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6. EMPLOYMENT

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the employment experiences of Somalis in London. Qualitative data from the focus group interviews, held with women over the age of 45 and men aged between 18 and 35 in Camden, and from the stakeholder interviews will be presented in relation to the following: barriers facing Somalis regarding employment; discrimination in employment and the labour market; the influences on the employment choices made by Somalis; U.K. government initiatives to improve access to employment and community responses; and where Somalis turn for advice, information and support in relation to employment issues. The chapter begins with some contextual information regarding the U.K. economy and labour market as a whole and specific data on the position of Somalis.

6.2 Somali Participation in the Labour Market

There is a long history of Somali migration to the United Kingdom being premised on economic grounds, and this gathered momentum after the Second World War.⁸² However, the decline in the manufacturing industries in the United Kingdom from the 1970s onwards affected Somali communities. Somalis who arrived in the 1990s onwards were mainly refugees and not economic migrants; this is an important factor shaping Somali participation in the labour market. Employment levels among refugee settlers are low,⁸³ and a high proportion of people who came to the United Kingdom as refugees have never been in employment.⁸⁴

The current situation facing Somalis with regard to employment in London needs to be understood within the context of the wider global economy. Like many other European countries, the United Kingdom is currently experiencing the after-effects of a prolonged economic downturn, which has inevitably impacted on the employment market. U.K. unemployment levels are currently at 7.1 percent of the economically active population. This amounts to 2.32 million people aged 16 and over who are currently classed as unemployed. There are also 22.3 percent of the population who are economically inactive (this includes those who are studying, looking after family, retired or unable to work due to illness).⁸⁵

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) gathers labour market statistics and data on the following ethnic groupings: White; Mixed/multiple ethnic groups; Indian; Pakistani; Bangladeshi; Chinese; Other Asian background; Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; Other ethnic background. The ONS also publishes labour market data

⁸² Harris, "The Somali community in the UK".

⁸³ Harris, "The Somali community in the UK".

⁸⁴ Bloch, (2004).

⁸⁵ ONS (January 2014).

for country of birth; however, for non-EU states these data provide seven broad categories of African (excluding South Africa), South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, USA and the rest of the world. It is therefore not possible to extrapolate British-Somali representation among employment figures or occupation, although evidence suggests that Londoners born in Somalia are heavily concentrated in sales and customer services and elementary occupations—the two lowest paid occupational groups.⁸⁶ One stakeholder working at a community organisation indicated that British-Somalis tend to be employed in low-paid work such as care work, cleaning where there is no progression, basic pay and little training.

Labour market statistics indicated that for the three months up to November 2013, employment levels and rates in London as a whole were at record highs. However, despite this, unemployment levels in London are still well above the levels prior to the recession. This is because economic activity rates are at a record low. Unemployment figures by borough⁸⁷ indicate that for London as whole, rates were 6.81 percent. The figure was 8.66 percent for Tower Hamlets. Data from Camden show that⁸⁸ by 2012, total employment in Camden was 5 percent higher than before the recession (2008). This figure is higher than the average employment growth for the whole of London, which is 2.7 percent. Unemployment in Camden peaked in 2011 at 5.7 percent, but since March 2012 has remained 3 percent higher than pre-recession levels. Youth unemployment has also stabilised at pre-recession levels.

British-Somalis have the lowest employment rates of all migrants to the United Kingdom and unemployment affects all parts of Somali communities, for example the young, men and women, the skilled and unskilled. Evidence suggests that unemployment can have detrimental effects on well-being, such as mental and physical health, isolation and poverty.⁸⁹

Somalis are known all over the world for their entrepreneurial and business skills, but the regulatory framework in the United Kingdom and the inability to raise capital has been identified as a barrier to establishing businesses in the United Kingdom.

Following the Roundtable Discussion, key labour market information was provided on Camden.⁹⁰ By 2012, total employment in Camden was 5 percent higher than before the recession (2008). This figure is higher than the average employment growth for the whole of London, which is 2.7 percent. Unemployment in Camden peaked in 2011 at

⁸⁶ DMAG, "Country of birth and labour market outcomes", 63 DMAG Briefing 2005/1, at woman.

⁸⁷ London's Poverty Profile website, at <http://www.londonpovertyprofile.org.uk/indicators/topics/work-and-worklessness/unemployment-by-borough/> (accessed 4 August 2014)

⁸⁸ See: <http://www.londonpovertyprofile.org.uk/indicators/topics/work-and-worklessness/unemployment-by-borough/>

⁸⁹ CLG, "The Somali community in England". Harris, "The Somali community in the UK".

⁹⁰ DMAG, "Country of birth and labour market outcomes", 63 DMAG Briefing 2005/1, at <http://legacy.london.gov.uk/gla/publications/factsandfigures/DMAG-Briefing-2005-1.pdf> (accessed 4 August 2014).

5.7 percent, but since March 2012 has remained 3 percent higher than pre-recession levels. Youth unemployment has also stabilised at pre-recession levels.

6.3 Impact of Unemployment, Economic Inactivity

British-Somali participants in the Open Society Foundations' focus groups felt that being unemployed in London created additional difficulties because the cost of living is so high. The detrimental effects of unemployment were also recognised in terms of poverty, low self-esteem and depression. It was also thought that unemployed men in particular were at greater risk of using *khat*.⁹¹ Self-reliance was considered to be a valuable character trait among the men in the focus group, and being employed was part of this:

I think employment ... it's given me that self-belief that I can work hard for something and not rely on anybody, that sense of, you can earn your own money but also the core values it teaches you in terms of working hard ... these things you only get after you get into, I would say even minimal jobs, like I've done. (Camden, man 18–35)

The same sentiment was expressed in the women's focus group, and there was clearly an appetite for employment among the majority of these women:

I want them to send me to work. I am job ready. (Camden, woman 45+ group)

This is consistent with research that suggests that work is culturally important for Somali women, and that there may be higher levels of economic activity among women than official statistics indicate.⁹²

6.4 Barriers to Employment

Stakeholders suggested that there is a lack of trust in authorities and government departments from the Somali community, and that there is also a lack of confidence in approaching organisations. At the Roundtable Discussion, representatives from Camden and Tower Hamlets highlighted that in both boroughs there is a lack of BME employees in senior positions. In Tower Hamlets, there are only 66 Somali employees out of 1,200, and in Camden the number is just 12.⁹³

The importance of employment and its central role in promoting integration and cohesion was acknowledged by all of the participants in this research. Lack of language skills was identified as a barrier for recently arrived young women, but language is not the only barrier and conversely, for settled families, the perception of being recent

⁹¹ *Khat* is a leafy green plant that acts as a stimulant when chewed and ingested.

⁹² N. Kabeer and P. Ainsworth, "Life-chances, life choices: Exploring patterns of work and worklessness among Somali women in Tower Hamlets", 2011. London, Tower Hamlets LBC.

⁹³ Evidence presented at the Roundtable Discussion.

immigrants was also identified as a problem. Many respondents acknowledged that the current recession poses particular problems, since access to employment is more difficult and opportunities are limited.

Among the significant structural barriers identified is the lack of jobs available:

I've always been one to always rely on myself, I've never liked to ask for something from anyone, but at the same time, with the position we are in now with economy ... you get a hundred, a couple of hundred [applicants for one job], and that's not even me exaggerating, that's the statistics so it's much harder for you to get a job now. (Tower Hamlets, man 18–35)

Two female focus group participants also highlighted the difficulties facing jobseekers in terms of the lack of employment opportunities:

The job centre will tell us to bring details of jobs. There are no jobs out there to present. (Camden, woman 45+ group)

For others, a key issue was the match between the opportunities that existed and the qualifications they had:

It's not easy, even though the job centre don't have any work for you, they tell you to hurry up and find work. You're not equipped with appropriate qualifications, they've not sent you for training, their whole aim is just a job. (Camden, woman 45+ group)

For others, qualifications are not an issue. One male participant commented that he was unsuccessful in applying for jobs for which he was over-qualified:

There are jobs where I'm over-qualified that I'm applying for and I still don't get it. (Tower Hamlets, man 18–35)

Many of the men in the focus group, although educated, had taken jobs for which they were over-qualified, albeit often on a temporary basis.

Competition for jobs from other migrants was also seen to act as a barrier to finding work, in particular the arrival of A8 migrants from the EU:

What we don't recognise is that even the immigration system has changed, where we have opened up doors to other EU countries, especially from Eastern Europe or what have you, so they're taking jobs that were readily available. (Camden, man 18–35)

Further, a lack of role models and being habituated to unemployment and benefit dependency were further identified as barriers facing young people in particular:

You have three generations of families where nobody has worked, you'll create that sort of issue where if a young person gets into his adult life and he has never worked, a lot of problems in society will appear. (Tower Hamlets, man 18–35)

There was a strong feeling in both focus groups that although the government currently is encouraging people to take up employment and is reducing welfare benefits as an incentive to do so, there is a job shortage that acts as a significant structural barrier.

6.4.1 The Experience of British-Somali Women

Since the profile of the women in the study differed from that of the men—they were older, were homemakers, most had never worked and lacked education and language skills—arguably the barriers they faced were different from those of the men. The lack of language skills for older women in particular was felt to be problematic:

For many people their children have grown up and they've been told to go to work. How should they go about going to work when they haven't even grasped the working language? (Camden, woman 45+ group)

For the women in the study, not having the appropriate qualifications or work experience also acted as a barrier:

When you do present the details for the jobs you've applied for in line with your experience they say it's not enough. (Camden, woman 45+ group)

Lack of training and support to find work was also perceived as being problematic:

It's wrong to tell a mother who's been stuck at home raising her children, who doesn't already know the language [to go to work without support]. She doesn't know the way in which to look for work or the language. We don't even know how to use the computer or go online. We can't read or write, how are we meant to find work? (Camden, woman 45+ group)

From the evidence gathered from stakeholders and community members, there appeared to be limited engagement with employment training programmes. There was some evidence of women being asked to stop language classes in order to find a job. This was considered to be detrimental as it limits the type of employment they can look for:

The job centre is very problematic ... if you don't do as they say, they suspend your payments. They send you back and forth. They send you on training but won't allow you to complete a language course. (Camden, woman 45+)

Women in the focus group felt that they needed training in IT skills, language education and support to help them secure employment. Both the men and the women in the focus groups felt that voluntary work was useful to gain work experience, but that it needed to lead on to securing paid work to be fully worthwhile.

For the older women in the focus group entering education and training courses—often for the first time in their lives—was a particular challenge:

Before I was told to go to work, I used to study at college. I struggled a lot during my time there, the language isn't my mother tongue, I'm older and my brain isn't what it used to be. This isn't the (right) time in my life to be studying. My brain's moved on. An older person sits through a class, the same thing repeated over; they lose it the moment they leave the room. (Camden, woman 45+ group)

For women with younger children, the lack of childcare facilities was a further barrier:

Before all the changes came in to force, I used to work at a number of different places. Since they had my records on file, they said you can work at a school, etc., but each time what hindered me was my children. One of whom I need to drop off in the morning, school begins at 8 a.m. You need full-time places if you can't find part time. I told them I needed something that serves the interests of my children, a job that I can begin when I've dropped them at school and finish before I have to pick them up. I found one, thank God, I'm employed as a carer where I work the hours that suit me, and I can refuse to work hours that are inappropriate. (Camden, woman 45+ over)

For some of the women in the study, the logistics of finding work were daunting. Those women who had been homemakers and had not engaged in paid employment were confounded by the procedures and processes for searching for employment, as the examples below illustrate:

For those who haven't worked outside the home ... teach people how to search for work. I'd like that a lot. (Camden, woman 45+ group)

How should I go about finding work? I don't even know how to. (Camden, woman 45+ group)

Women in the focus group were very clear about what needed to be in place to support them in finding work, as one participant commented:

Teach people the best way to search for jobs. They know the most effective ways to carry out job search. We'd like for them to teach us and to support us. (Camden, woman 45+ group)

The women in the focus group expressed concern regarding cuts to services, in particular community-based organisations, as they felt that this was the best place for support for accessing employment to be located. However, British-Somali community organisations were not usually established with the remit to provide employment support; their main focus of provision was English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and welfare advice, with employment support often being informal. The research team were unable to identify any British-Somali specific employment support in Camden and Tower Hamlets. Women in the focus groups generally did not like to

access job centres, finding the staff there less helpful. Sure Start⁹⁴ was considered to be really helpful, particularly in providing one-to-one support for mothers with children under five to find work. Services within their locale were considered to be the most useful:

The community centres are best placed to help. Even the community centres that used to support people are closing down because of a lack of funding. All the (public) services have been reduced. The local Citizen's Advice Bureau is being closed, you know, the Council too. But what would be good is that, in order to get people working, they receive support to find the jobs they need to make a way for that to happen. (Camden, woman45+ group)

6.4.2 Experience of Somali Men

The men in the focus group were all educated and some of them had gone on to further and higher education. Most of these research participants were currently in employment. For the men, further barriers included not being part of "networks" which facilitate access to employment through the transfer and use of social capital, as one male focus group participant commented:

It's not about what you know; it's about who you know. It's not nice to say but it's the truth. (Tower Hamlets, man 18–35)

One respondent described a situation where he suggested to his manager that a potential (Somali) candidate for a job should submit a CV to the company, only to discover that the position had been filled by someone who was already known to a more senior manager. This was felt to be a common practice and to disadvantage Somalis as they were not part of such powerful networks.

It's networking, it's networking, but also sometimes it's unfair when you're trying to, say, for somebody who has no experience who is trying to break into this field it's very, very difficult. (Tower Hamlets, man 18–35)

It was clearly felt that not being part of networks was a hindrance to securing employment. It was also suggested that there were cultural barriers that acted as obstacles to joining networks. In particular, participants noted the extent to which networks and relationships are developed in social events after work:

It's that cultural aspect of, you know, how you get through. Even with management, people attend parties or Christmas dos just to meet the right sort of people; I think it's cultural in this country where it's something that is the norm you have to attend these gatherings to meet the right people. It's not the right way forward, but it's quite a cultural thing. (Tower Hamlets, man 18–35)

⁹⁴ Sure Start was a U.K. government initiative introduced in 1998. Its aim was to improve children's life chances by improving childcare, early education, health and family support.

It was felt that even if individuals had successfully gained qualifications and secured employment in their chosen field, it was difficult to become established and progress unless people belonged to the right networks, and such networks did not appear to be open to members of the Somali community:

Currently, I'm doing my Construction Industry Training Board license, and once you get that you can break into ... construction, you can break into a field and do your placement, but the issues is I don't know whether to, because I don't know no one, I don't know where to go to, who to apply to, I've checked sites and that, but it's a lost cause. (Camden, man 18–35)

Role models in the family and community were important in shaping employment choices. For example, if there was a precedent of accessing higher education or professional occupations this was considered to encourage young people to aspire to such positions themselves. The corollary, though, was that lack of achievement and available role models could mean that young people would not pursue higher education or professional employment.

The importance of social networks and the strength and quality of social relationships for labour market outcomes have been well documented,⁹⁵ and it is recognised that there is variation in the employment prospects of ethnic minorities due to social processes which impact on inclusion (or not) in the labour market. The role of network social capital is significant in how ethnic minorities fare in accessing employment since it impacts on information flows and communication.⁹⁶

Further, the degree to which ethnic minorities are integrated into the mainstream has also influenced their integration into the labour market.⁹⁷ A long migration history (of more than 30 years), formal group membership of a club or organisation, engaging with voluntary employment, and networking with mixed-ethnic groups (including the indigenous population) are all identified as having an important impact on labour market outcomes.⁹⁸

6.5 Discrimination in Employment and the Labour Market

Discrimination was considered to be a significant problem facing Somalis in London by the majority of research participants, with one male focus group member commenting:

⁹⁵ See man Kahanec and man Mendola (2007) for a summary of the literature and empirical research based on the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities conducted by the Policy Studies Institute in 1993–1994.

⁹⁶ man Kahanec and man Mendola, *Social Determinants of Labor Market Status of Ethnic Minorities in Britain*, IZA Discussion Paper No. 3146. Germany: Institute for the Study of Labor, 2007 (hereafter, Kahanec and Mendola, *Social Determinants*).

⁹⁷ Kahanec and Mendola, *Social Determinants*.

⁹⁸ Kahanec and Mendola, *Social Determinants*.

The fact that they have stereotypical views also doesn't help our situation ... they just judge you basically, they prejudge. (Camden, man 18–35)

Another explained that negative experiences in attempting to access employment were comparable to the negative stereotyping of Somali young men by the police:

Say if we're to gather for something and we get stopped, by police or whatever ... it's like that in the employment world as well, they'll see you in the interview and they'll be like, "You know what, a black teenager who lives in Camden, no we don't want him". (Camden, man 18–35)

Another man in the study, a teacher, talked about his experiences of seeking work and the difficulties in successfully securing employment:

Prejudice in employment. I applied for so many positions when I was, I'm moving now from school to school ... I have interviews, every day I think for two weeks. Some schools as you walk in, you know when you talk to people, they have already made up their mind, you didn't do nothing. (Camden, man 18–35)

Another male focus group participant described his experience of working at the Olympic Park, where the Somali employees were negatively labelled:

They ended up calling us the mischief gang, they ended up memorising our reference numbers and everything, as soon as we came in everyone would be quiet, and it would be awkward, "Ah, the mischief gang". (Camden, man 18–35)

The situation in this case was helped by a senior colleague—also Somali—opting to manage the group.

6.6 Initiatives to Improve Access to Employment and Community Responses

An example of a government initiative to improve access to employment is Tower Hamlet Council's "Overcoming Barriers to Work Programme". Tower Hamlet's Employment Strategy 2011 identified Bangladeshi and Somali women as being particularly disadvantaged in relation to the labour market⁹⁹ and funded a year-long pilot project to understand more about such barriers and help women back into work. Programmes of support were made available for women, premised on the needs of individuals rather than generic criteria adopted by Jobcentre Plus. Enhancing literacy, numeracy and IT skills were at the core of this programme.

It is difficult at this stage to judge the success¹⁰⁰ of this initiative, however, or to gauge community responses as none of the participants in the study had participated in this particular initiative. Another initiative identified was the Future Jobs Fund, which

⁹⁹ See <http://www.londontenders.org> (accessed 4 August 2014).

¹⁰⁰ An independent evaluation of the project is currently being carried out by Accendo Consultancy.

although not Somali specific, was a scheme to help young people access employment. Companies and organisations were given government funding to subsidise wages for six months for young people who had been receiving Jobseeker's Allowance for six months. Although none of the research participants had engaged with this scheme, evidence suggests that a number of people were employed by placement organisations after the six-month period had ended.

Both male and female focus group participants provided examples of their experiences of engaging with government initiatives. For example, Omar, who works in construction, described a scheme that was meant to prioritise training and employment for local people. He explained how the opportunities meant to arise from this did not materialise due to the way that the scheme was administered:

The government have a scheme with a lot of local boroughs, what they do is any work, in regards to construction work, they are supposed to hire someone from the local borough, and what happens is the local Council will pay for that person to be trained. And what happens is, sometimes these companies they don't even get anyone who is from the local borough, they'll get somebody from somewhere else, it's very, very difficult for the person, but the government should be putting more pressure on the companies who are in the local boroughs. (Camden, man 18–35)

Another male focus group participant described a scheme that was previously operated by Camden Borough Council:

I kind of agree with what he has just said, I work in Camden Council where they used to have a work placement programme for young people where they could get experience through working voluntary through work experience. Since the recession started, that has been abolished, there was a whole place created for it, it was shut down just to save money for the cutbacks. (Camden, man 18–35)

In the women's focus group, one participant described her experiences of undertaking training to help her get into work:

They then sent me to Reed [an employment agency]; they help people. They then sent me to training where I learnt about caring. I got a certificate for this training and that's how I got my job. They put me on the path to get my certificate and supported me to find work ... But to tell someone who hasn't even taken the first step to get up and go to work, they don't know where to begin ... We're struggling, male and female alike and we need this kind of support. (Camden, woman 45+ group).

6.6.1 Training and Support

The Camden Plan was launched in 2012 by Camden Council, in part to address unemployment in the borough. As part of the plan, 25 hours of free childcare is available (10 more hours than is funded by the government), since maternal

unemployment was highlighted as a contribution to child poverty. By 2013, Camden Council published progress over 2012–2013 and indicated that it had increased the numbers of local people employed by Camden businesses, improved work experience opportunities and launched a business portal as a single point of contact for businesses with the aim of making access to employment easier. Future commitments include targeting education and training for employment for young people in the borough.¹⁰¹

The “Camden Jobtrain” was considered to be an excellent initiative for supporting people into work. Based on three sites across the borough, it provided vocational learning and support and helped people develop skills, confidence and chances of succeeding in work. It had a high success rate in that the vast majority of people engaging with Camden Jobtrain gained employment or other achievements, for example, a qualification or a place in further education or training. Camden Jobtrain was a registered charity and a limited company operating as part of the voluntary sector and was in existence for over 30 years until its funding was stopped in 2012 when it closed.¹⁰²

In Tower Hamlets, the Tower Hamlets Employment Strategy sets out a four-year trajectory to increase the employment rate in Tower Hamlets. It covers the period from April 2011 to March 2015 and recognises that equality and diversity in access to employment needs to be addressed.¹⁰³ In Tower Hamlets, the “STEP” programme worked with 100 British-Somali women over an 18-month period and helped 50 women into paid employment and 50 into further education. This was considered to be very successful by one stakeholder working with Somali women.

In Tower Hamlets, there are various opportunities for employment, including Apprenticeship Programmes and a Graduate Scheme, available from the end of April each year. The Youth Engagement Programme was developed for young people in the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) group. It was established in 2005–2006 in response to the increasing numbers of NEET young people in the borough. The Youth Engagement Programme engages a variety of learning, education, training and employment providers and offers specific opportunities targeted at NEET young people.¹⁰⁴ Two stakeholders commented that it had tangible and trusted outcomes; a particularly good example was the opportunity for young people to engage in two weeks’ training and one week’s volunteering, which then guaranteed a job interview. However, one stakeholder working in a community organisation felt that it was not specifically targeted towards British-Somalis and therefore this may affect opportunities taken up.

¹⁰¹ Camden Borough Council, “2012–2017, The Camden plan one year on”.

¹⁰² See the Camden Jobtrain website at <https://www.ucasprogress.com/provider/78521>.

¹⁰³ Tower Hamlets Council, “Tower Hamlets Employment Strategy 2011”.

¹⁰⁴ See <http://archive.c4eo.org.uk/themes/youth/vlpdetails.aspx?lpeid=484> (accessed 6 August 2014).

The Somali Community Leadership course by Tower Hamlets Council and the Somali Civic Leadership Programme by Operation Black Vote were also identified as initiatives aiming to build capacity as well as providing opportunities for learning, development and building effective networks. Some stakeholders suggested that the success of the borough's initiative could have been strengthened with additional measures to provide follow-up support after participation.

6.6.2 Capacity Building Initiatives

Somali Civic Leadership Programme

Organiser(s): Operation Black Vote (OBV) is an organisation established to champion race equality and promote civic engagement amongst the United Kingdom's minority ethnic communities.

Eligibility: candidates must live or work in Tower Hamlets and show a genuine interest in community issues.

What does it offer? Fifty Somali participants (men and women) follow a programme that gives an insight into four areas of public life. They include:

- education: school governors;
- criminal justice system: safer neighbourhood panels;
- politics: councillor;
- voluntary sector: trustees.

Priorities: to promote and actively encourage civic participation in public bodies.

Previous participants on OBV programmes have gone on to become "Councillors, School Governors and Magistrates. A notable achievement was made by Helen Grant MP, the first woman Conservative MP of African Caribbean descent."

The Somali Muslim Young Men's Project

Organiser(s): London Borough of Tower Hamlets, SOAS University and OSCA.

Eligibility: candidates must live or work in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Barking and Dagenham, Newham or Redbridge, have an undergraduate degree and show a genuine interest in community issues.

What does it offer? The opportunity to develop community leadership skills with 30 places leading to a Post-Graduate Diploma qualification.

Priorities: to support and encourage Somali residents to take up leadership roles in the community.

The Camden Equality Taskforce was set up in May 2013 to explore the role of public services in tackling inequality in the borough. Employment was identified as a key area—and specifically parental employment—highlighting the strong relationship with child poverty. BME employment was identified as an issue, particularly among Bangladeshi and Somali residents.

Following the recommendations of the Equality Taskforce, a number of interventions have been taken forward including commissioning the Camden Parents First project, delivered by the Hopscotch Asian Women's Centre and the Somali Cultural Centre. This project provides support for long-term unemployed mothers with complex barriers to employment, including exploring perceptions of gender roles in the workplace, family and community, confidence building and motivation and employability skills.

Camden LBC has been working with Somali organisations to strengthen links with a range of employment and skills provision available universally in the borough. Examples of the services for young people and enterprise support in Camden that Somali organisations have been put in contact with are listed in the following section.

6.6.3 Support for Young People

- **Camden Mentoring Programme:** mentoring support for 16–24-year-olds to access apprenticeships, into enterprise and other pathways.

- **Camden Apprenticeships.**¹⁰⁵
- **King's Cross Construction Skills Centre:** apprenticeships and job opportunities in construction.¹⁰⁶
- **Camden Scholarships:** scholarship opportunities with the HULT Business School and LCA Business School for the September 2014 academic year.¹⁰⁷
- **Work experience:** Camden Business Board and the Council are working with Inspire, an educational charity, to offer Year 10 pupils (14–15-year-olds) from Camden schools good-quality work experience placements.
- **Into Enterprise:** individualised support for young people (16–24) interested in enterprise (run by Westminster Kingsway, Prince's Trust and London Youth Support Trust and Camden).¹⁰⁸
- **New Enterprise Allowance:** Financial support for setting up your own business from Jobcentre Plus.¹⁰⁹
- **PRIME:** enterprise support for the over-50s, based at the British Library, also running taster sessions in Gospel Oak.¹¹⁰

A further example of a successful initiative in Camden highlighted at the Roundtable Discussion was the support for a group of Somali women to establish a care organisation in response to unmet need in the community; the Council now buys care services from this organisation. There is also a task force in place for BME residents—the Maternal Employment Programme—that seeks to promote Somali women into work.

In terms of future priorities, development of employment opportunities, particularly for young people, was seen as crucial. Research participants also felt that there was a strong need to make training, education and support more widely available. The importance of role models and mentoring were also highlighted.

¹⁰⁵ See <http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/content/business/jobs-and-skills/apprenticeships-and-kx/camden-apprenticeships.en?sessionId=FA7B1B7187C5C3193394175256C7663A> (accessed 4 August 2014).

¹⁰⁶ See <http://www.kingscrossconstruction.co.uk/portal/index> (accessed 4 August 2014).

¹⁰⁷ See <http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/business/jobs-and-skills/current-opportunities-and-scholarships> (accessed 4 August 2014).

¹⁰⁸ See <http://www.camdenintoenterprise.com> (accessed 4 August 2014).

¹⁰⁹ See <https://www.gov.uk/new-enterprise-allowance> (accessed 4 August 2014).

¹¹⁰ See <http://www.prime.org.uk/category/about> (accessed 4 August 2014).

6.7 Summary

The importance of employment and the role of education and training in enhancing employment opportunities were recognised as being important by Somali communities in Camden and Tower Hamlets. It was suggested at the Roundtable Discussion that there were still gaps in knowledge across both boroughs regarding the levels and types of need for training and support, and to specify this would have significant benefits.

There were numerous examples of Somalis being successful in securing employment in high status occupations; however, there were also many examples of barriers to securing employment and experiences of discrimination. A significant structural barrier to Somalis gaining employment is the current economic downturn and recession, which means that jobs and opportunities are scarce. This has meant that there is greater competition for fewer jobs.

It is evident that older women need support in accessing employment as they face disadvantages in terms of language barriers, educational attainment, qualifications and work experience. However, young men are also disadvantaged in the labour market; their lack of access to established networks was put forward as a particular barrier.