This series is influenced by the artist Mous Lamrabat, whose work is about growing up as Muslim. His photographs also show the beauty of the materials that women use to cover themselves. I took photographs in Marist Park near my house because this area is my place. My work is about cultural identity and the complex issues of Muslim feminism. This series is part of an ongoing body of work investigating my family system and my Muslim culture.



Qualification gained:
Bachelor of Creative
Enterprise (BCE)

Name of tertiary institution:
Unitec

Year of graduation:
2019

Place of employment:
Auckland DHB



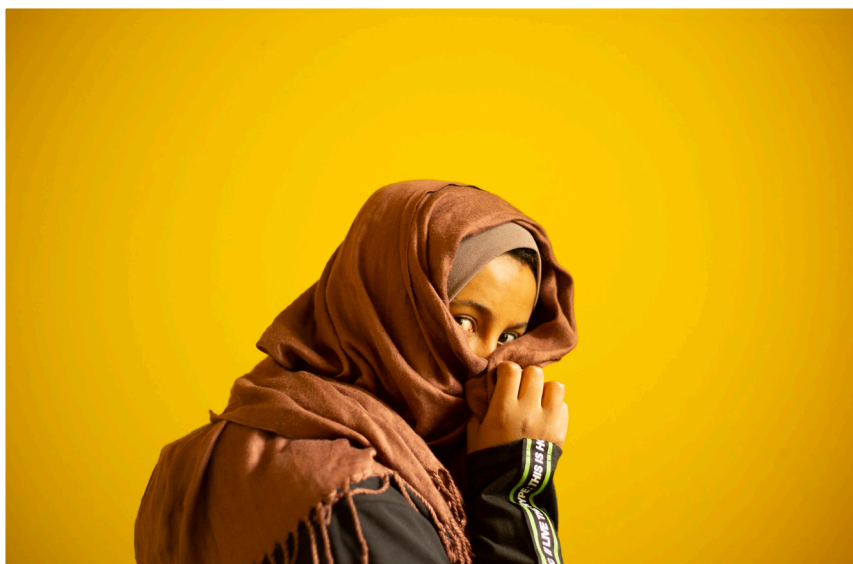
MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

To own a
photography
business and
continue doing what
I love.



MY MESSAGE:

I want the world to know
that deaf people can
do it. Just like hearing
people, deaf people are
the same. We are all
the same. Remember
you can do anything that
you put your mind to
and always follow your
dreams and work hard
to set your future.



NAJIB MOHAMUD



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

The value of education has always been something that I understood and began to take seriously in my journey of self-discovery. My parents were both not educated academically as a result of their focus being on work (dad was the one undertaking this role however as a result of his death, my mother had to take over) to fend for their children.

The value of education has been something that my mother has instilled in both my siblings and I growing up. Being a witness to the numerous challenges my mother has been exposed to whilst growing up in a refugee camp and then immigrating to New Zealand, I have been able to be inspired to continue the commitment that my mother has shown us all. If I am to recall, my journey with education has been more than acquiring a degree. For me, after completing high school I had no clue what was next, but I always knew I wanted to pursue a higher education and achieve getting a bachelor's degree as this was the vision that was set within our household.

I decided to pursue a career in computer science as this was something that interested me at that time. My first year of finishing high school and studying at the university was full of many challenges and panned out to be what I had not imagined. making the transition from high school to university was a massive jump and one that I was not probably prepared for in the least, as I presented with qualities that did not benefit my focus. In case you are probably wondering what did not benefit my focus, it was my immaturity, lack of time management skills and overall resistance towards what I decided to study. Midway through my semester, I left my studies to work full-time at Pak n Save (a decision which was hard at the time but also the right thing to do as I needed to

find the drive I desired). Working at Pak n Save supported my maturity, learning and developing various skill sets. This is what I believe played a key part in my journey for the following years. Through the discussions I would have with my colleagues regarding education, I was able to develop insights into where I see with my own future. At the time, one of my colleagues who was doing a business degree shared the many projects he was working on that had interested me. With every exchange between us, I was able to develop an interest about the degree he was undertaking. Eventually after my interest grew and I did further research, I was able to pursue education within this field.

Equipped with the right mindset and hunger for success and growth, I decided to first pursue the New Zealand Business Diploma with emphasis on strategic management at Waikato Institute of Technology. After excelling in this and developing a focused interest in economics and accounting, I went onto Waikato University the following semester to do a Bachelor in Business Analysis, Majoring in Accounting at Waikato University.

Completing this milestone for me is one of my greatest achievements thus far as it has helped me to develop in my personal and professional life. The past few years of studying has been a journey filled with enjoyment, challenges and growth. With every exchange that I've had with people, I have been able to gain memories and knowledge which I know has supported me to be the person I am today.

Throughout this journey I also learned there is no substitute for hard work and the greatest gifts do in fact come to those who work hard and wait patiently. Massive congratulations to all those students who have graduated this year.

Qualifications gained:

Bachelor of Business Analysis

Name of tertiary institution:

University of Waikato

Year of graduation:

2019

Place of employment:

Fliway

**MY MESSAGE****to my fellow somalis**

One of my favourite quotes that I have come across is “meaningful growth requires challenge and stress”. This resonates with me, as nothing that is worthy will come easy. It is important we go out of our comfort zone, take every opportunity that comes our way (that is good for us) and work towards achieving our goals. Always remember everything happens for a reason and every setback/failure has its lessons. Go out there, try your best in everything, achieve greatness by reaching your full potential.

**GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT**

I have been fortunate enough to achieve many great things while studying which include being a recipient of the FIANZ scholarship and receiving a scholarship for an exchange program which I was also proud to achieve.

Overall, my greatest achievement I would say is becoming a better person during my journey of self-discovery. I have learnt to understand that everything happens for a reason and that each event has its purpose and each setback has its lessons. I have also come to understand that failure whether its individual, professional or even a spiritual kind, is vital/important for our personal growth. I was able to embrace what I have learned from my past experience and use it to grow.

**MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS**

I am very enthusiastic about learning new skills and expanding my knowledge. I want to be able to gain the necessary skills and experience by working in firms around the globe. The knowledge and expertise I gain through my experiences will further support my goal of being a consultant agent between different countries who may require advice and assistance with the market opportunities.

Once I have the experience required, I want to open my own accounting firm so that I can be able to provide my community with business, accounting and financial guidance. I acknowledge it may take time to reach this however I remain committed.

ABDULQANI MOHAMED MUSE

Qualifications gained:
Bachelor degree in Paramedicine

Name of tertiary institution:
AUT

Year of graduation:
2016

Place of employment:
full time role post-graduation with
St John Ambulance and was
tasked on the Rapid Response
Unit



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

I am humbled to be included in this graduation journal and partake alongside these other successful stories. My name is Abdulqani Mohamed Muse and I arrived here along with my family in 1998. Growing up in New Zealand from a young age, I have always had my eyes set on the health sector and giving back to those in need. During my adolescent days, I attended Avondale college and here I worked on the necessary qualifications required to get me into tertiary education. I went on to university initially pursuing nursing but quickly changed by mind after coming across a cardiac arrest in the community some years ago now. After the cardiac arrest scene, I was pulled aside by a paramedic who encouraged me to look into the paramedic career pathway, so I went home, did my research and found out there was not a single qualified Somali Paramedic in New Zealand (NZ), so I looked into changing this and applied for a bachelor's degree in Paramedicine at AUT. During my time of study, I also was employed with St John (casual basis) and did shifts out of Hauraki Coromandel and Tauranga during my 3-year study period so I could stand out once graduation day arrived (2016). By the will of Allah I managed to secure a full time role post-graduation with St John Ambulance and was tasked on the Rapid Response Unit (single crewed on a jeep). To achieve being the first Somali Paramedic in NZ feels great Alhamdulillah's, but I have not reached my potential yet, Paramedic work does not only involve working in the back of an ambulance and evidently there is more to it.



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

Currently I am with another health organisation in a manager role (clinical coordinator). I foresee staff members nationwide in regions like Wellington, Christchurch, Tauranga, and Auckland. My intention like many of us is to someday return home with that wealth of knowledge/experience and to give back to our people (InshaAllah).



MY MESSAGE

Find something you have a true passion for and pursue it. Stay connected to Allah and always put yourself first over others. Allah is the best of planners so keep steadfast. Paramedic work involves gruesome scenes and critical thinking during life-or-death situations. Having a calm demeanour in chaotic scenarios is essential and to make life/death decisions during difficult jobs is expected in the Paramedic profession. The most important skill of them is, you should be able to communicate with people effectively from all scopes of life during difficult times. Lastly believe in yourself and don't let others pressure you into doing something you are uncomfortable with, stay true to you.



FARHAN ASED



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

I came to Aotearoa New Zealand 9 years ago with a Bachelor Degree in Business Administration and two years of work experience as an accountant. As is the case for many skilled migrants and refugees, my qualifications and experience couldn't get me into a meaningful employment in my area of expertise as I didn't have local experience.

After a few months of fruitless applications from which I was getting rejection after rejection, I came to know about a programme called "pathways to employment" run by an organisation called Refugee Services and funded by the Ministry of Social Development. The programme was meant to support refugees/migrants with formal qualifications and experience to get employment in their areas of expertise and was structured in such a way that the participants attend a five-week course at Victoria University followed by an internship.



FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

My foreseeable future aspirations are to further advance my Accountancy career to a senior role in the near future and a principal or business partnering type role in the medium term.

Qualifications gained:

Master of Professional Accounting

Name of tertiary institution:

Victoria University of Wellington

Year of graduation:

2018

Place of employment:

New Zealand Ministry of Education

I was lucky that New Zealand Red Cross offered me an internship role after completing the five-week course. This placement has given me an opportunity to prove that I am as capable as locally trained Accountant and the testimony to that was, I was offered a permanent Accounts Payable Administrator role after finishing the internship contract.

However, after a few years in the above role, I couldn't move up the ladder in the career path I envisaged.

I wanted to become a Chartered Accountant and certainly didn't want to stay in the Accounts Payable Administrator role for more than a couple of years.

I have started applying to Chartered Accounting bodies both in New Zealand and Australia to become a members only to be told that my Degree from Ethiopia wasn't good enough for them to accept me as a provisional member which would've allowed me to

start their pathway programme to eventually become a full member. This was another hurdle that I had to overcome to fulfil my dream of becoming a Chartered Accountant and getting into a professional accounting job that has a clear career progression path.

To achieve this, in 2016, I quit my job at the New Zealand Red Cross and enrolled in a Master of Professional Accounting course at Victoria University of Wellington. I graduated in 2018 and straightaway got accepted into CPA Australia (Certified Practising Accountant) and got a job at the Department of Internal Affairs. I have since moved on to the Ministry of Education and have now completed all the chartered Accountancy exams and fulfilled the experience requirement and I am waiting for the certificate in the new year.

“ MY MESSAGE

My advice to fellow Somali students or graduates, including those who recently arrived in New Zealand with formal qualifications and experience, is to never give up on fulfilling your dreams. As a person of colour with a refugee/migrant background, you will almost certainly experience hurdles in your quest to acquire tertiary qualifications and to ultimately get into a professional career (not just a job). However, how you react to these impediments is important – you either give in or get up and keep fighting on. At this stage in your career, it is very important that you have a clear idea of what you want to become in the future and that should hopefully be a motivator that keeps you on track.



Qualifications gained:
Bachelor of Science

Tertiary education institution:
University Of Waikato

Year of graduation:
2018

Place of employment:
LIC

ABDIFATAH ABDI



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

My tertiary educational choices were based on the interests I had in high school. I had an interest in science which resulted in me completing a Bachelor of Science. I faced many challenges throughout university, mainly the mental battle of getting through it. I faced many trials and tribulations which shaped who I am today. My career choice was based on my interests in the New Zealand dairy industry which shaped New Zealand's economy. I think science is exciting and always changing so no day at work is the same.

**Set peace of mind
as your highest
goal and organise
your life around it**

MY MESSAGE

Set peace of mind as your highest goal and organize your life around it. However difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at. You cannot be hard on yourself for it, these are the cards you were given so you have to understand that's not who you are. You know you're trying to be the best you can be, but that's all you can do. If you do not give it all you got, you're only cheating yourself.



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

My future plans and aspirations are to have a successful career and learn as much as I can throughout my career and not be limited to one field of science. Contributing towards making New Zealand a nation underpinned by science is something I want to achieve.

**Qualifications gained:**

Bachelor of business Analysis (BBAFin)

Tertiary education institution:

University of Waikato

Year of graduation:

2018

Place of employment:

Currently working at an investment bank overseas

AHMED ABDULRAHMAN

**MY EDUCATION JOURNEY**

Arriving in New Zealand in the year 2000, aged four, I was assimilated into the Kiwi lifestyle almost immediately as opposed to cultural the shock my folks must have experienced but nonetheless the opportunity was destined and one that we thank Allah for. Being lucky enough to be raised in a country voted as 'most livable' many times over presents many prospects, one of whom being great education with equal access. I completed my secondary schooling at Hamilton Boys and followed my interests in business and entrepreneurship by attending the University of Waikato to complete a degree in Finance

Stay committed to the process and avoid bad influences who will have great impact on your life's trajectory.

MY MESSAGE

My advice to the youth today with all the challenges they inevitably face, is to stay focused and goal driven, stay committed to the process and avoid bad influences who will have a great impact on your life's trajectory.

**MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS**

The future for me whether it is personally or professionally is to continue to develop and learn, Insha' Allah. As I grow my tenure in the world of business and finance, I may eventually want to pursue postgraduate study and self-employment.



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

My name is Ahmed Salah. I was born in Somalia, during my stay in Somalia, I attended primary school, but I did not finish, and I left Somalia in 1991, because of the conflict war started, was getting worse, worse, and as result we fled to Kenya. In 1991, coming to Kenya meant coming to a new environment and a new life, which was the most challenging life I had had to face for many years. However, I did not give up my dreams of studying, although there was a big gap because I had lost the fundamental basics of education, since I left Somalia and became a refugee in Kenya. As the time went by, for many years without having good schooling, I still used to attend a private English language, math and Islamic studies class, as it was cheaper than the government school in Kenya. I did this because I was still thinking I wanted to attend university or college one day, in order to fulfil and accomplish my dreams of getting qualifications that would prepare me for a good life. To get

MY MESSAGE

University is a fun and challenging place during study time but it depends how you approach it. If you do your assignments on time then that's the fun part as it is required on the deadline. On the flipside, if you don't do the assignment on time and do not prove your genuine approval to the lecturer then that's when the challenge will start and most likely will you not get a good grade. My advice to you is to take care about the assignments and be prepared early and then later and always be in contact with the lecturer. Generally, in academic studies we need critical thinking and study skills including time management. Healthy eating and playing sports are good for the mind and the body and will give energy and enthusiasm to deliver the results. My advice to you is to believe in yourself, work hard and seek advice when you need it from the staff, and

I assure you the lecturers are there for you. I will end this Beautiful advice from Aishah (r) to Mu`awiyah (r)

"Once, Mu`āwiyah b. Abī Sufyān (r), the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, wrote a letter from Damascus to Madinah, addressed to our mother A'ishah (r), in which he said, "O mother, I ask you to advise me, and don't overwhelm me with it!"

So she wrote back to him, "Salām Alayk. I heard the Prophet ﷺ say: Whoever desires to please Allah even if it means displeasing the people shall be taken care of by Allah [and he shall have no need] of the people's help. And whoever desires to please the people even if it means displeasing Allah shall be abandoned by Allah and left to the people. Wa-l-Salam." [Reported by al-Tirmidhi].

AHMED SALAH

Qualification gained:

Bachelor of Social Science, Majoring Geography and Anthropology

Tertiary education institution:

University of Waikato

Year of graduation:

2019

Place of employment:

Support member, the Office of Parliament of New Zealand, Hamilton

a qualification and live in some African countries is not easy, unless the families of the person are high class, middle class, or get income from other sources, like scholarships from the government or business companies. In 2007, I arrived in Christchurch and the weather was too cold, but people used to say "it is the end of winter and you will find it a lot colder, when winter begins next year". Luckily, I got a job a month later in the meat industry, where I worked for three years. After the Christchurch earthquake, we moved to Hamilton with my nuclear family, I enrolled in a Certificate of University Preparation course

(CUP programme) as it would give me a basic understanding of university learning, before I go to degree level. It was a good experience to start the CUP programme of Waikato University and made easy in the years of my degree level study. I graduated with a bachelor's degree in social science, majoring in Geography and minoring in Anthropology. During my University studies, I learned skills in report writing and giving presentations, as well as an understanding of the Resource Management Act 1991. I also gained experience in online learning including research, essay writing and online submissions



FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

I gained quality leadership skills throughout the journey of my studies and in my voluntary role as Chairperson of the Somalia Community Friendship Society (December 2014 to December 2016). In this role I was responsible for representing the needs and concerns of my community to local government and other support agencies. I have experience in connecting people from different backgrounds to local social services such as MSD, Housing NZ, Community Law and Ministry of Education. I represented the Somali Community for two+ years as Chairperson and gained quality management experience, dealing with a range of complex social situations. This gave

me the skills to work with diverse people and gain their trust to help them in any way needed. For now I am temporarily working for the Member of Parliament in the Hamilton Office in a support role, I carefully followed the office processes to ensure tasks were completed appropriately and I am looking at the future ahead. Lastly, I want to thank Allah who blessed me with a wonderful wife and my three lovely daughters during my studies and encouraged me to not give up and also, I was so lucky to have such a fabulous team supporting me both in my voluntary role for the Somali Community friendship Society as Chairperson and in my studies.

ANZAL ADEN

Qualifications gained:
Bachelor of Social Work

Tertiary education institution:
Waikato Institute of Technology

Year of graduation:
2018

Place of employment:
Oranga Tamariki-Ministry for
Children



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

Whilst in high school, I had undertaken a few sessions with the career advisory center in which I was provided with the opportunity to undertake work experience in the professions I saw as potential future in. With the support of the career advisory center, I was able to develop an interest in Psychology however

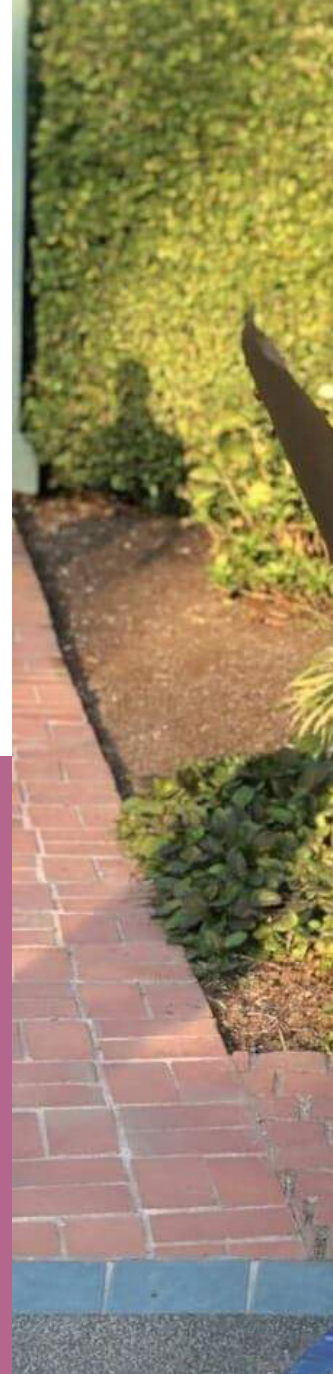
after further research (especially with understanding the years it would take to be a qualified psychologist), my passion instead grew to be in the field of Social Work. Whilst studying, I was able to do a placement at the Ministry for Children which helped to recognize this was the area I wanted to be in long term.



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

If spending time with my family and friends were an interest, then this would be the first given that it's not often this will happen. Most recently, I have gained an interest in wanting to enhance the overall wellbeing of the community, particularly young people given they are the future generation of tomorrow. As a result, I am currently collaborating with other young professionals and organisations to support Refugee and migrant youth within our community.

From a professional viewpoint, I hope to undertake further education whilst I continue working within the Ministry. I know that with the right amount of experience and educational knowledge, I will be better equipped to apply for leadership positions in/out of the Ministry.





**I encourage
you to
volunteer so
that you can
do your part
to improve
on the world
around you.**

MY MESSAGE

I believe that education is a way forward and it is important that we make the most of this opportunity, particularly when there are others who desire this yet cannot, as a result of circumstances that have been thrust upon them. If this doesn't motivate you enough then do it for your loved ones, as I guarantee you will gain a sense of fulfillment by seeing the presence of your parent(s), caregiver(s) and/or loved ones sincere happiness on this day.

I would also like to add onto the importance of volunteering in and amongst our community. We all know the many great benefits of volunteering on our overall holistic wellbeing given that we are choosing to work without receiving monetary compensation. It is important that we understand how volunteering can also be a way to "get your foot in the door" for a company you'd like to work with as many companies value social responsibility. My advice to future Somali students currently/ thinking about tertiary education: I encourage you to volunteer so that you can do your part to improve on the world around you.

NESRA WALE



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

Assalaamu alaikum, my name is Nesra Wale. I am a first generation Somali New Zealander. I had the pleasure of doing my whole education journey in New Zealand starting from Kindergarten all the way to University.

After graduating from high school, I decided to take a gap year and work to support my family. During my gap year I worked as a healthcare assistant because I knew that after 13 years of schooling, I needed a break from education. My gap year turned into 2 years (as it often does), but I valued my time as a healthcare assistant because it allowed me to work and gain some real-life skills before going into university. In 2016, I enrolled into Waikato university and started my training to become a primary school teacher. I've always wanted to be a teacher, but I had doubts whether or not I was capable. I am a very social person who loves talking, and through teaching I knew I'd get to work with various people from different walks of life.

I have always wanted to work in a career where I could have a positive impact on peoples' lives, and I knew I wasn't the type of person who would have a normal office job. I wanted a job where I could care for people, learn new things and grow as a lifelong learner. The most rewarding part of being a teacher is that I am constantly learning new things and evolving. I believe teaching is a wonderful career that can lead to many opportunities. While working in the education sector, I have met so many amazing people and it has helped build my understanding of the world. Every day I get to go to work and interact with people and make a positive difference. As a teacher I can combine a lot of

hobbies into my job. Being a primary school teacher allows me to teach multiple curriculum areas and explore exciting new topics.

The highlight of finishing my degree was landing my dream job. During my last placement as a third year, I had the pleasure of completing a 10-week place at Silverdale Normal School. Within those 10 weeks I fell in love with the school and their policies. I find myself connecting with students, teachers and families in a way that I did not think was possible. Every day I went to placement it felt exciting and rewarding. I was building positive and meaningful relationships. While I was on placement a few positions opened and I applied for a job straight away. Alhamdulillah I got the job!

The first two years of starting any job is always challenging, there is so much to learn and somehow you always feel like you are not doing things properly but that is normal. The best way to learn is through hands-on experience and taking things one day at a time. Being a fulltime student is stressful and can take a toll on you, so it is important to be kind to yourself and ask for help when you need it. I would like to thank everyone who has helped and supported me throughout this long journey; be it family, friends, colleagues and former teachers, thank you!

be kind to
yourself and ask
for help when
you need it

**Qualifications gained:**

Bachelor of Teaching - specified programme in Primary major in Professional

Tertiary education institution:

University of Waikato

Year of graduation:

2019

Place of employment:

Silverdale Normal Middle School

MY MESSAGE to my fellow somalis

My advice for anyone thinking about going into tertiary education would be to take their time, there is no rush or deadline. Find a career that you are passionate about, work at your own pace, find yourself and know who you are before starting this big journey. Choosing a career is difficult, I would advise you to choose a career that will allow you to develop and reach all your aspirations.



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

I love seeing how the education system in New Zealand is changing and developing. I look forward to building my teaching pedagogy and insha'Allah going back to get my masters. In the future, I would love to travel and teach overseas for a while to gain more knowledge.

FADUMO ALI

Qualifications gained:

Bachelor of Electronic commerce
major in E-business minoring in
Marketing

Tertiary education institution:

University of Waikato

Year of graduation:

2019



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

Assalamu alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh, my name is Faduma and I am part of the 2019 graduate class.

My family and I moved to New Zealand from Kuwait in the early 2000s for educational purposes and to gain a better life filled with many opportunities. As a young child, I always had a dream of achieving higher education, but when it came to University, it was challenging to choose a major from a long list of options. With the guidance of my career advisor, I eventually decided to take on a science degree as this was something I enjoyed in high school. After Completing one semester, I found myself lacking

interest in the science program and made a very stressful decision and took a risk by applying for a Bachelor's Degree in Business. After this first year of studying business, I knew this was something I could find myself enjoying and was satisfied with the decision I made. I found myself being very passionate about marketing and electronic commerce which I ended up pursuing as my main majors. I believe my biggest advantage was taking part in an internship in Australia for marketing and working over the summer break as part of my degree program. It gave me opportunities to build my experience and gain new skills in digital marketing as well



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

My future aspirations include gaining more experiences in the business world by trying new things, networking to develop connections and moving my way up the business ladder. A dream of mine is to one day have my own business in digital marketing and help grow and support different kinds of business.

**Don't be afraid
to take those
risks and
explore your
options**

as networking and establishing connections which I can utilize in the future. After graduating in 2019, I decided to take a break and pursue an overseas experience by working and living in a small town located in Canada. I was working in a global environment building my skills and seeing where my qualification may take me. It was very challenging to be away from home and something that was out of my comfort zone but also very rewarding and a time in my life I will cherish and never forget.



MY MESSAGE

A word of advice to the Somali youth is don't be afraid to take the next step in your education and anything is possible when you put your mind to it. It can be difficult to find what you're most passionate about, however, don't be afraid to take those risks and explore your options. University was a great experience; I encourage the youth to take advantage of any opportunity that comes your way.

ISMAHAN KHALIF

Qualifications gained:

Bachelor of Social Science, Double majored in Human Development & Sociology

Tertiary education institution:

University Of Waikato

Year of graduation:

2018



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

I was born in New Zealand, I went through kindergarten, primary, intermediate and high school, and along the way I always thought about what I wanted to be when I get older. During my last few years in high school, I started to think about university, and I had no idea what field I wanted to study in, however I knew I wanted to go to university. The degree I enrolled in was not what I wanted to study and was not my dream job, I was under a lot of pressure to enrol into university and pick a degree. I picked Social Science because at the time I was interested in becoming a social worker to help individuals, families and

the communities in the challenges they face in life. However instead Social Science led me into Human Development and Sociology.

I have always been interested in working with people and helping them move forward in life. Human Development and Sociology gave me an insight on how people develop and work. Human Development taught me the development of individuals, families, groups and communities throughout lifespan. Sociology has taught me the social behaviour of humans and how society works. All these things I have learnt will definitely help me in the future



MY MESSAGE:

My advice for future Somali students is:

Take whatever opportunity that comes to you. Take your time and think about what you really want to study. Even if it takes you a few years to decide, it's better than going to university and not knowing about what you want to do. Study something that you love and are passionate about because it makes it easier to study it and you won't get bored. Also do some research on the field you are about to study, find out where it will take you and if you will find jobs with your degree. And lastly make sure you are doing this for yourself and nobody else.

Study something that you love and are passionate about

Four years at university was not easy, I had a lot of sleepless nights, I faced many challenges and I came through it at the end and got my degree. I had a lot of support from my family and friends too. Also, my lecturers and tutors were very supportive and wanted to see me succeed. My biggest motivation that kept me going was knowing that there were people that did believe in me.

Overall going to university has been one of the favourite and best experiences of my life and I would go back and do it again.



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

My interest is to help people and find ways to make this world a better place. My plans for the future are to go back to university. I still want to study what I originally wanted to study and get my dream job, I don't care about how long it will take me, I still want to get my dream job.



FARTUN HIRSI



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

Alaikum, my name is Fartun and I am part of the class of 2019 graduates.

My family and I arrived in New Zealand in 2010. I started my education journey at Fairfield Intermediate with no prior schooling before my first day at Fairfield Intermediate which meant that I had a lot of catching up to do and that pushed me to work harder than any other student. After one year at Intermediate, I quickly improved my English and I started Hamilton Girls High. Whilst language was still a barrier in my learning, science became one subject that I thoroughly enjoyed. My interest in science

Qualifications gained:

Bachelor of Science - major in Biotechnology

Tertiary education institution:

University of Waikato

Year of graduation:

2019

Place of employment:

South Pacific Sera

**FUTURE ASPIRATIONS**

One part of science that always fascinated me is Biomedical research specifically cancer research. I hope to one day be part of a research team that works towards developing treatments through clinical research.

led me to take all three sciences (Physics, Chemistry, and Biology) in my senior years to give me an idea of the direction I wanted to go in the science field. At the end of High school, I was awarded a full scholarship to pursue a degree in science.

In 2016, I started a Bachelor of Science at the University of Waikato. I was unsure of a specialty at the beginning of my degree but as I explored the many fields in science Biotechnology became a major that caught my attention. Being able to research, manufacture and develop products that are used in everyday life was something that excited me about Biotech specifically. I am passionate about helping

others, and I knew choosing a major like Biotech would allow me to work in an environment where I was able to contribute to the wider community.

After graduating in 2019, I was offered a job as a Cell Culture Production Technician in a pharmaceutical company in Timaru. As a production technician I am involved in the manufacture of animal vaccine products from live organisms. This was an exciting role, and as a new graduate I moved down to the South Island to pursue my new career. Starting a new job in a new city away from family is difficult, but undoubtedly, I have learned a lot from this experience. It has helped me to become an independent person.

MY MESSAGE

As important as education is, everyone's education journey is different. The common ideology of going to school, then straight away going to university and then working is not a must for everyone. I will advise current students to take their time, find their passion and pursue it without the pressure of others. Make the most of the opportunities that are presented whilst you are still a student, whether it is summer scholarships, internships or volunteering.



MARYAN ALI



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

I have graduated from the University of Waikato. I enjoyed gaining my qualifications. I have studied Environmental Planning and Geography. This career is going to drive me to be an environmental planner or GIS analysts. I want to be responsible for overseeing the environmental performance of the public and private sectors.

During my studies, it has taught me to be more analytical and well organized. My career pathway focuses on creating sustainable and resilient communities and it will support me in the future to work on projects dealing with sustainability development and urban planning.

I'm a fresh graduate at the moment and I want to focus on getting experience in a senior role. I would like to progress my career further into state government positions and develop the right network to support my community.

I have completed an EPA program run by the Waikato University and land Information New Zealand internship, the conservation management internship in New Zealand. For my qualification I have tried to focus on completing an internship programme that will support my academic achievements, these programmes have helped me

MY MESSAGE

Don't let a setback pull you down too low. Take it for what it is, during your study years make a plan to move forward, and begin to execute that plan. It's important to remember your roots. Call your mom or dad or grandfather or grandmother or whoever it was who took care of you before you left home.

Learn and move on, and teach what lessons you have to share as well.

Be Confident. Don't feel the need to conform to anyone else's idea of what you should be as a college freshman.

Always stay active in activities, don't let things pass you by while you are there to experience them. Understand that your time is precious, and you have such a source of vast knowledge literally at your fingertips. Going to class will ensure that you are getting the information you need. Get career advice from the careers coordinators. Career programs have databases of hundreds of resources, like internship or mentorship programs, a trained, dedicated staff are also there to help you.

Qualification gained:

Bachelor of Environmental Planning minor in Geography

Tertiary education institution:

University Of Waikato

Year of graduation:

2019

Place of employment:

Accident Compensation Corporation-Acc

achieve a level of experiences in this pathway field and get involved in my networking profession, transition to my career pathway and most of all have helped me gain confidence. This field of study is all about earning recognition (and a reputation) for the right reasons. It's good to do voluntary work through government institutions to ensure compliance with environmental regulations in air quality, waste, clean water, and pollution.

This field of study I chose is to help articulate and manage environmental strategies budgets, ensuring compliance with environmental legislation, as well as coordinating public hearings and consultations on environmental matters. With so many possibilities of which sector you can work in, there are many different ways you can make a difference in the world. The challenges I have faced were remaining focused while not getting distracted by social media.

In university, it is difficult to identify your interest just due to the broad range of majors being offered. While this is a common and naïve mistake for students, it should be avoided if possible.

Changing your major down the road can lead to late graduation and wasted time.

In general, it is better to choose a major in the Correct fields or in other fields that are currently hiring for high rates. I have seen my guidance counselor see possible career fields that are right for me. With my study field, a career counselor showed me a growing career field that potentially interested me. My goal is to fully be certified, registered and gain a Master's Degree in Environmental Planning and Policy Analysis and gain five years' experience in working in cooperative organisations supporting my field.

**FUTURE ASPIRATIONS**

For the future, I would like to obtain a position that is dedicated to my field of study and further on move on to becoming self-developed in senior roles, and a leader in the management field. My aspiration is to learn about technical aspects of land use and environmental planning, the history, the theory, the practical application practiced. My career mainly focuses on the sustainability of an urban plan, environmental planners attempt to mitigate the environmental impact of architecture, logistics, systems, and other aspects of a undeveloped areas. To build a long-term career as a project manager is to promote unity and effectiveness of effort among all concerned with the problems with the environment. I would like to obtain a position in the local or state government.

Qualification gained:
Bachelor of Science, Masters in
Science Communication

Tertiary education institution:
University of Otago

Year of graduation:
2016, 2018

Place of employment:
Programme activator at the Social
Impact Studio at the university of
Otago

AMAL ABDULLAHI



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

I started my tertiary education journey many, many years in 2013 at the University of Otago. I fell in love with microbiology and followed my scientific passions which also included biochemistry and genetics. After my Bachelor, I was craving some creativity and fell into Science Communication. It was a taxing yet very rewarding programme. Science communication is about helping the general public understand and appreciate science through writing, museum exhibitions and film making. You can choose to specialize in whatever creative medium you prefer and you can come in with any science background. I was able to participate in a variety of different projects that sparked my scientific and social justice interests. After my Master, I actually started my PhD in the microbiology department but due to health reasons I had to stop 9 months into it. I say alhamdulillah now as after I stopped my studies I fell into a job that was truly life changing. I became the programme activator at the Social Impact Studio at the university and engaged with topics like social impact, mental health and wellbeing and leadership. This job helped me realize that mental health is a huge passion of mine. It's something I want to seriously pursue so I can give back to my community.



MY MESSAGE to my fellow somalis

Know yourself. Never forget who you came from and where you want to go. That'll take you to where you want to be alongside prioritizing the basics (a.k.a please get your 8 hours of sleep, eat properly and find things that balance your spirit).



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

I plan to start studying again at Victoria University. I will study a double degree in a Bachelor of Law and a Bachelor of Arts with the hope to get into clinical psychology afterwards. My long term goal is to start a mental health practice specifically designed for the needs of the wider ethnic community in Aotearoa.



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

In the future I would like to own my own pharmacy and give back to the community in any way I can. I find serving the community and helping people with their health very rewarding and I want to continue to do so.

Qualification gained:
Bachelor of Pharmacy I
with Distinction

Tertiary education institution:
University of Otago

Year of graduation:
2019

Place of employment:
Wellworks Pharmacy
Boulcott

SAGAL ABDULLAHI



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

Growing up my parents instilled in me the value of knowledge. From early on at school, my education was a top priority. I was always interested in science and was drawn to working in the health sector. I left my family to study at the University of Otago and was open to getting into a professional science field. I have completed my Bachelor degree in Pharmacy followed by my internship during 2020. I have now gained my Pharmacy Practicing Certificate.

MY MESSAGE to my fellow somalis

You have the power to change your own mindset. Strive for the best and dream big. It's important to grab opportunity and take your education to the highest level you can. You will be supported by your teachers, peers, and family so you can do it.



Qualifications gained:
Bachelor of Commerce with
Honours in Information Systems

Name of tertiary institution:
Victoria University of Wellington

Year of graduation:
2019

ADNAN ABDULLAHI



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

Assalamu Alaikum wa rahmatullahi wabarakaatu.

Choosing to study Information Technology (IT) came from appreciating technology as a child. However, that appreciation shifted from simply playing with it to realising that it can directly underpin our society. The teamwork aspect of the modern day IT industry appealed to me as well, sitting in front of a desk all day to code is quite the misconception. I love that it is just as much people oriented as it is about being technical. I liked that it is a multifaceted profession. Providing value to a wide range of clients in different sectors and industries is something I want to do. Finally, I liked that it is an industry that has exponentially changed throughout history and will continue to do so. Always learning new things and challenging myself is something I want to do in my career.

Progressing through university was a consistent effort. It never is easy for anyone, but alhamdulillah the belief and love from my support system got me through it. Special thanks to my parents who were so brave coming to a country where nothing was guaranteed for an opportunity like this one. The words I love you and thank you will never be enough.



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

I say go for it! Find out what you are passionate about and run with it. Always remember that you should never limit yourself and that you are more than capable. I am confident in saying that you have the support and love of an entire Somali community behind you. Treat your mental and physical health as your number one priority, grades are subjective and will never determine your worth or define who you are. It will be tough at times, but that is when you grit your teeth, back yourself and stick to it - ignore the pessimists and be an optimist. Finally, remember that hooyo is not there with you in class and no one will be your hooyo at university – you have to be accountable of yourself and university is truly what you make of it.

BOTAN MUSA BOTAN



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

Words cannot express my heartfelt joy and honour in being given the opportunity to be part of the Somali graduate journal. This is the second time I am being profiled in this inspiring publication. The first time was when I graduated with my bachelors degree back in 2016. There is no doubt that we have all gone through an unprecedented year in learning how to cope with a life changing pandemic.

I want to thank the almighty Allah (swt) for his never-ending blessings, my family and my beloved Somali community for their continual support.

Qualification gained:
Master of Engineering Studies

Tertiary education institution:
University of Auckland

Year of graduation:
2020

Place of employment:
Looking for job opportunities



MY MESSAGE to my fellow somalis

I wish the Somali graduates and prospective students the best of luck and success.

MOHAMED IBRAHIM

Qualifications gained:
Bachelor of Electrical Engineering

Name of tertiary institution:
Manukau Institute of Technology

Year of graduation:
2017

Place of employment:
AE Smith



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

I arrived in New Zealand from Somalia in February 2009 with my family. Coming to New Zealand I had big dreams to be successful and to make my life better than before. However, it was not an easy transition coming from Somalia to New Zealand. Before arriving here, I had an expectation in my mind to be successful and become an Engineer. I thought I was prepared academically but that was not the case. One of the first obstacles that I came across was the language. I remember vividly the first day I sat down for an exam to be evaluated for which class I would be attending. It was an eye opening experience and it dramatically changed how I evaluated myself. The lecturer who was assessing me wrote on the examination paper that I should be enrolled as an elementary student. It was very difficult to accept at the beginning because I thought I would be more advanced than that, but that was their decision. After that I began to consult myself and decided to take a deep breath and started as a beginner and that was the best decision that I have taken. After two and a half years, I graduated with a Diploma in English. My studies did not end up there but I continued to strive and try to figure out how to do further studies. Having a Diploma in English in your hand was not enough to go to university, therefore after consulting with student advisors and other lectures, I began to learn that there was a pathway to university which was by taking a one year Certificate course. Once I had finished that I went to Manukau Institute of Technology and showed my results of both the English and the Certificate and had an interview with the head of the Electrical Engineering Department and I was accepted. It was not an easy journey, it involved a lot of hard work, dedication. For me as the eldest of my siblings, the driving force to be successful and still even now was to set a good example for my younger siblings.



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

I am currently working as an electrician and my future goal is to be an inspector.



MY MESSAGE

My advice is very simple: you know yourself better than anybody therefore, think very critically of where you would be in five years. What have you achieved, what was the obstacle if you have not accomplished it. You can make your life better if you challenge yourself and be disciplined. One of the most important things is to be close to God and make supplications to him to make the journey easier for you and you should put effort into achieving your goal.



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

Isha Allah I am thinking of doing Chartered Accountants (CA) in the short term.

Qualification gained:
Bachelor of Business (Accountancy)

Tertiary education institution:
Unitec Institute of Technology (AUT)

Year of graduation:
2016

SAYNAB IBRAHIM



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

Assalamu Alaikum, I arrived in New Zealand in 2009 along with my family and we settled in Auckland. My education journey started in Somalia; however, I had more time to adjust to schooling in the new country and learnt the necessary language skills needed to progress through tertiary education.

I did two years of English studies at Unitec. After improving my English, I started a Diploma of Business and was eventually accepted into a Bachelor of Business (Accountancy). Accounting was something that I had in mind since a young age and I always wanted to become an accountant. Studying can be difficult, however, through self-motivation and determination anyone can succeed. Alhamdulillah I was able to complete my degree. I would like to thank my parents and my husband for their endless support and love; without their support and encouragement, I would not be at this level in my education.



MY MESSAGE to my fellow somalis

To the upcoming Somali graduates, take the opportunities we have in this country and pursue your chosen field. Believe in yourself, maintain your dream, and stay positive. There will be barriers during studies but do not give up; hard work pays off.

BAHSAN IBRAHIM

Qualification gained:
Bachelor of Nursing

Tertiary education institution:
Unitec Auckland

Year of graduation:
2019

Place of employment:
Health centre



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

I have special interest in primary nursing care. I love developing positive relationships with my local community, promoting and advocating for their health. I love volunteering for local community projects and being part of initiatives that promote community wellness.

MY MESSAGE to my fellow somalis

It is never too late to accomplish anything. Most of us have come from disadvantaged backgrounds but luckily this country is full of opportunities. Enrolling in a tertiary course, or similar is never easy, but you can have a positive experience if you have the resilience, motivation and good study discipline.

MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

My dream to gain a tertiary qualification started immediately when I arrived in Aotearoa. However, this was short-lived as my priorities changed. I left my nursing studies after my first year due to challenges associated with raising a young family and lack of support networks. After several years, as my children were getting more independent, I realised the importance of embarking on my career and gaining some qualifications. I ultimately decided to enrol into nursing again and somehow managed to convince the admission board that I was serious this time. Being a mature student was never easy itself, especially when you are a full-time mother. However, the desire to accomplish a qualification and contribute to society was a far more driving force for me to overcome my challenges. I would not have achieved my qualification without the help of Allah (SWT), the support of my family and close friends. I was glad my children had shown some resilience and patience during my studies and thus contributed to my success.



MY MESSAGE

Stay curious and explore all of your options, and no matter which field or job you choose make sure you actually love it.

Qualifications gained:

Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science

Tertiary education institution:

Auckland University of Technology

Year of graduation:

2018

Place of employment:

Australian Red Cross Blood Service

YUSUF MOHAMED

**FUTURE ASPIRATIONS**

Anywhere in a laboratory.

**MY EDUCATION JOURNEY**

My love for science started in high school and was exacerbated when I got my first job at a food research laboratory that was across the street from my high school. As a 16-year-old with no formal qualifications there was not a lot I could do in the lab besides stock taking and cleaning. However, I tried to take advantage of every minute I was there by being curious and confident enough to ask as many questions as I could about what exactly the scientists did from day to day and to learn all I could from them.

In my free time I would do research on what I had learnt to help me better understand and maybe ask better questions. So, after 2 years of working there as their Laboratory Assistant I was fortunate enough to be offered a Laboratory Technician role where I would get formal training to be able to do all the things I saw the scientists do. That eagerness to learn has stayed with me throughout my university career and even in my current job.

When I was leaving high school, science and health were my two favourite subjects

and heading into university, I wasn't sure which one

I wanted to focus on. So, to compensate and give myself some more time to think I decided to study a Bachelor of Health Science. I chose Health Science because it gave me a much broader view of so many different careers from health promotion, nursing, occupational therapy, mental health and applied sciences.

As much as I loved Health Science, it became clear that the classes that I looked forward to the most were the ones which were science related. Anytime I was in the laboratory I felt at home. With that, it became clear to me that science was where I needed to be. After a year of health science, I transferred into Medical Laboratory Sciences. It was a 4-year course which involved 3 years of theory work and 1 year of placements. I enjoyed every minute and I am so thankful to all my lecturers and my supervisors in placement for putting up with all my annoying questions.

I moved to Australia to be closer to my family, but my passion and love for science hasn't eased in any way.



Qualifications gained:
Bachelor Health Science

Tertiary education institution:
Auckland University of Technology
(AUT)

Year of graduation:
2020

Place of employment:
New Zealand Health Group

MOHAMED MOHAMED



MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

I was drawn towards the Healthcare sector from an early age. The premise of helping people is central to Healthcare which was why I wanted to study Health Science. I majored in Health Management and did a minor in Business Management. This allowed me to widen my horizons, learning about how Business intersects with Healthcare. I am now working as a Quality Coordinator at New Zealand Health Group tasked with assessing incidents and risks. Along with helping our field staff attain compensation for work related injury. University at first was hard to decipher as I entered straight from high school. There are so many options to study that you can become overwhelmed. But focusing on areas you are interested in can open doors for you.



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

Insha Allah my future goal is continuing to work and develop experience. I am particularly interested in learning more about our Public Healthcare system and doing further tertiary study. My long term goal would be going to Somalia to help strengthen our Healthcare system.

MY MESSAGE to my fellow somalis

My advice is follow your passion and do not worry about what other people are doing. There are many areas of study and all of them are noble and respectable.



MY FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

I currently work in a field that I am quite passionate about (library and community spaces, Wellington City Council), and I intend to stay in this line of work and build myself further. Many of the things that I do in this field I have learned because of the skills that I picked up during my time at university. I plan to continue utilising these skills and letting them propel me further into the future, inshallah

Qualification gained:

Bachelor of Biomedical Science
(majoring in human genetics)

Tertiary education institution:

Victoria University of Wellington

Year of graduation:

2020

Place of employment:

Wellington City Council, Library
and Community Spaces

KHADRO MOHAMED

MY EDUCATION JOURNEY

I studied a Bachelor of Biomedical Science with a major in Human Genetics. I've had a fantastic time doing my studies and learning new skills and meeting a range of different people. My first year was extremely difficult because I was fresh out of high school and knew very little about university life and the expectations it came with. Finding my feet was difficult and there were times I wanted to quit. However, finding the right group of people and learning more about my own limitations, really helped me navigate the space better. As time went on, I learned to enjoy my degree and my study. I worked really closely with my lecturers towards the end of my university years in 6-8 hour labs that I found extremely challenging.

This was the moment that things began to shift for me. Towards the end of my degree, I decided that lab work was not for me and chose to concentrate on research work and writing. This transition was good for me and helped me pursue things that I was much more interested in. I'm currently doing other work for the Wellington City Council, but a lot of the skills that I have picked up in university (gathering information, learning to present things in a clear and coherent way) have helped me do excellent work in my current field.

MY MESSAGE

to my fellow somalis

Always push yourself! The transition from high school to university is both exciting and daunting, I would encourage everyone to look further into their chosen line of study before starting and asking yourself some hard questions. You want to be sure about your choices, I would encourage you to stay focused on your dreams and try to enjoy your time. University is full of great experiences and amazing opportunities. Enjoy them all. Inshallah Khair.

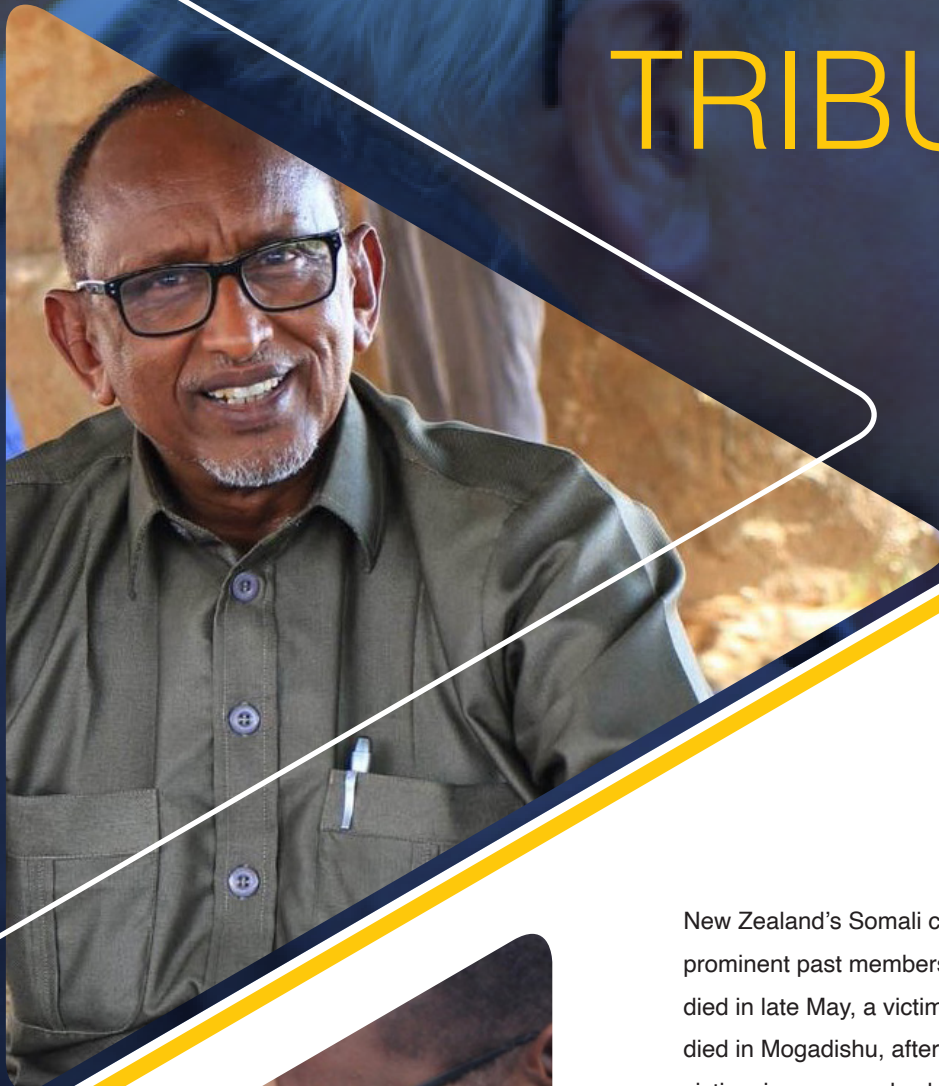


COMMUNITY FOCUS

ITY



TRIBUTE




New Zealand's Somali community lost one of its most prominent past members when **Ismail Diriye Gamadid** died in late May, a victim of Covid-19. Ismail, aged 65, died in Mogadishu, after a humanitarian visit to flood victims in an area also hit by the pandemic. At the time of his death he had been serving as Minister of Agriculture and Environment in Puntland, to which he had returned a year-and-a-half before his death.

Ismail, originally from Buuhoodle, originally arrived in New Zealand in the late 1990s

his recent return to his homeland was preceded by a few years in Brisbane, Australia. A one-time scholarship student at Oxford University, he once served as director of the Somali Range Agency.

In New Zealand, he lived in Hamilton, home to New Zealand's largest Somali community where he served for many years as president of the Waikato Refugee Forum and the Waikato Muslim Association, which brought together over 40 nationalities.



**He was my mentor...
he could have been
the President [in
Somalia]. Ismail was
a man of wisdom
and had a natural
power to negotiate**

Mohammed Khalif Abdi

He was a long-time contributor to community and refugee resettlement, instrumental in setting up Hamilton's first Islamic early childcare centre, and a tireless worker on behalf of young people and for cross-community relations. A particular cause he championed was the involvement, against tradition, of Muslim girls in outdoor pursuits in their sports-mad adoptive homeland.

In 2009, he was awarded a Hamilton Civic Award.

Paying tribute at a memorial gathering in Hamilton in June, Mohammed Khalif Abdi, also from Somalia and Ismail's successor at the Waikato Refugee Forum, declared: "He was my mentor... he could have been the President [in Somalia]. Ismail was a man of wisdom and had a natural power to negotiate."

THE SOMALI WARRIOR

POEM BY JENNY JANIF
A FRIEND OF ISMAIL

The weeping skies opened up
Gifting blessings of rain
To Mother Earth
preparing to receive her warrior son
whose commitment and dedication to
humanity lead him from the
Hawd to Hamilton
crossing two great waters of
the Indian and Pacific Oceans
a leader with great vision and wisdom
a champion for human rights
Ismail Diriye Gamadid
State Minister for Agriculture
The Environment and Climate Change for
Puntland
A patriotic son of Somalia
your love for your country
your wise counsel
woven with pearls of traditional wisdom
you walked so humbly amongst the people
donning your traditional Somali Shaal
and culture cultivated
by the Daraawiish spirit
your gift to humanity
and legacy lives on



CONGRATULATIONS

Ahmed Tani

Ahmed Tani, of Christchurch, ONZM, for services to refugee communities

In recognition of his support for former refugees and the wider community, Ahmed Tani was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM) in 2019 year's honours list. He is justifiably proud to have a letter from Prime Minister Jacinda Adern congratulating him on being the recipient of one of New Zealand's top honours.

Ahmed Tani played a key role in founding the Canterbury Refugee Resettlement and Resource Centre (formerly the Canterbury Refugee Council). He has facilitated

multiple projects through the Centre for seniors, women and young people. He helped establish and now chairs the New Zealand National Refugee Association. He is part of the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network. He has set up multiple groups and sub-groups for refugees and migrants in Christchurch, in collaboration with other development agencies. He has been instrumental in setting up inter-faith committees in Christchurch. He chairs Immigration New Zealand's Strengthening Refugee Voices. He is a senior member of the Muslim Association of Canterbury and chairs the organisation's Election Committee. Following the 2011 Christchurch earthquakes, Mr Tani helped connect people with services and with others in the community.

Congratulations Ahmed Tani, your Somali community is very proud of your accomplishments. Keep up the good work



Guled Mire

Fullbright scholarship winner and human rights advocate – Guled Mire

As a teenager, former refugee Guled Mire was chased by skinheads and told by his teachers that university wasn't a place for people like him.

Years later – an Auckland University of Technology graduate, policy advisor, community advocate and refugee ambassador – Mire has been announced as a Fulbright award winner, and will go on to study at Ivy League-listed Cornell in New York.

"I'm really stoked and pleased, but this is much bigger than just me. This is for every young person growing up in Aotearoa who was told they'd never be good

enough, or university wasn't for them – just as I was," he said.

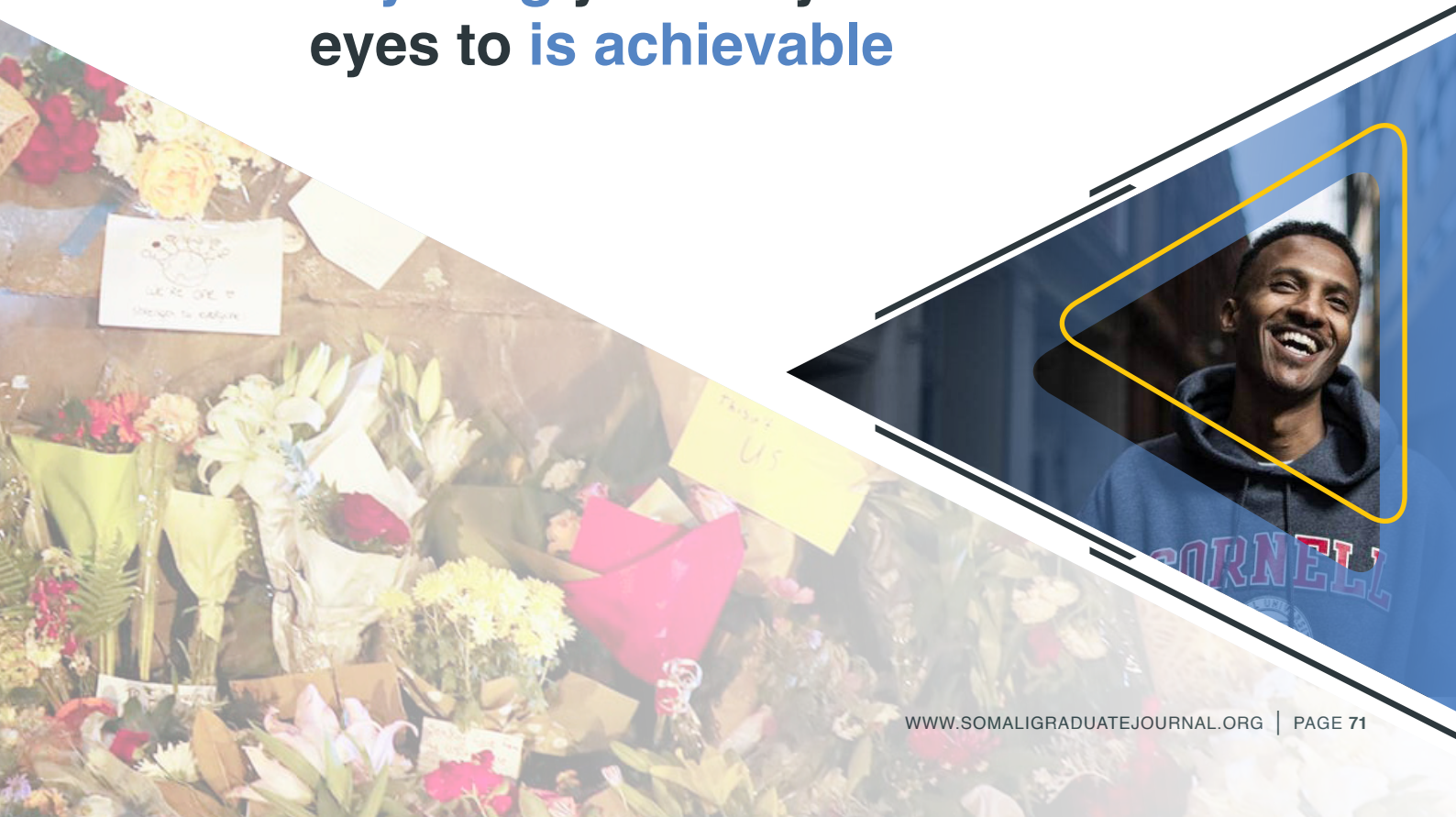
"It shows that anything you set your eyes to is achievable."

Mire, who was born in Somalia and spent time at a refugee camp in Kenya, is based in Wellington. He is currently studying a Masters of Public Administration at Cornell, specialising in human rights and social justice. On top of his Fulbright General Graduate Award, Mire has also received a merit-based fellowship award.

Congratulations Guled Mire, your Somali community is very proud of your accomplishments and winning this valuable scholarship.



**It shows that
anything you set your
eyes to is achievable**





MARIAM ALI

My name is Mariam Ali, I am currently a first-year Health Science student at Auckland University of Technology.

These photographs were taken for a school assignment on Culture and Identity.

These images represent our Somali Whakapapa of history, faith, and culture.



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SPOTLIGHT ON AN
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT
PASSION FOR
BAKING

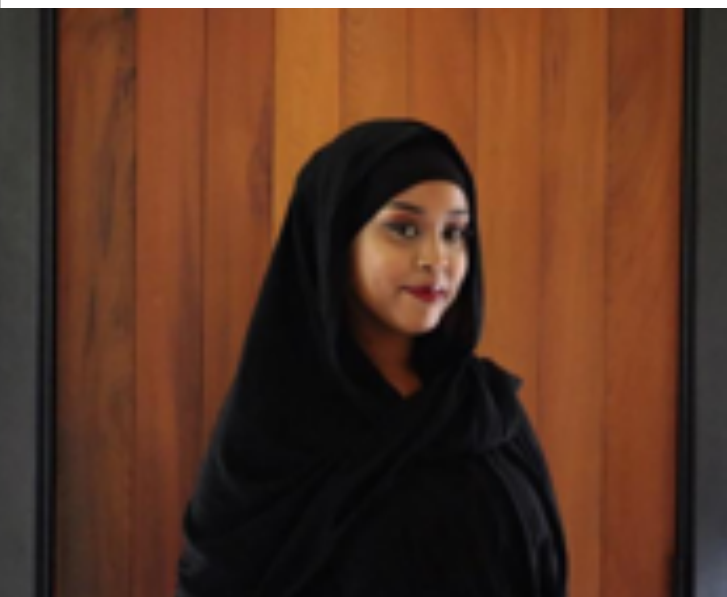
AISHA KHALIF

My name is Aisha Khalif, I am a Political Science major at the Waikato University with hopes to engage in a career of political analysis and historical research. When you study politics during a politically demanding year, I advise you to have something as a distraction to keep you going from insane. I choose food.

The subject of politics has transgressed into all matters of the world, including food.

Some people eat for nutrition, others for flavour and some for ethical sustainability.

Because of this I began questioning what I consume and realised I am eating mainstream and mediocre while ignoring all possible elements of food. Once you recognise how expressive, vast and resourceful food is to every person, of every country in the whole world- you understand that food itself is a gift and there is no need to be stingy on what you eat. Therefore, I am no longer eating to survive. I'm living to eat because it encourages me to explore and celebrate my culinary experiences, while expanding my boundaries and growing my abilities in the kitchen.



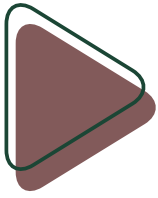
My particular interest with baking began when I realised how treacherous I was at baking. I thought to myself, there is no way I am in the kitchen at all hours of the day and I can't make a muffin. So, I took it up as a challenge to combat the awkward relationship between me and ingredients that include flour and baking powder.

One random day in May I made a strawberry shortcake and it looked horrible. However, to my surprise it tasted so delicious that my family asked me to make it again. So, I complied, and at that moment I realised that I had potential. I continued my journey of cakes and discovering other sweet desserts and saw myself beginning to flourish in the kitchen.

I was surprised to have navigated towards baking, eventually I saw myself always having bread dough or a cake mixture in front of me. Progress is a slow process, but when you're passionate about something, the passion is glowing in your work. Visually, and tastefully I could examine the progress of my work and felt content on my journey as I came a long way. And trust me was this self-discovery journey of baking worth it, because now I can wake up at 3:30am in the pitch black of the night and make a wedding cake.

Thus, Honeystyx (Instagram) Bakery was established July 11th, 2020.





SOMALI ENTREPRENEURSHIP EMERGES IN CHRISTCHURCH



Said Abdukadir, the owner and head baker of Waberi Bakery



SAID'S JOURNEY INTO HIS BUSINESS

I arrived in New Zealand in 2009 at the age of 16. I went to Hillmorton high school then went to Ara to study for a Diploma in ICT. I went on to work for different companies over the years before I opened Waberi Bakery in January 2021.

The Somali community in Christchurch has gone through a lot in the last 10 years. Ten years ago, a deadly earthquake struck the city. In 2019 the city also witnessed the worst terrorist attacks against its Muslim community. Three Somali lives were among the 51 lives lost in the shootings inside the city's two Mosques. However, despite these tragedies the Somali community in this city is now emerging as the hub for the well-known Somali entrepreneurship. Two Somali businesses have sprung up in the last few months - a bakery and barber and soon will be joined by a café currently under its final preparations for opening. These startup businesses have given this small community of about 250 people something to be positive about.

I have always had an interest in baking however, my interest turned into a serious hobby about five years ago when I decided to stop buying bread from the supermarket and bake my own bread. For the past five years, I have spent most of my time reading textbooks, attending baking classes and volunteering in commercial bakeries which led me to develop my baking skills to a professional level and ultimately open my own bakery. My primary motivation for opening a bakery was not an entrepreneurship instinct but rather a passion for baking healthy bread for the wider community. My vision for Waberi is to be one of the best artisan bakeries in New Zealand and one day a learning centre for all people that are interested in baking. We sell all types of baked goods at Waberi Bakery but we focus on handcrafted artisan breads like Sourdough and Ciabatta. I have also introduced some Somali specialties like mash-mash, roti farmajo and Samosa to set ourselves apart from our competitors.

CHALLENGES

As a new business, we are facing the usual challenge of finding new customers in both the wholesale and retail market. Running a business in any capacity requires tremendous mental strength and energy. There are good days and bad days in business, but it is all about keeping faith in your long-term vision and having good resilience in the face of adversity.



Roti Farmajo



Mashmash



Samosa

ADVICE

For anyone starting a new business is do your due diligence and educate yourself in your chosen field. Make sure you are passionate about whatever you are about to endeavour in because that is the anchor that will keep you grounded in the bad days ahead and will make you smile in the good ones.



CHRISTCHURCH AL NOOR MOSQUE FOOTBALL TEAM



The Al Noor Mosque was the hardest hit in the Christchurch terrorist attacks on March the 15th 2019. The Muslim community, despite the lingering memory of that sad event, is forging ahead with a lot of optimism for the future.



Al Noor F.C. is a football team established in 2020 based in Christchurch. They were set to participate in the March 15th Memorial Cup that was meant to take place on the weekend of March 6-7, 2021 but due to Covid-19 alert levels changing, the tournament has been postponed to October 2021. The team is looking forward to participating in both local and national tournaments.

The team features players from different ethnic backgrounds with Christchurch Somali youth contributing a greater number of talented football players to this squad.



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NEW ZEALAND SOMALI LEADERS FORUM

On Saturday 19th December 2020,

delegates and representatives of Somali communities based in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch met at Hamilton's Settlement Centre Waikato to participate in the inaugural New Zealand Somali Leader's Forum.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Somali Leader's Forum was to bring together the leaders of the Somali community in New Zealand with the aim of discussing the common concerns for the Somali community, exchanging ideas for appropriate solutions and fostering solidarity & fellowship among the leaders. The forum broke into five groups to discuss some of the issues facing the Somali community across New Zealand. An expert panel addressed some possible solutions. Some of the main challenges raised during the forum include:

- 1** Lack of unity among Somali Leaders (competition rather than cooperation)
- 2** Hawala/Remittances – lack of reliable and legal means to transfer money to relatives back home
- 3** High unemployment in the community including those with New Zealand qualifications
- 4** Astray Youth
- 5** Mental Health and Addiction
- 6** Educational barriers for newcomers
- 7** Immigration, airport customs & housing issues
- 8** Resettlement challenges
- 9** Identity crisis especially for youth/cultural dislocation
- 10** Growing distance between parents and children / family issues
- 11** Lack of connection between New Zealand Government agencies and the Somali community
- 12** Working towards getting Somali Passport recognized by New Zealand Government so that Somali travelers with New Zealand visa can travel on their national document.

FORUM OUTCOME

The community leaders at the forum emphasized the need for a unified approach to tackle the challenges faced by the community.

Therefore, the forum proposed:



The formation of a technical committee to document and collate the discussions of the inaugural forum and convening, facilitating and organizing a second forum in due course. Members of the technical committee are Abdirizak Abdi, Abdiqani Ali, Mohamud Mohamed and Muridi Amin



Each city should first go back and form its own reconciliation committee to resolve their internal issues and concerns. If this is unsuccessful, the next forum would consider forming an independent reconciliation committee from different regions to mediate conflicts across New Zealand.



To continue discussions and meet again in due course.

SHIRKII MADASHA HOGGAAMIYEYAASHA SOOMAALIDA EE NEW ZEALAND

Maalin Sabti ah ay taariikhdu ku beegneyd 19-ka Diseembar 2020, wufuud iyo wakiilo jaaliyadaha Soomaaliyeed ee fadhigoodu yahay Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington iyo Christchurch ayaa ku kulmay Settlement Center Waikato si ay uga qeyb galaan furitaanka shirka Madasha Hoggaamiyaasha Soomaaliyeed ee New Zealand.

UJEEDDADA

Ujeeddada Madasha Hoggaamiyaasha Soomaaliyeed waxay ahayd in la isu keeno hoggaamiyeyaasha bulshada Soomaaliyeed ee ku nool New Zealand iyadoo ujeedkeedu ahaa in laga wada hadlo tabashooyinka guud ee bulshada Soomaaliyeed, is-weydaarsiga fikradaha xalka ku habboon iyo kobcinta midnimada & wehelnimada hoggaamiyeyaasha. Madashu waxay u kala baxday shan kooxood si ay uga wada hadlaan qaar ka mid ah dhibaatooyinka haysta bulshada Soomaaliyeed ee ku baahsan New Zealand. Koox khabaro ahna waxay ka hadleen qaar ka mid ah xalalka suurtagalka ah. Qaar ka mid ah caqabadaha ugu waaweyn ee la soo saaray intii lagu guda jiray kulanka waxaa ka mid ah:

1. Kala qeybsanaanta Madaxda Soomaalida (tartan iyo kala jijiidasho shacabka ee aanay wadashaqayn)
2. Xawaalada / Xawaaladaha
3. Shaqo la'aan xattaa dadka haysta shahaadooyinka waxbarasho ee New Zealand
4. Dhallinyaro Baadida
5. Caafimaadka Maskaxda iyo Balwadda
6. Caqabadaha waxbarasho ee soo-galootiga cusub
7. Cabashooyinka waaxda socdaalka, kastamka madaarka iyo guryaha

8. Caqabadaha dib udajinta
9. Mushkiladaha Aqoonsi ee Dhallinyarada / dhaqanka lumay
10. Kala fogaanshaha u dhexeeya waalidiinta iyo carruurta /arrimaha qoyska
11. Xoojinta xiriirka ka dhexeeya hay'adaha Dowladda New Zealand iyo bulshada Soomaaliyeed
12. Ka shaqeynta sidii Dowladda New Zealand u aqoonsan lahayd Baasaboorka Soomaaliya si dadka Soomaaliyeed ee u soo dhoofaya New Zealand ay u isticmaali karaan Baasaboorkooda Soomaaliyeed.

NATIJOOYINKA KA SOO BAXAY SHIRARKA WAXAA KA MID AH

- a. Abuuris guddi farsamo oo soo qora soona aruuriya waxyaabihii lagaga dooday gogosha iyo isu-imaatinka, fududeynta iyo abaabulka gole labaad aan waqtigiisa wali la shaacin. Xubnaha guddiga farsamada waa Abdirazak Abdi, Abdiqani, Mohamud Mohamed iyo Muridi Amin
- b. Magaalo walba waa inay marka hore dib isigu noqotaa oo ay sameysataa guddi dib u heshiisiin oo xallisa khilaafaadka dhexdooda ah. Haddii tan lagu guuleysan waayo, golaha soo socda ayaa tixgelin doona sameynta guddi dib-u-heshiisiin ah oo ka kooban gobollada kala duwan si loo dhexdhexaadiyo khilaafaadka ka taagan guud ahaan New Zealand.
- c. In la sii wado wada hadalka lana kulmo markale, markuu wakhtigu saamaxo.



ISLAMIC CENTRE'S FOCUS ON COMMUNITY WELLBEING

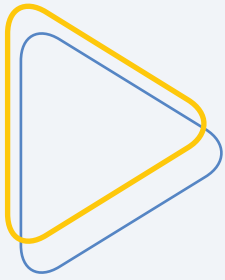
The Mt Roskill Islamic centre on 60 Stoddard Road, Mt Roskill in Auckland was established in 2017 by New Zealand Islamic Cultural Trust's chair, Sheikh Uwais Ahmed.



This community centre, in the heart of Mt Roskill suburb which has a large Muslim population hosts a number of initiatives in addition to offering daily prayers for the community in the masjid (mosque) section of the building. The pictures below give evidence to the approach taken by the founder of the centre when it comes to meeting the spiritual/religious as well as the social needs of the community. Sheikh Uwais believes that masaajid (mosques) should be not only places of worship but equally important is to address other needs of the community or at least be open to listen to those needs whatever they may be.

Sheikh says the community needs are multifaceted and complex and we, the ulama (religious leaders) should be open-minded about what issues our community may seek help with. It is not only a religious issue they may have. For example, our youth have unique challenges they face and so do our women and children. Some of our community members are afraid of talking to their local imams about some of their unique situations as they don't want to be judged. Therefore masaajid are often the last place they seek help from.

Sheikh Uwais's approach may seem to be keeping up with the reality of time and place but in fact it is based on the principles of Islam and the approach of our prophet (May Allah be pleased with him) in his dealings with people of all kinds and in all aspects of life. *Ulamas are meant to be community servants*, says Sheikh Uwais.



ISLAMIC CENTRE'S FOCUS ON COMMUNITY WELLBEING



Guests at the graduation ceremony organised by NZICT



Religious s

IN PICTURES:

Some of the
programmes run at the
centre and outside of
the centre



Graduation ceremony organised by NZICT



Information sharing



Summer youth programme at the beach



sermon



Organising sporting youth activities



Youth friendly space



Graduation ceremony organised by NZICT



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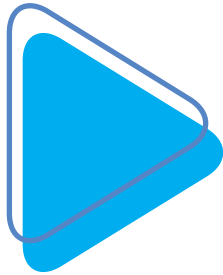
Iftar (fast breaking) together



CELEBRATIONS







ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the graduates who have submitted their profiles and shared their personal stories with the wider community.



Your individual stories and achievements will, in no doubt, inspire your fellow Somalis especially those in high schools who are considering their future career aspirations.

I have enjoyed reading each and everyone's unique education journey and their aspirations and so will the readers of the journal I am sure. Congratulations on your achievements and I wish you all great success in your life endeavors and career choices. Keep on learning.

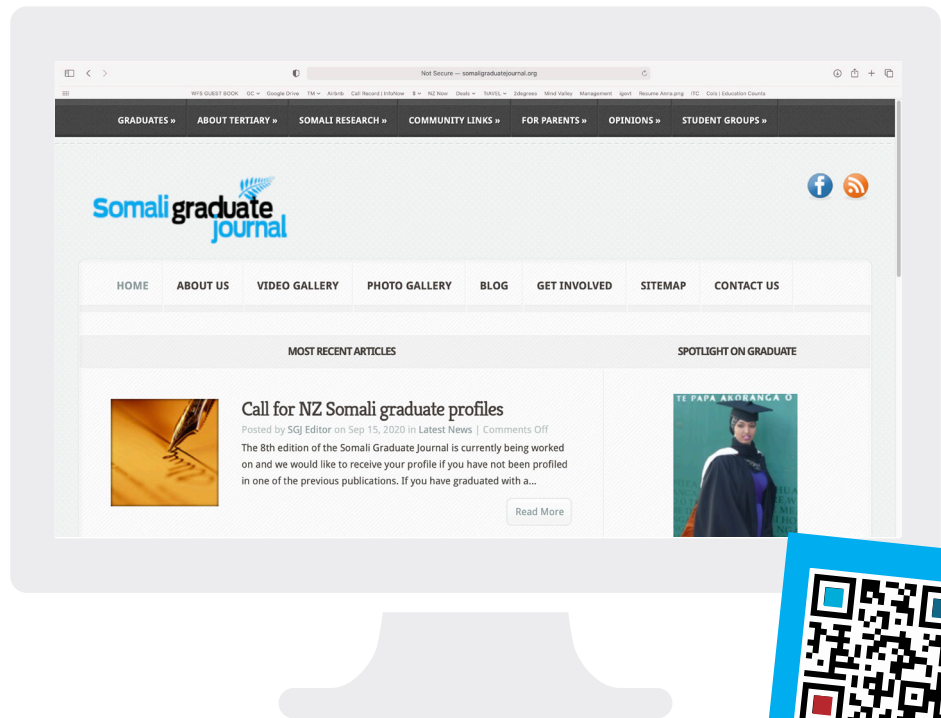
Many thanks to everyone who has helped with the collection of the graduate profiles from the community or have helped in any other ways. It has been the efforts of many to put together this publication that is widely anticipated and celebrated across our Somali community in New Zealand and beyond. I also want to thank Grafica Creativa and Waikato Refugee Forum for their support.

Special thanks to the Ministry of Social Development, specially the E Tū Whānau Team, for their ongoing support and engagement with our community.

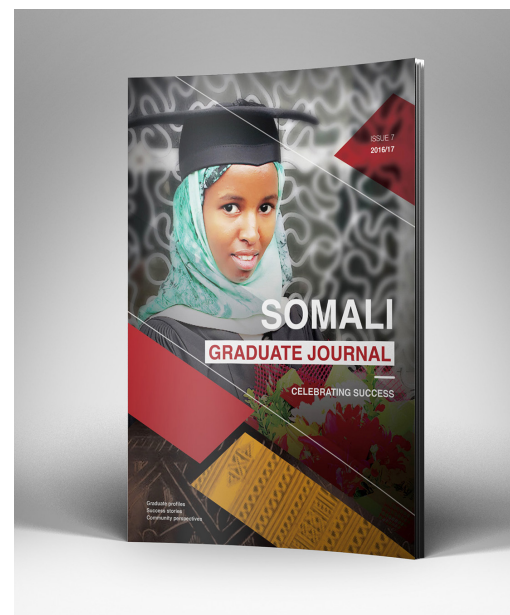
Abdirizak Abdi
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nzsomaligraduates@gmail.com



Check out the **Somali Graduate Journal** website. www.somaligraduatejournal.org



PREVIOUS EDITIONS





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**OUR SOMALI GRADUATES
INSPIRING OUR COMMUNITIY**