

Development of Health Sector in Somaliland – But on whose Terms?

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Somali diaspora is actively engaged in the development of Somalia. For example, the Finnish Somalia-Network which is an umbrella organization for associations that conduct and/or support developmental projects in Somalia, has 27 member organizations in January 2011. Out of them, 12 are currently running projects in Somalia, funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Finland. Most of the projects target at educational and health sectors, for example by rebuilding and maintaining health clinics and providing training for health professionals.

At the same time as Somali diaspora, together with representatives of medical institutions and professions, concentrate on rebuilding bio-medically oriented health services in Somalia, local folk healers receive a significant number of Somali patients even from abroad. In particular Islamic healers are highly trusted and new Koranic healing clinics have emerged. Due to insufficient health services and economical challenges, healing has become an opportunity among others to earn income. Moreover, Somali healers develop their practice by integrating modern technologies with traditional methods, and hence, create hybrid forms of healing.

The aim of this paper is to address the concept of development from the point of view of health sector in today's Somaliland, in particular Hargeisa. Development is not only something brought from outside, but culturally, religiously and socially framed local process. The paper is based on ethnographic fieldwork, in total 5 months, in 2005-2011 in Somaliland.