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In this Issue

Film:2/3
The Intersection/Le Carrefour
Zamzam Elmoge

Black Owned Maine/Amjambo
Holiday Gift Guide.4/5

Editorial.....6

Healthcare in Chad8
*French • Kinyarwanda
Portuguese • Somali • Spanish
Swahili*

Poetry: *My version of the
American dream*13

Hermenegildo Paulo and
Mathilde Micomyiza.....14

Diversity Calendar project.....16

Finance/All about cars.....18

Columns.18/19

*Preble Street • MIRC • ILAP
Maine Equal Justice • IntWork*

5 New Mainers celebrate
holidays.....20-29
*French • Kinyarwanda
Portuguese • Somali • Spanish
Swahili*

Community Health
Workers/CHOWs.....28

New Voices.....29
*Rupal Ramesh Shah • Roseline
Souebele*

Humanitarian crisis in Maine.31



RYAN ADAMS | LESSONS

OCTOBER 1, 2021 - JANUARY 9, 2022
Center for Maine Contemporary Art, Rockland

Switch The Code

Switch The Code examines the role that “code switching” has played in my life. I define code switching as “adjusting one’s style of speech, appearance, behavior, and expression in ways that will optimize the comfort of others in exchange for fair treatment, quality service, and employment opportunities.”* As a Black man growing up in an environment that was 97% white, I felt that code switching was necessary for survival. Considering the lack of exposure to diversity in these majority white spaces, I was very often greeted with preconceived notions about my personality that were based on stereotypes. Stereotypes of Black males are often negative, and counter to what is deemed “appropriate” for the social setting. Being that the dominant and most affluent culture determines what is or is not “appropriate,” using a “white voice” is merely a way to alter one’s presentation in hopes of being seen, treated fairly, and viewed as an individual contrary to stereotypical expectations. In this piece, the words “Use,” “Your,” and “Voice” are slightly highlighted, whereas “White” blends and assimilates into the background. This is because I believe assimilating and accommodating to the dominant culture’s view of what is acceptable, to assure comfort, will only prolong the cycle. There is power in using your individuality, and your own voice, and in presenting yourself however you’d like. This is how we will define our own narratives and create a culture/society in which we do not have to adjust ourselves to appease the dominant majority, forcing the spectrum of what is “appropriate” to widen and become more accepting and diverse.

— ARTIST’S STATEMENT BY RYAN ADAMS

* From “The Costs of Code-Switching” by Courtney L. McCluney, et al. Harvard Business Review, November 15, 2019

Ryan Adams | Lessons is made possible in part by a grant from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. The exhibition is organized by CMCA’s Executive Director & Chief Curator, Timothy Peterson in collaboration with the artist.

Asylum seekers and the U.S. - Canada border

By Kathreen Harrison

“We are looking for a homeland.
Asylum seekers are humans.”
— Ahmed H, originally from Egypt

The southern border of the U.S. is frequently in the news in relation to immigration, but the northern border – particularly the stretch between Quebec and New York – is also of great importance to those seeking refuge.

Ahmed H. is one example of the many tens of thousands of asylum seekers in recent years who have focused their sights on starting a new life in Canada instead of the U.S. – pulled by reports of good treatment in Canada, and having a fair chance at being granted asylum, and pushed by inhospitable conditions in the U.S.

a·sy·lum seek·er:n.

An asylum seeker is someone who leaves their own country, seeking international protection, due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, and who travels to another country hoping that the government will protect them and allow them to live there.

Speaking from Staten Island, Ahmed H. (whose name has been changed for fear of reprisals) said, “My wife and I wanted to apply for asylum in the U.S., but we realized that with the broken immigration system in the U.S., and because of how few people of Middle Eastern descent are granted asylum in the U.S., we could wait for six, seven, 10 years, and then after all that be denied admission and have to leave.”

So, Ahmed H. and his wife decided to apply for refuge in Canada instead, “where asylum seekers are treated better.” A successful engineer back home, he was targeted by his government because of his political views. He was jailed, threatened with death, and told his daughter

Continued on page 15

Lewiston's French-speaking residents highlighted in film

By Stephanie Harp



When Cecile Thornton returned to living full time in her Lewiston home, in 2015, she wanted to get involved, reconnect with the community, and rediscover her Franco roots and the French language, which she had rarely spoken for over 20 years. “I went to the Gendron Franco Center and found out about a little French club that was meeting about a mile away from my house,” she said. The club, which was at the Hillview Community Center, was run by Blandine Injonge, “Maman Blandine,” a New Mainer from Rwanda, with the assistance of the Gendron Franco Center and TV5Monde. Members included people from Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Angola, Djibouti, and more, which surprised Thornton, who had only just learned about the New Mainers in the area who spoke French. “I thought pretty much that everyone who was an immigrant here from Africa was from Somalia. But I was very wrong about that, and I was very thrilled to find them.”

She began attending the French club twice a week. “The people who were going at the time were still in the asylum process of trying to get a work permit. They were very new arrivals and ... were looking for connections to people in



Trésor Mukendi and Cecile Thornton

the community,” she said. That’s exactly what Thornton was looking for, too. “It was a friendship. We socialized. It was not just a French club. We partied together. I even spent one Christmas with them when my kids weren’t coming.” When her new friends from Central Africa told her they already felt cold in mid-fall, she realized they weren’t yet outfitted for their first winter in Maine. So she put a notice in “Sun Spots” in the Lewiston Sun Journal and received 50 calls offering donated furniture, kitchen items, clothing, and boots.

“We just helped each other. I was very fortunate,” she said of her new friends. “They helped me gain confidence. They helped me become proud of being French. They made me realize that being able to speak French is really cool and so different than it was back when I was in my early teens.”

The story of the deep connection that formed between Thornton and Lewiston’s newest French-speaking residents – particularly Trésor Mukendi – is the subject of a new documentary co-directed by Jessamine Irwin and Daniel Quintanilla. “The Intersection/Le Carrefour” shines a light on the

intersection of past and present immigrant realities brought together by the French language. The film, which premiered at the 17th Camden International Film Festival in September, received the first-ever Maine Heritage Film Grant from TV5Monde and Points North Institute, and a grant from Maine Humanities Council. Irwin is a professor and French language advocate from Bangor who teaches French at New York University. Quintanilla is a documentary filmmaker who grew up in Mexico and is based in Rockland.

“I wanted to give back to Maine,” Irwin said about making the film. “I love it so much. ... I wanted to represent Maine because it’s part of me.” While her own family is not Franco, Irwin’s mother began elementary school in Madawaska and first encountered French on the playground, with French-speaking Acadian children. Growing up, Irwin often heard about French in Maine and was surprised that many people outside of the state have no idea about it. “Why don’t people know there are French speakers in Maine?” she wondered. She designed a “Living in French” project and brought her NYU class here on an eight-day field trip. She contacted the Franco Center so that her students could interact with French speakers, one of whom turned out to be Thornton. When Irwin and her class got to Lewiston, she said, “Wait a minute, there’s way more going on here. Thanks to Cecile, my students were able to interact with Franco African New Mainers, too.”

What began as Irwin’s personal and class project to document people living in French in North America was evolving into something bigger, and she realized she needed more expertise. She doesn’t have a background in documentary filmmaking, so she got in touch with Julia Schultz, whom she’d interviewed for “Living in French,” and Ben Levine, both of whom had worked to document French speakers in Maine. They introduced her to Quintanilla, whose international filmmaking background included “A Shared Space,” a virtual reality project about a young father who arrived in Lewiston at the beginning of the 2017 “travel ban,” after having been resettled to the southern U.S. from a refugee camp in Kenya.

Irwin and Quintanilla began applying for grants to fund their new project and, after many months, started filming in the spring of 2021. She had shared with Quintanilla, Schulz, and Levine the many contacts she’d made through Thornton, and the team met with them to talk about speaking French in Maine, what it means to them, and those with whom they’d first spoken French in the Franco-American or New Mainer community. In these conversations and in the footage from Irwin’s “Living in French” project, the team noticed Trésor Mukendi’s magnetic screen presence. A trained actor, Mukendi is being himself – not acting – in the film. He studied pedagogy in his native DR Congo and theater in Brazil, and speaks five languages. “He has an energy that he projects onto the screen,” Irwin said.

“He has the ability to be able to go to places emotionally,” said Quintanilla. “And talking

about who he is, he is more comfortable in front of the camera than most of us are. He gets energy from it.”

“And Cecile was at the center of all of it. It made so much sense for her to be a part of it,” Irwin added.

At first, the co-directors spent time nourishing the relationships they were establishing with French-speaking residents because they didn’t yet know exactly what film they were going to make. “It took a lot of trust building with many parties in Lewiston, to have this sort of north star light that looks at the intersection of these stories. But we didn’t know what it would look like,” Quintanilla said. They knew they wanted a story that would be accessible to both Franco-Americans and Franco-Africans.

In the film, Mukendi says that moving to Maine, applying for asylum, and starting from zero is like another birth. At a screening in Lewiston in October at the Franco Center, attended by about 100 people, Irwin could see that Mukendi’s story resonated. “They told us, ‘More people need to see this film.’ I think that really pays tribute to the power of representation. Seeing a community member who has a story that may be the same as yours in many ways is like seeing yourself,” she said.



“I think Trésor summed up my experience quite nicely when he said, ‘Often, we find ourselves through others.’ That’s just so profound!” Thornton added.

“Being able to bring those communities to have this very interesting conversation was exactly what we were hoping to do,” said Quintanilla. One of his favorite moments during the question-and-answer period that followed the film was watching the reaction of Amjambo Africa publisher Georges Budagu Makoko. “I could tell it had sort of sparked something in him. We were bringing in things that he’s interested in, that Amjambo Africa is interested in, and collected it into this thing that you can process and can appreciate.”

For Quintanilla, filmmaking is a journey to learn. “That’s what filmmaking is to me, where you’re learning, tying strings together to tell this story, and hopefully make it interesting and relevant for people, and find good characters.”

The film’s two main characters, Mukendi and Thornton, have spoken to French classes at Bates College about the film and about a friendship so deep that they consider each other family. Thornton still marvels at what her quest for her roots has brought about. “This is just because I was curious about people, and curious about language, and wanted to know more about myself and people who speak French,” she said. “I’m still very curious, and I hope it’s going to last forever.”

For more information about “The Intersection/Le Carrefour” and future screenings, see www.lecarrefourfilm.com.

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News
Match

Young Lewiston filmmaker honored with Women of Achievement Award

By Stephanie Harp | Photos by Patrick Fogarty

Filmmaker Zamzam Elmoge of Lewiston is one of four recipients of the 2021 Women of Achievement Awards from the YWCA Central Maine. At a November 7 gala event, she received the Lee Young Leadership Award; other honorees were Elise Johansen (Marcia Baxter Social Justice Award), ZamZam Mohamud (Tonie Ramsey Service Award), and Elaine Roop (Priscilla Gendron Legacy Award).

A 2020 graduate of Lewiston High School, Elmoge took a year off to complete her third film, the documentary “Everything Earned” (Amjambo Africa, January 2020, August 2021) about former LHS basketball coach Ronnie Turner and his team, which premiered at the Franco Center in July. Her previous films are “Reason 4369,” a documentary about youth in her community, and “Barayubaka,” which honors young people with big goals whose lives ended before they could accomplish them.

“I made my first film when I was 15, did my first documentary,” she said. “I knew nothing about filmmaking, nothing about cameras. I think my activism really just drove me to learn how to do it.” For “Reason 4369,” she asked local teens what changes they wanted to see in the Lewiston community, and asked them to talk about the misconceptions about the city held by people elsewhere. “I was trying to express that on a platform. And that’s how my passion for filmmaking got started.” She knew that young people of color weren’t being heard, and making a film allowed her to give them a platform.



Zamzam Elmoge at the premiere

“I was a kid, too, but I wanted to be the one who could be the outlet. Give my community a voice, especially with the things that were going on at the time.” That included a fatality following a fight, which she said led people to think Lewiston kids were violent, and she wanted to change that image. At the premiere, she could see that her art was inspiring people and that she was doing something for her community. “That’s what I dedicated myself to – just being a filmmaker to give people access to sharing their stories.”

The 19-year-old is now in her first year at Emerson College in Boston, which has opened her eyes. “Meeting people from different backgrounds really just inspires you to want to try new things,” she said. She’s looking beyond documentaries to different ways of telling the stories that are important to her. “My aim is to focus on people who look like me and have the same background as me because you don’t see that a lot. Because it’s important for people to feel recognized.” She remains dedicated to giving people platforms to share as they choose. “As people of color, we don’t really get that, especially in a small place like Maine, where it can be harder.” She knows that as a young, Black, immigrant, Muslim woman, “it’s not common to see people with my exact same identity represented in film.”

Her newest storytelling focus is the “Women Who Dream Project,” designed to inspire other young immigrant women to reach for their dreams. “We’re taught sometimes that our dreams are too big, and maybe we should let them go,” she said. Elmoge is trying to build resources to help young women believe that what they dream about



Coach Ronnie Turner

could actually happen. She didn’t want to simply go to school, get married, and have a 9-to-5 job. “If someone wants that, that’s definitely fine. But I think there are some girls who want to pursue something they’re more passionate about.”

The YWCA award began in 2015 to recognize women who inspire or provide significant contributions to their



Elijah Scales (center) with Malik Foster on the right and Chiwer Mayan on the left.

community. “I would recognize myself just inspiring the community to believe, achieve,” Elmoge said. She has taken on a number of leadership roles in her young life, including at Seeds of Peace Camp, the 21st Century Leadership Club at LHS, and Gateway Community Services. The award surprised her. “I never really thought people were recognizing the work I was doing. I would recognize it, and my friends would. But I thought to myself, ‘Now older people are recognizing it, too.’”

Elmoge has been making films for four years. “It gets tough sometimes, especially because I ask myself, ‘Am I telling this person’s story the right way?’ With editing and filmmaking, you’re the person executing it, so you have to make sure you’re telling it the right way. I wouldn’t want something I’m sharing to be interpreted in a way that they don’t want it to be. It definitely takes a lot of emotional strength, mental strength, and to firmly believe that you can do it.” Elmoge certainly has the strength, and the belief, to make it happen.

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Amjambo Africa welcomes letters to the editor, notices of local events, photographs, and suggestions for future stories.

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EDITORIAL

Task force needed to address Maine asylum seeker crisis

by Georges Budagu Makoko, Amjambo Africa Publisher

Hundreds of new arrivals from DR Congo, Angola, Haiti, and other countries of origin have arrived in the greater Portland area over the course of the pandemic. While the news of their arrival has not created the same buzz that surrounded the arrival of asylum seekers in 2019, it is time that it did. The arrivals include over 500 women, men, and children who have been living in budget motels in the greater Portland area – many for months.

In mid-November, I visited with some of these asylum seekers, and was able to get a hint of the conditions in which they are living. I was hit again with the deep emotion of how it feels to lose the comfort of one's own home and be forced to start a new life in a strange country with limited resources and possibilities.

During my visit, I saw people coming in and out of rooms, children playing joyfully, pregnant women looking very tired. One of the men shared his experience with me. He and his wife and two kids arrived on July 30 of this year. The man spoke excellent French. He said that he is from Kinshasa, DR Congo. When I asked him how his family got here, he said that it was a long and risky journey, but he is grateful that he is here, and that his family is finally safe. However, he also said he really needs help. He asked for a caseworker, who can help him get his feet on the ground – beginning with finding housing.

When he first arrived, he said his family was placed in one crowded room, and that their living conditions were made especially hard because they were not able to cook hot meals. He said that most of the people in the motels have not had a hot meal in months. General Assistance provides food vouchers, but they

“I have lived in Maine for almost 20 years, and I have seen the generosity of Mainers many times. I hope that the people who have come to us in such need are in good hands, and that they will receive the support that they need.”

cannot cook. He said that a woman from the community supplied them with hot meals a few days a week, which they picked up from the front desk, but that this is not a stable arrangement, and there does not seem to be any organized assistance available.

When hundreds of asylum seekers arrived in Portland in 2019, they were housed at the Portland Expo for several months. At that time, a task force was created, the Red Cross and other emergency services were called in, and over the course of three months, the asylum seekers were resettled in different cities and towns. But during the current crisis, the pandemic has prevented any kind of congregate makeshift shelter from being created, and the state has not responded with a plan. The City of Portland has been housing the asylum seekers in motels, and their focus is on finding housing – which is nearly impossible, in such a tight housing market. Recently, approximately 20 families have been moved to budget motels in Old Orchard Beach, with no access to transportation.

Mufalo Chitam, Executive Director of Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition, along with others involved in helping asylum seekers, are calling for the state to respond to the crisis. Chitam said the needs of the arrivals include housing, regular access to cooked meals, medical care, legal assistance, access to transportation, and cultural brokers to help with the adjustment to life in Maine.

“Happy is the hand that gives than the one that receives” says the Christian Bible. I have lived in Maine for almost 20 years, and I have seen the generosity of Mainers many times. I hope that the people who have come to us in such need are in good hands, and that they will receive the support that they need.



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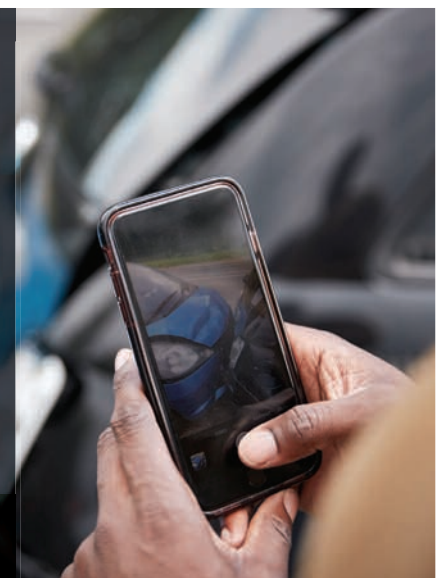
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Chad's healthcare system in shambles; 5.4 doctors per 100,000 citizens

Story & photos by Vincent Niebede Kende

Although Chad is an oil-rich nation and has been investing in healthcare for years, most Chadians who are able to do so, travel abroad to neighboring countries for their healthcare. The country boasts a modern hospital, built in the capital N'Djamena, which according to Chadian authorities meets international standards – yet this is a drop in the bucket of what is needed. Those Chadians who don't travel abroad for care often opt for traditional healers, or purchase medication right on the street where it is for sale, just like candy. The revitalized health centers and trained doctors, that the government lists as achievements, are insufficient to reach the majority of people in the country.

The World Health Organization (WHO) standard is 23 doctors and 23 nurses per 10,000 inhabitants. However, according to the WHO, Chad had just 5.4 doctors per 100,000 people in 2019. The same year, Chad allocated \$119,175,318 (USD) of the national budget to the health sector – and this sum was complemented by the support of international development partners. Yet the sector continues to face enormous challenges, almost as if the investment had never happened.

Why is getting healthcare treatment so difficult in Chad?

A retired doctor, who asked that his name be withheld, told Amjambo Africa that corruption, nepotism, and regionalism plague the health system in Chad. Denise



Tarassem, an elementary school teacher in Chad, said that the mafia has a hold over the health system. “There is an established mafia controlling the health personnel, so that when we come to the hospital, we are not taken care of as we wish,” she said, and then went on to complain that newly graduated doctors and nurses are choosing to join private health clinics instead of public hospitals because of poor salaries, as well as a generally unstable atmosphere in public health centers, with policy changes and shifts in personnel frequently occurring overnight, without warning.

Obtaining treatment of any kind in Chad is never easy, but becomes exponentially more difficult when someone is in urgent need of a specialist. Aubertine, a woman in her 30s, had already been waiting on the floor of a private clinic for several hours to consult with a gynecologist when she shared her thoughts. “In many public hospitals, it takes a week to see a specialist. But the disease cannot wait, I am sick, I need to be treated to avoid the worst,” she said. Worried and angry, Aubertine added that in the private health clinic she had to pay \$17 up front in consultation fees, a large sum for her. “This consultation fee is a nightmare because you have to pay it first, and sometimes there will not be a specialist doctor to consult with you, and you will need to pay the same amount again when you return. The health system is extremely expensive in Chad.” Aubertine had already spent days waiting in a public hospital for treatment, without success.

Tarassem pinpointed the doctor-patient ratio, as well as inadequate professional training and poor pay, for the inadequacy of the healthcare system. She urged Chadian authorities to take measures to increase the supply of trained doctors. “For example, malaria treatment is said to be free in Chad – but in reality, it is not free. And treatment is even worse in remote villages, where staff is critically insufficient and have less training and worse pay.” Some staff in these areas are left with no choice but to boost their income by working outside the medical profession, she said – and the sick are the real victims.

Alarming number of maternal and infant deaths

Dr. Djiddi Ali Sougoudi, Minister of Public Health in Chad, has said that the government has been doing what it can to improve the existing healthcare system, while also building up infrastructure in rural areas. He has acknowledged that the population has gradually lost trust in the public health system and admits that many people are finding their own ways of obtaining treatment, including visiting charlatan doctors, and traditional practitioners, called marabouts. Women and children remain the most vulnerable victims of the healthcare charade. The WHO reports that in Chad, 860 per 100,000 women die in childbirth, and the World Bank estimates 690 infant mortality deaths for 1-,000 infants in 2019.

The situation is difficult for those with pre-existing conditions, as well. Adoumadji Alexis, who has suffered from diabetes for several years, and walks painfully on swollen legs and with the help of a cane, said, “There is a deliberate slowness in the functioning of the health system of our country. Spending two to three weeks before meeting a doctor for an acute health problem is a real ordeal.” Adoumadji compared the services of Chad to those available in towns of neighboring Cameroon, where he said that in two days a patient could complete both lab work and doctors' consultations.

Chadians wonder why doctors trained in public medical schools are nowhere to be found when they are needed. An anonymous source told Amjambo Africa that conditions in the public sector are not adequate for retaining these professionals. “These doctors prefer to work in the private sector, or create their own clinics in order to earn a living,” he said.

Del Palou, a sociologist in N'djamena, said, “In some areas, you must travel more than 25 kilometers to reach a health center, and the health center, if it exists, then lacks equipment and qualified personnel.” Del Palou explained that those who seek treatment abroad have simply lost confidence in the Chadian health system. “The system lacks medical facilities. Partners of the Chadian government are providing funds, but these are sometimes diverted to other sectors. It is alarming that, in some cases, policy makers are not considering the needs of the population when doing their planning.”

Del Palou said, “There are some areas where the establishment of health centers was not done according to the needs of the population, but according to the orientations of certain influential leaders within the government. As a result, densely populated localities have no health facilities, and less populated ones have them.” Meanwhile, members of the government seek treatment abroad, Del Palou said. “These officials are aware of the failing, ill-equipped, poorly managed health system that suffers from a dire shortage of qualified personnel. This does not encourage us to trust our hospitals and health centers.”

The government has its work cut out, if it wants to restore trust in the healthcare system. Diarabeye Justin, a lawyer, lamented the notorious neglect by the government toward the health system in Chad. “This is because politics have sneaked into the health sector, and it is the vulnerable people with low income who are the sole losers in this poor management of the healthcare system.”

— FRENCH —

Tchad : le système sanitaire ne rassure pas les populations?

Par Vincent Niebede Kende

Le Tchad compte environ 15 millions d'habitants. Alors qu'il compte 5,4 médecins et 23,2 infirmiers pour 100 mille habitants, contre les normes de l'Organisation mondiale de la santé, respectivement 23 médecins et 23 infirmiers pour 10 mille habitants. Chaque année, le pays injecte des milliards de Fcfa dans le secteur de la santé avec l'appui de ses partenaires au développement du secteur de la santé, mais il est confronté à des difficultés pour faire fonctionner son système de santé.

Conséquence, de nombreux patients tchadiens préfèrent se soigner à l'étranger (dans les pays voisins), les moins nantis préfèrent consulter plutôt les charlatans (marabout), se livrent à l'automédication, des médicaments de la rue achetés auprès des faux docteurs appelés communément docteur chouckou. Devenu producteur du pétrole depuis octobre 2003, le Tchad a effectué de progrès dans ce secteur, en multipliant des hôpitaux, parmi lesquels un hôpital moderne construit à N'Djamena la capitale, répondant selon les autorités tchadiennes aux normes internationales. Des centres de santé revitalisés et des médecins formés figurent sur la liste des réalisations.

Pourquoi est-il difficile de se soigner au Tchad?

Le clientélisme, la corruption, le népotisme, le régionalisme, sont des maux qui gangrènent le système sanitaire au Tchad, reconnaît un médecin à la retraite. Même si des progrès ont été constatés dans le domaine des infrastructures sanitaires, « la mafia a gagné le personnel de la santé si bien que, quand on vient à l'hôpital, on n'est pas pris en charge comme nous le souhaitons », renchérit l'enseignante Tarassem Denise qui poursuit, « le plateau technique manque dans le pays. Bien que le personnel soignant soit formé, avec de nombreux spécialistes ces dernières années. Malheureusement, force est de constater que ce personnel est absorbé par le secteur privé de plus en plus moins cher aux citoyens à revenu moyen », précise-t-elle.

Il est donc difficile de se faire soigner en ce sens, mais il est encore plus difficile d'avoir un médecin spécialiste disponible dans l'immédiat et dans le temps. Aubertine, la trentaine, le visage inquiet, assise à même le sol devant une clinique attend depuis plusieurs heures, l'ordre de passage pour consulter un gynécologue. Selon elle, « dans les hôpitaux publics, pour voir un spécialiste, il faut attendre au moins une semaine. Alors que la maladie ne peut attendre, je suis malade, j'ai besoin de me soigner pour éviter le pire. Depuis plusieurs semaines, je n'arrive pas à voir un spécialiste, mais en vain. Je suis contrainte de venir dans les cliniques privées. Je trouve qu'ils ont un service accueillant au moins. Accueillant certes, mais le problème, c'est qu'avant la consultation, je dois donner une somme de 10.000 Fcfa, soit environ 17,11 dollars américain. Le comble dans cette souffrance que nous vivons c'est que si le médecin n'est pas là, ou les examens ne sont pas fait le même jour, nous sommes tenus de revenir à la prochaine, mais il faudra payer encore 10.000 FCFA afin d'être probablement reçu par le médecin. Ce, sans compter les médicaments qu'il faut acheter après les résultats des analyses. Bref, je vous dis, le système sanitaire est extrêmement très cher au Tchad », Affirme Aubertine, même si elle reconnaît tout de même que le gouvernement tchadien a fait des efforts et des progrès pour améliorer le système sanitaire qui reste cependant précaire et moins accessible par un bon nombre de personnes. De personne à revenu moyen dans un pays, où le revenu journalier d'un citoyen est d'environ 1 dollars.

Tarassem Denise exhorte les autorités tchadiennes à faire le ratio malade médecin, « je crois que beaucoup restent à faire encore. Un pauvre ne peut pas se soigner en un laps de temps. Par exemple, le traitement du paludisme est dit gratuit au Tchad mais en réalité ce n'est pas gratuit, le cas des provinces est grave. Le personnel est d'une insuffisance criarde en province, surtout dans les centres villageois, il manque cruellement de personnel formé, même s'il y en a, il n'est pas employé comme il le faut et parfois, son traitement laisse à désirer et contraint ce dernier à se faire la part belle en développant des activités qui lui permettent de subvenir à ses besoins et à celle de sa famille. Les villageois souffrent pour se faire soigner. Face à cette difficulté, les populations se confient aux tradipraticiens pour se faire soigner.

Les plus vulnérables dans cette chaîne, ce sont les femmes et les enfants, ce qui montre clairement le dysfonctionnement du système sanitaire tchadien. Le cas le plus patent, c'est surtout la mortalité maternelle et infantile dont le nombre de décès est élevé malgré les efforts consentis. Selon un rapport de l'organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS), 860 femmes pour 100 000 naissances meurent en donnant la vie et environ 720 nouveau-nés périssent pour 10 000 naissances. Selon Dr Djiddi Ali Sougoudi, en plus de ces décès, la population a perdu la confiance vis-à-vis du système sanitaire tchadien, d'où le fait que bon nombre de tchadiens s'orientent vers les charlatans et marabouts.

La situation est beaucoup plus compliquée chez des patients ayant une santé plus complexe. Adoumadji Alexis souffre d'un diabétique depuis plusieurs années. Ayant les pieds enflés, s'appuyant sur une canne, portant sur sa tête une casquette de fortune, les yeux larmoyant, rencontrés aux alentours de l'Hôpital général de référence nationale, affirme en ces termes, « il y a une lenteur délibérée dans le fonctionnement du système sanitaire de notre pays. Passer deux à trois semaines avant de rencontrer un médecin pour un problème de santé, c'est un véritable calvaire », poursuit-il en précisant, « imaginez, au Cameroun précisément dans la ville de Maroua à côté, en deux ou trois jours, le malade peut faire tous ses examens et le médecin peut lui donner le traitement. Ce qui est loin d'être le cas dans nos hôpitaux ici au Tchad. N'en parlons pas pour le cas des personnes ayant des maladies chroniques », conclut-il.

La plupart des tchadiens s'interrogent sur l'insuffisance des médecins dans le secteur public, « où sont partis les médecins qui sont formés pour que l'on ne les trouve pas ? En réponse, un expert-sociologue, qui requiert l'anonymat,

Continued on page 9

explique que « les conditions dans le secteur public, ne favorisent pas le maintien de ces médecins, même s'ils ont été pour la plupart formés sur fond propre du gouvernement tchadien. Ces médecins préfèrent travailler dans le privé, notamment dans les ONG ou créent leur propre clinique pour travailler afin de gagner leur vie. Un certain nombre d'entre eux interpelle le gouvernement afin de leur permettre de comprendre les raisons pour lesquelles, il ne réagit pas face aux médecins qu'il forme et qui finissent par quitter les hôpitaux publics.

Selon le sociologue Douka Ehba Del Palou, enseignant chercheur à N'Djaména dans la capitale tchadienne, « la politique du gouvernement en matière de santé présente de fortes insuffisances. Les structures sanitaires ne couvrent pas les besoins en matière de santé. Dans certaines régions, il faut parcourir plus de 25 km pour accéder à un centre de santé. Et les structures, si elles existent, souffrent du manque d'équipement et de personnel qualifié ». Del Palou ajoute que « ceux qui se soignent à l'étranger ont simplement perdu la confiance au système sanitaire tchadien. Le manque de

terior para os seus cuidados de saúde. O país possui um hospital moderno, construído na capital N'Djamena, que segundo as autoridades chadianas cumpre os padrões internacionais – no entanto, esta é uma gota no balde do que é necessário. Os chadianos que não viajam para o estrangeiro por cuidados muitas vezes optam por curandeiros tradicionais, ou compram medicação na rua – onde está à venda, tal como os doces. Os centros de saúde revitalizados, e os médicos treinados, que o governo enumera como conquistadas, são insuficientes para atingir a maioria das pessoas no país.

A norma da Organização Mundial de Saúde (OMS) é de 23 médicos e 23 enfermeiros por 10.000 habitantes, no entanto, segundo a OMS, o Chade tinha apenas 5,4 médicos por 100.000 pessoas em 2019. No mesmo ano, o Chade atribuiu 119.175.318 dólares do orçamento nacional ao sector da saúde - e este montante foi complementado com o apoio dos parceiros internacionais de desenvolvimento. No entanto, o sector continua a enfrentar enormes desafios, quase como se o investimento nunca tivesse acontecido.

Então, por que é tão difícil obter tratamento de saúde no Chade?

Um médico reformado, que pediu que o seu nome fosse retido, disse à Amjamba África que a corrupção, o nepotismo e o regionalismo atormentam o sistema de saúde no Chade. Denise Tarassem, uma professora do ensino fundamental no Chade, concordou. Entre outros problemas, a máfia tem um domínio sobre o sistema de saúde, disse. "Há uma máfia estabelecida que controla o pessoal de saúde, para que quando chegamos ao hospital, não sejamos tratados como quisermos", disse Tarassem, que se queixou de que os médicos e enfermeiros recém-

licenciados estão a optar por ingressar em clínicas de saúde privadas, em vez de hospitais públicos, por causa dos baixos salários, bem como de um ambiente geralmente instável nos centros de saúde públicos. com mudanças de política, e mudanças de pessoal, ocorrendo frequentemente durante a noite, sem aviso prévio.

Receber tratamento de qualquer tipo no Chade nunca é fácil, mas torna-se exponencialmente mais difícil quando alguém precisa urgentemente de um especialista. Aubertine, uma mulher na casa dos 30 anos, que já aguardava no chão de uma clínica privada há várias horas para consultar um ginecologista quando partilhou os seus pensamentos, disse: "Em muitos hospitais públicos, leva-se uma semana para consultar um especialista. Mas a doença não pode esperar, estou doente, preciso de ser tratado para evitar o pior." Aubertine, preocupada e zangada, acrescentou que na clínica privada teve de pagar 17 dólares adiantados em taxas de consulta, uma quantia avultada para ela. "Esta taxa de consulta é um pesadelo porque tem de pagar primeiro, e às vezes não haverá um médico especialista para consultá-lo, e terá de pagar o mesmo valor novamente quando regressar. O sistema de saúde é extremamente caro no Chade." Aubertine disse que já tinha passado dias à espera de tratamento num hospital público sem sucesso.

Tarrassem apontou o rácio médico-doente, bem como a formação profissional inadequada, e os salários baixos, para a insuficiência do sistema de saúde. Instou as autoridades chadianas a tomarem medidas para aumentar a oferta de médicos treinados. "Por exemplo, o tratamento da malária é dito ser gratuito no Chade - mas na realidade, não é gratuito. E o tratamento é ainda pior em aldeias remotas, onde o pessoal é criticamente insuficiente, e tem menos formação e pior salário." Alguns funcionários destas áreas não tiveram outra escolha senão aumentar os seus rendimentos trabalhando fora da profissão médica, disse - e os doentes são as verdadeiras vítimas.

Número alarmante de mortes maternas e infantis.

O Dr. Djiddi Ali Sougoudi, Ministro da Saúde Pública do Chade, afirmou que o governo tem feito tudo o que pode para melhorar o sistema de saúde existente, ao mesmo tempo que constrói infraestruturas nas zonas rurais. Reconheceu que a população perdeu gradualmente a confiança no sistema público de saúde e admite que muitas pessoas estão a encontrar as suas próprias formas de obter tratamento, incluindo médicos charlatões e praticantes tradicionais, chamados marabouts. As mulheres e as crianças continuam a ser as vítimas mais vulneráveis da charada dos cuidados de saúde. A OMS refere que no Chade morrem

860 por 100 mil mulheres durante o parto, e o Banco Mundial estima 690 mortes por mortalidade infantil para 1.000 bebés em 2019.

A situação é difícil para aqueles com condições pré-existent, também. Adoumadi Alexis, que sofre de diabetes há vários anos, e anda dolorosamente sobre as pernas inchadas, e com a ajuda de uma bengala, disse: "Há uma lentidão deliberada no funcionamento do sistema de saúde do nosso país. Passar duas a três semanas antes de encontrar um médico para um problema de saúde agudo é uma verdadeira provação." Adoumadi comparou os serviços do Chade com os disponíveis nas cidades vizinhas dos Camarões, onde disse que em dois dias um paciente poderia ter tanto trabalho de laboratório como consultas médicas concluídas.

Os chadianos perguntam-se porque é que os médicos treinados em escolas médicas públicas não estão em lado nenhum quando são necessários. Uma fonte anónima disse à Amjamba África que as condições no setor público não são adequadas para reter estes profissionais. "Estes médicos preferem trabalhar no setor privado ou criar as suas próprias clínicas para ganhar a vida. Del Palou, sociólogo em N'djamena, disse: "Em algumas áreas, você deve viajar mais de 25 km para chegar a um centro de saúde, e o centro de saúde, se ele existe, então não tem equipamento e pessoal qualificado." Del Palou explicou que aqueles que procuram tratamento no estrangeiro simplesmente perderam a confiança no sistema de saúde chadiano. "O sistema carece de instalações médicas. Os parceiros do Governo chadiano estão a disponibilizar fundos, mas por vezes são desviados para outros sectores. É alarmante que, em alguns casos, os decisores políticos não estejam a considerar as necessidades da população quando fazem o seu planeamento."

"Há algumas áreas em que a criação de centros de saúde não foi feita de acordo com as necessidades da população, mas de acordo com as orientações de alguns líderes influentes dentro do governo. Como resultado, as localidades densamente povoadas não têm instalações de saúde, e as menos povoadas têm-nas", explicou Del Palou. Entretanto, membros do governo procuram tratamento no estrangeiro, diz Del Palou. "Estes funcionários estão cientes do sistema de saúde falhado, mal equipado e mal gerido [no Chade] que sofre de uma terrível falta de pessoal qualificado. Isso não nos encoraja a confiar nos nossos hospitais e centros de saúde."

O governo tem o seu trabalho cortado se quiser restaurar a confiança no sistema de saúde. Diarabeye Justin, advogada, lamentou que haja uma notória negligência por parte do governo em relação ao sistema de saúde no Chade. "Isto porque a política entrou à socapa no setor da saúde, e são as pessoas vulneráveis com baixos rendimentos que são os únicos perdedores nesta má gestão do sistema de saúde."

— SWAHILI —

Mfumo wa huduma za afya nchini Chad umedoroka, na madaktari 5.4 kwa kila raia 100,000

Na Vincent Niebede Kende

Ijapokuwa nchi ya Chad ni taifa lenye utajiri wa mafuta, na imekuwa ikiwekeza katika huduma za afya kwa miaka mingi, wananchi wengi wa Chad ambao wanaweza kufanya hivyo, wanasafiri nje ya nchi kwenda nchi jirani kwa ajili ya huduma zao za afya. Nchi inajivunia hospitali ya kisasa, iliyojengwa katika mji mkuu wa N'Djamena, ambayo kulingana na mam-laka ya Chad inakidhi viwango vya kimataifa - lakini hii ni kushuka kwa ndoo ya kile kinachohitajika. Wale watu wa Chad ambao hawasafiri nje ya nchi kwa ajili ya uangalizi mara nyingi huchagua waganga wa kienyeji, au hununua dawa moja kwa moja mtaani - ambako zinazwa, kama vile pemende. Vituo vya afya vilivyohuishwa, na madaktari waliofunzwa, ambavyo serikali imeorodhesha kama mafanikio, havitoshi kuwafikia watu wengi nchini.

Kulingana na sera za Shirika la Afya Duniani (WHO) kiwango chenye kukubalika ni madaktari ishirini na watatu na wauguzi ishirini na watatu kwa kila wakazi 10,000, hata hivyo kulingana na WHO, Chad ilikuwa na madaktari 5.4 tu kwa kila watu 100,000 mwaka 2019. Mwaka huo huo, Chad ilitenga kutoka bajeti dola za kimarekani 119,175,318 za taifa hilo kwa sekta ya afya - na jumla hii ilikamilishwa na msaada wa washirika wa maendeleo wa kimataifa. Bado sekta inaendelea kukabiliwa na changamoto kubwa, kana kwamba uwekezaji haujawahi kutokea.

Sasa kwa nini ni vigumu sana kupata matibabu ya afya nchini Chad?

Daktari mmjoja mstaafu, aliyeomba jina lake lihifadhiwe,

Continued on page 10



plateau médico- technique encourage les Tchadiens à aller se soigner à l'étranger ». Il reconnaît par ailleurs que les partenaires du gouvernement tchadien, lui apportent leurs aides dans le fonctionnement du système sanitaire tchadien mais, ils ne tiennent pas compte des besoins de la population. Ainsi l'aide destinée aux structures sanitaires est détournée des objectifs fixés. Le sociologue relève dans sa réflexion un autre problème. Il s'agit de l'implantation des centres de santé qui ne se fait pas en fonction des besoins de la population, mais en fonction des orientations de certains leaders influents au sein des politiques. Ce qui fait que les localités dont la population est dense se trouvent sans structures sanitaires et celles moins peuplées en trouvent et quelques fois, ces centres sont à l'abandon. En plus de cela, il manque de suivi pour évaluer les résultats de leurs efforts sur le terrain.

Ce qui inquiète le plus les populations tchadiennes, c'est de constater que certains membres du gouvernement se font soigner à l'étranger. Le sociologue fait observer que : « ces responsables sont bien conscients du système sanitaire défaillant, mal équipé, mal géré et souffre d'un manque cruel de personnel qualifié. Cela ne nous encourage pas à faire confiance à nos hôpitaux et centres de santé, d'ailleurs c'est pour cette raison qu'aucun étranger ne vient se soigner au Tchad. Tandis que les hôpitaux étrangers accueillent le plus souvent un bon nombre de Tchadiens », conclut-il.

De son côté, le juriste Diarabeye Justin indexe le gouvernement, affirmant qu'il y a une certaine négligence notoire constatée dans le système de santé au Tchad. Sinon les lois de la République sont claires. Le médecin intégré à la fonction publique, est régi par loi 17 de la fonction publique et il ne doit pas laisser les heures de travail pour lesquelles il est payé et aller faire du commerce. Malheureusement, l'on vit cela au Tchad. Car la politique s'est introduite dans le secteur de la santé et ce sont les personnes vulnérables à revenus moyens qui sont sacrifiées sur l'autel des intérêts.

— PORTUGUESE —

Sistema de saúde no Chade em ruínas, com 5,4 médicos por 100.000 cidadãos

Por Vincent Niebede Kende

Embora o Chade seja uma nação rica em petróleo, e tem vindo a investir em cuidados de saúde há anos, a maioria dos chadianos que são capazes de fazê-lo, viajam para o ex-

aliambia Amjambo Africa kuwa rushwa, upendeleo wa kindugu, na upendeleo wa kikanda vinakumba mfumo wa afya nchini Chad. Denise Tarassem, mwalimu wa shule ya msingi nchini Chad, alikubali. Miongoni mwa matatizo mengine, mafia wanashikilia mfumo wa afya, alisema. "Kuna kikundi cha mafia kinadhibiti watumishi wa afya ili tukija hospitali tusihudumiwe tunavyotaka," alisema Tarassem ambaye aliendelea kulalamika kuwa madaktari na wauguzi waliohitimu hivi karibuni wanachagua kujiunga. kliniki za afya za kibinafsi, badala ya hospitali za umma, kwa sababu ya mishahara duni, na vile vile hali isiyoni na utulivu kwa ujumla katika vituo vya afya vya umma, na mabadiliko ya sera, na mabadiliko ya wafanyakazi, ambayo hufanyika mara moja, bila onyo.

Hakuna matibabu ya aina yoyote nchini Chad yenye kupatikana rahisi, lakini inakuwa vigumu zaidi pale mtu anapokuwa na uhitaji wa haraka wa mtaalamu. Aubertine, mwanamke mwenye umri wa miaka thelathini, ambaye tayari alikuwa akingoja kwenye sakafu ya kliniki ya kibinafsi kwa saa kadhaa ili kushauriana na daktari wa magonjwa ya wanawake aliposhiriki mawazo yake, alisema, "Katika hospitali nyingi za umma, inachukua wiki kuona mtaalamu. Lakini ugonjwa hauwezi kusubiri, mimi ni mgonjwa, nahitaji kutibiwa ili kuepuka mabaya zaidi. Aubertine, akiwa na wasiwasi na hasira, aliongeza kuwa katika kliniki ya afya ya kibinafsi alilazimika kulipa \$17 mbele kama ada ya mashauriano, kiasi kikubwa kwa ajili yake. "Hii ada ya mashauriano ni ndoto, kwa sababu unatakiwa kulipa kwanza, na wakati mwingine haku-takuwa na daktari bingwa wa kushauriana nawe, na utahitaji kulipa tena kiasi hicho ukirudi. Mfumo wa afya ni ghali sana nchini Chad." Aubertine alisema tayari alikuwa ametumia siku nyingi kusubiri katika hospitali ya umma kwa matibabu - bila mafanikio.

Tarrassem alibainisha uwiano wa daktari na mgonjwa, pamoja na mafunzo duni ya kitaaluma, na malipo duni, kwa kutotosheleza kwa mfumo wa huduma za afya. Alizitaka mamlaka za Chad kuchukua hatua za kuongeza usambazaji wa madaktari waliohitimu. "Kwa mfano, matibabu ya malaria yanasemekana kuwa bure nchini Chad - lakini katika hali halisi, siyo bure. Na matibabu ni mabaya zaidi katika vijiji vya mbali, ambapo wafanyakazi hawatoshi, na wana mafunzo kidogo, na malipo mabaya zaidi. Baadhi ya wafanyakazi katika maeneo haya waliachwa bila chaguo ila kukuza kipato chao kwa kufanya kazi nje ya taaluma ya utabibu, alisema - na wagonjwa ndio waathirika wa kweli

Idadi ya yenye kutisha ya vifo vya wazazi wenye kujifungua pamoja na vya watoto wachanga.

Dk Djiddi Ali Sougoudi, ambaye ni Waziri wa Afya ya Umma nchini Chad, amesema kuwa serikali imekuwa ikifanya kila iwezalo kuboresha mfumo uliopo wa huduma za afya, huku pia ikijenga miundombinu katika maeneo ya vijijini. Amekiri kwamba idadi ya watu imepoteza imani polepole katika mfumo wa afya ya umma na anakubali kwamba watu wengi wanatafuta njia zao za kupata matibabu, ikiwa ni pamoja na kutembelea madaktari wa charlatan, na wanga wa jadi, walioitwa marabouts. Wanawake na watoto wanasalia kuwa wahanga walio katika mazingira magumu zaidi ya charade ya huduma za afya. Shirika la WHO inaripoti kuwa nchini Chad, 860 kwa kila wanawake 100,000 hufa wakati wa kujifungua, na Benki ya Dunia inakadiria vifo vya watoto

kubwa sana." Adoumadiji alilinganisha huduma za Chad na zile zinazopatikana katika miji ya nchi jirani ya Cameroon, ambapo alisema kuwa katika siku mbili mgonjwa anaweza kupata kazi za maabara na mashauriano ya daktari kukamilika.

Wananchi wa Chad wanashangaa na kujiuliza kwa nini madaktari waliofunzwa katika shule za matibabu za umma hawapatikani popote wanapohitajika. Chanzo kisichojulikana kiliambia Amjambo Africa kuwa hali katika sekta ya umma haitoshi kubaki na wataalamu hawa. "Madaktari hawa wanapendelea kufanya kazi katika sekta ya kibinafsi, au kunda kliniki zao ili kujikimu kimaisha. Del Palou, mwanasosholojia wa N'djamena, alisema, "Katika baadhi ya maeneo, lazima usafiri zaidi ya kilomita 25 ili kufika kituo cha afya, na kituo cha afya kikiwapo, basi kinakosa vifaa na wafanyakazi wenye sifa. Del Palou alieleza kuwa wale wanaotafuta matibabu nje ya nchi wamepoteza imani na mfumo wa afya wa Chad. "Mfumo huo hauna vifaa vya matibabu. Washirika wa serikali ya Chad wanatoa fedha, lakini hizi wakati mwingine zinaelekezwa kwenye sekta nyingine. Inatisha kuwa katika baadhi ya matukio, watunga sera hawazingatii mahitaji ya watu wakati wa kupanga mipango yao."

"Kuna baadhi ya maeneo ambako uundaji wa vituo vya afya haukufanyika kulingana na mahitaji ya wananchi, bali kwa mielekeo ya baadhi ya viongozi wenye ushawishi ndani ya Serikali. Matokeo yake, maeneo yenye wakazi wengi hayana vituo vya afya, na yana watu wachache," Del Palou alielezea. Wakati huo huo, wanachama wa serikali wanatafuta matibabu nje ya nchi, Del Palou anasema. "Maafisa hawa wanafahamu kuhusu mfumo wa afya unaofeli, usio na vifaa, na unaosimamiwa vibaya [nchini Chad] ambao unakabiliwa na uhaba mkubwa wa wafanyakazi wenye sifa. Hili halituhimiza kuamini hospitali na vituo vyetu vya afya."

Serikali ina kazi yake iliyopunguwa ilipotaka kurejesha imani katika mfumo wa huduma za afya. Diarabeye Justin, mwanasheria, alilaumu kwamba kuna kupuuzwa na serikali kwa mfumo wa afya nchini Chad. "Hii ni kwa sababu siasa zimeingia kinyemela katika sekta ya afya, na ni watu wanaoishi katika mazingira magumu wenye kipato cha chini ambao ndio pekee wanaopoteza katika usimamizi huu mbovu wa mfumo wa afya."

— SOMALI —

Nidaamka daryeelka caafimaadka ee Chad ayaa burburay, iyadoo 100,000 muwaadinba 5.4 dhakhaatiir ah

Waxaa qoray Vincent Niebede Kende

In kasta oo Chad uu yahay waddan qani ku ah saliidda, isla markaana sannado badan maalgelayey daryeelka caafimaadka, haddana inta badan dadka Chad ee awood u leh inay sidaas sameeyaan, waxay u safaan dibadda si ay u helaan daryeel caafimaad. Wadanku wuxuu ku faanaa isbitaal casri ah, oo laga dhisay caasimadda N'Djamena, kaas oo sida laga soo xigtay mas'uuliyiinta Chad uu buuxiyo heerarka caalamiga ah - haddana tani waa hoos u dhac ku yimid baalidiyada waxa loo baahan yahay. Dadka reer Chad ee aan dibadda ugu safrin daryeelka inta badan waxay doortaan daaweeyayaal dhaqameed, ama waxay dawo ku iib-sadaan waddada - halkaasoo iib ah, sida nacnaca oo kale. Xarumihii caafimaadka ee dib loo soo nooleeyay, iyo dhakhaatiirta la tababaray, ee ay dowladdu ku sheegtay guulo, kuma filna in la gaarsiyo inta badan dadka dalka ku nool.

Heerarka Ururka Caafimaadka Aduunka (WHO) waa saddex iyo labaatan dhakhtar iyo saddex iyo labaatan kalkaaliye caafimaad 10,000 oo qofba, sikastaba ha ahaatee, sida laga soo xigtay WHO, Chad waxay lahayd 5.4 dhakhtar 100,000 qofba sanadka 2019. Isla sanadkaas, Chad waxay u qoondaysay USD 119,175,318 Miisaaniyadda qaranka ee qaybta caafimaadka - waxaan lacagtan lagu kabay taageerada hay'adda horumarinta caalamiga ah. Hadana waaxdu waxay sii wadaa inay la kulanto caqabado waaweyn, ku dhawaad sidii haddii maalgelintu aana weligeed dhicin.

Haddaba waa maxay sababta ay u adag tahay in Chad laga helo daawayn caafimaad?

Dhakhtar hawlgab ah, oo codsaday in magaciisa la qariyo, ayaa u sheegay Amjambo Africa in musuqmaasuqa, nin jec-laysiga, iyo gobolaysigu ay ragaadiyeen nidaamka caafi-

maadka ee Chad. Denise Tarassem, oo ah macalinka dugsiga hoose ee Chad, ayaa ku raacay. Dhibaatooyinka kale, maafiyadu waxay haysaa nidaamka caafimaadka, ayuu yidhi. "Waxaa jirta maafiyo dhisan oo koontaroolaysa shaqaalaha caafimaadka, si marka aan cusbitaalka u nimaadno aan naloo daryelin sidaan rabno," ayuu yiri Tarassem oo sii hadlay isagoo ka cawday inay dhawaan qalin-jabiyeen.

Dhakhaatiirta iyo kalkaaliyayaasha caafimaadku waxay dooranayaan inay ku biiraan rugaha caafimaadka gaarka ah, halkii ay ka ahaan lahaayan isbitaalka dadweynaha, sababtoo ah mushahar xumo, iyo sidoo kale jawiga guud ee aan deg-ganeyn ee xarumaha caafimaadka dadweynaha, oo leh isbeddello siyaasadeed, iyo isbeddel shaqaale, oo badanaa dhaca habeenkii, digniin la'aan.

In Chad lagu daweyo nooc kasta oo ay tahay weligeed ma fududa, laakiin waxa ay noqotay mid aad u adag marka qof uu degdeg ugu baahan yahay dhakhtar takhasus leh. Aubertine, oo ah haweeney soddon jir ah, oo horeba dhowr saac-dood ku sugaysay dabaqa rug caafimaad oo gaar loo leeyahay si ay ula tashato dhakhtarka dumarka marka ay la wadagtay fikirkeeda, waxay tidhi, "Isbitaalka badan oo dawladeed, waxay qaadataa toddobaad in la arko dhakhtar takhasus leh.

Laakiin cudurku ma sugi karo, waan xanuunsanahay, waxaan u baahanahay in la i daweyo si aan uga fogaado kuwa ugu xun." Aubertine, oo walwalsan oo xanaaqsan, ayaa intaa ku dartay in rugta caafimaadka ee gaarka loo leeyahay ay ku qasbanatay in ay horay u bixiso \$17 oo ah khidmadaha la tashiga, lacag aad u badan oo iyada ah. "Khidmadan la-talinta waa riyo, sababtoo ah waa inaad marka hore bixiso, mararka qaar kood ma jiri doono dhakhtar takhasus ah oo kula tashanaya, waxaadna u baahan doontaa inaad bixiso lacag la mid ah mar kale markaad soo noqoto. Nidaamka caafimaadku aad ayuu qaali ugu yahay Chad." Aubertine waxay sheegtay inay horeba maalmo ku sugaysay cusbitaal dadweyne si loogu daweyo - guul la'aan.

Tarrassem waxay tilmaamtay saamiga dhakhtarka iyo bukaanka, iyo sidoo kale tababar xirfadeed oo aan ku filnayn, iyo mushahar xumo, sababtoo ah ku filnaansho la'aanta nidaamka daryeelka caafimaadka. Wuxuu ku booriyay mas'uuliyiinta Chad inay qaadaan tillaabooyin lagu kordhinayo saadka dhakhaatiirta tababaran. "Tusaale ahaan, daawaynta duumada ayaa la sheegay inay bilaash ku tahay Chad - laakiin dhab ahaantii, bilaash maaha. Daawaynta way kasii daran tahay tuulooyinka foog halkas oo shaqaaluhu aad ugu filnayn, oo ay leeyihiin tababaro yar, iyo mushahar ka sii daran. Qaar ka mid ah shaqaalaha aaggaas ayaan loo hayn wax kale oo aan ahayn in ay kor u qaadaan dakhligooda iyaga oo ku shaqeyya meel ka baxsan xirfadda caafimaadka, ayuu yidhi - kuwa jiranna waa dhibbanayaasha dhabta ah.

Tirada nextinta leh ee dhimashada hooyada iyo dhal-laanka.

Dr Djiddi Ali Sougoudi, Wasiirka Caafimaadka Dadweynaha ee Chad, ayaa sheegay in dowladdu ay sameyneysay wixii karaankeeda ah si loo horumariyo nidaamka daryeelka caafimaadka ee jira, iyadoo sidoo kale dhistay kaabayaasha miyiga. Waxa uu qiray in dadku ay si tartiib tartiib ah u lumiyeen kalsoonida nidaamka caafimaadka dadweynaha, waxaana uu qiirtay in dad badan ay helayan siyaabo iyaga u gaar ah oo ay ku helaan daawaynta, oo ay ku jiraan dhakhaatiirta charlatan ee booqanaya, iyo dhakhaatiirta dhaqameed, oo lagu magacaabay marabouts. Haweenka iyo carruurta ayaa ah kuwa ugu nugul dhibanayaasha daryeelka caafimaadka. WHO ayaa ku warameysa in dalka Chad, 860 ka mid ah 100,000 dumar ah ay ku dhintaan dhalmada, iyadoo Bangiga Aduunka uu ku qiyaasay 690 carruurta ah inay u dhintana dhimashada 1-,000 dhallaanka sanadka 2019-ka.

Xaaladdu way ku adag tahay kuwa leh xaalado hore u jiray, sidoo kale. Adoumadiji Alexis, oo muddo dhowr sano ah la xanuunsanay cudurka macaanka, si xanuun badanna ugu socday lugaha bararsan, isagoo kaashanaya bakoorad, ayaa yiri, "Waxaa jirta gaabis ula kac ah oo ku yimid shaqada nidaamka caafimaadka ee dalkeena. Qaadashada laba ilaa saddex toddobaad ka hor intaanad la kulmin dhakhtar dhibaato caafimaad oo degdeg ah waa dhibaato dhab ah.

"Adoumadiji wuxuu isbarbar dhigay adeegyada Chad iyo kuwa laga heli karo magaalooyinka deriska la ah Cameroon, halkaas oo uu sheegay in laba maalmood gudahood bukaanku uu heli karo labadaba shaqada shaybaarka iyo la-talinta dhakhtarka labadaba. Dadka reer Chad waxay la yaaban yihiin sababta dhakhaatiirta lagu soo tababaray dugsiyada caafimaadka ay meelna uga heli waayeen marka loo baahdo. Illo qarsoodi ah ayaa u sheegay Amjambo Africa in xaaladaha waaxda dadwaynaha aysan ku filneyn sii haynta xirfad-layaashan.

"Dhakhaatiirtani waxay door bidaan inay ka shaqeyyaan ganacsiga gaarka loo leeyahay, ama ay abuuraan xarumo caafimaad oo iyaga u gaar ah si ay noloshooda u helaan. Del Palou, oo ah cilmi-nafsiga bulshada N'djamena, ayaa yidhi, "Meelaha

Continued on page 11



Authorities seize pharmaceutical products

wachanga 690 kwa watoto wachanga 1-000 mwaka 2019.

Hali ni ngumu kwa wale walio na hali mbaya ya awali, pia. Adoumadiji Alexis, ambaye amekuwa na ugonjwa wa kisukari kwa miaka kadhaa, na anatembea kwa maumivu kwenye miguu iliyovimba, na kwa msaada wa fimbo, alisema, "Kuna ucheleweshaji wa makusudi katika utendaji wa mfumo wa afya wa nchi yetu. Kutumia mbili hadi tatu wiki chache kabla ya kukutana na daktari kwa ajili ya tatizo kubwa la afya ni jaribu

qaar waa in aad u safartaa in ka badan 25 km si aad u gaarto goob caafimaad, rugta caafimaadka hadii ay jirto waxaa ka maqan qalab iyo shaqaale tayo leh. Del Palou wuxuu sharaxay in kuwa u raadsada daaweynta dibadda ay si fudud lumiyeen kalsoonida nidaamka caafimaadka Chad. “Nidaamku ma laha tas-hiilaad caafimaad.”

Wada-hawlgalayaasha dowladda Chad ayaa bixiya dhaqaale, laakiin kuwan ayaa mararka qarkood loo weeciyaa qaybo kale. Waa wax laga naxo in xaaladaha qaarkood, siyaasad-dejiyayaashu aanay tixgelineynin baahida dadweynaha marka ay qorshahooda samaynayaan. Dhanka kale, xubnaha dowladda ayaa u raadsada daaweyn dibadda ah, Del Palou ayaa leh. “Masuuliyiintani waxay ka warqabaan fashilka, qal-abaysan, nidaamka caafimaad ee sida xun loo maareeyay [Jaad] oo ay haysato yaraanta shaqaalaha aqoonta leh. Tani naguma dhiirigelinayso inaan amino isbitaaladayada iyo xarumaha caafimaadka.”

Dawladdu shaqadeeda way ka go'day haddii ay doonayso inay soo celiso kalsoonida nidaamka daryeelka caafimaadka. Diarabeye Justin, oo ah qareen, ayaa wax laga xumaado ku tilmaamay in dayacaad xun ay ka jirto dowladda Chad nidaamka caafimaadka. “Tani waa sababta oo ah siyaasaddu waxay si qarsoodi ah u gashay waaxda caafimaadka, waana dadka nugul ee dakhligoodu yar yahay kuwa keliya ee ku khasaaray maaraynta liita ee nidaamka daryeelka caafimaadka.”

— KINYARWANDA —

Urwego rwubuvuzi muri Chad mu bihe bigoye, abaganga 5.4 ku baturage 100,000

Yanditswe na Vincent Niebede Kende

N'ubwo Chad ari igihugu gikungahaye kuri Peteroli, kandi kikaba kimaze imyaka gishora imari mu rwego rw'ubuzima, Abanya-Chad babishoboye bivuriza hanze y'igihugu. Igihugu cyubatse ibitaro bigezweho kibiyubaka mu murwa mukuru N'Djamena, ibitaro biri ku rwego mpuzamahanga n'uko inzego z'ubuyobozi muri iki gihugu zibivuga. Gusa iki ni nk'igitonyanga mu ndobo y'ibikenewe gukorwa. Abanya-Chad batagiye kwivuriza hanze, akenshi bihitiramo ubuvuzi gakondo, cyangwa se bakigurira imiti ku mihanda aho bayibona ku giciro gito nk'uko bagura bombo. Amavuriro meza hamwe n'abaganga b'inzobere igihugu kivuga ko gifite ni bake cyane kuburyo batabasha kwita ku mubare munini w'abanyagihugu.

Ishami ry'umuryango w'abibumbye ryita ku buzima (WHO) risaba byibura abaganga 23 n'abaforomo 23 ku baturage 10,000, nyamara Chad yo yari ifite abaganga 5.4 ku baturage 100,000 mu 2019. Muri uwo mwaka kandi, CHAD yashoshye \$119,175,318 iyakuye mu ngengo y'imari yayo ngo ajiye kubaka urwego rw'ubuzima. Aya kandi yiyongereyeho andi yavuye mu nkunga z'imiryango mpuzamahanga yita ku iterambere. Gusa ntibibuzza ko uru rwego rukomeza kugira ibibazo uruhuri, nk'aho nta kigeze gishorwamo na gito.

Ni ukubera iki bigoye kubona serivisi z'ubuzima muri Chad?

Umuganga mu kiruhuko cy'izabukuru utarifuje ko amazina ye atangazwa yabwiye Amjambo Africa ko ruswa, itonesha ndetse n'ironakarere aribyo bidindije urwego rw'ubuzima muri Chad. Denise Tarassem, wigisha mu mashuri abanza muri Chad nawe yemera ibi. Ikindi kandi ngo hari agatsiko gafite ukuboko mu mikorere y'inzego z'ubuzima muri iki gihugu. Agira ati “Hari agatsiko kashyizweho kagenzura abakozi b'urwego rw'ubuzima, kugirango igihe tuje kwa muganga, tudahabwa serivisi nk'uko tubyifuzza.” Tarassem akomeza avuga ko abaganga n'abaforomo bakirangiza amashuri bahitamo gukorera ibitaro n'amavuriro yigenga kurusha gukorera ibya leta, bitewe n'imishahara mito ndetse no gufatwa nabi kw'abakozi mu nzego z'ubuzima za leta muri rusange, aho politiki ndetse n'ibihe byo gukora bihindagurwa uko abantu babyishakiye kandi bihitweho nta guteguzwa abantu.

Kubona serivisi y'ubuzima iyo ari yo yose muri Chad ntabwo byoroha na busa, ndetse bikarushaho kugorana cyane iyo umuntu akeneye ubuvuzi byihutirwa butanzwe n'impuguke (specialist). Aubertine, umubyeyi uri mu kigero cy'imyaka irenga 30, avuga ko yarindiriye amasaha menshi mu ivuriro ryigenga rimwe, ubwo yari ategereje kubonana n'umuganga w'impuguke mu kuvura abagore. Agira ati “Mu bitaro byinshi bya leta bisaba nk'icumweru ngo ubonane n'umuganga w'impuguke. Nyamara indwara yo ntabwo irindira. Ndarwaye kandi nkeneye kuvurwa kugirango ntarushaho kuremba.” Aubertine arakaye, avuga ko mu ivuriro ryigenga agomba kwishyura \$17 yo kubonana na muganga kandi kuri we avuga ko ari ikiguzi kinini. “Aya mafaranga yo kwisuzumisha ni ikibazo gikomeye, kuko usabwa kuyishyura mbere,

nyamara kahaba ubwo usanga nta muganga w'impuguke uhari ngo agusuzume bikazaba ngombwa ko wongera kwishyura andi ugarutse ngo mubonane. Kubona serivisi z'ubuzi muri Chad birahenze cyane.” Aubertine avuga ko amaze iminsi myinshi ategereje mu bitaro bya leta ngo arebe ko yavurwa nyamara ntibishoboke.

Tarassem agaruka ku mubare munini w'abarwayi kuri buri muganga hakiyongeraho no kutabona amahugurwa ahagije ku buryo bwiza bwa kinyamwuga bwo kwita ku barwayi, umushahara muto byose bikabyara serivisi mbi itangirwa kwa muganga. Asaba ubuyobozi muri Chad kongera umubare w'abaganga b'abanyamwuga. Agira ati “urugero natanga, ni ukuba bivugwa ko ubuvuzi bwa malariya ari ubuntu muri Chad. Nyamara muby'ukuru si ko bimeze. Ubuvuzi bugenda burushaho kuba ubi uko ugenda ugana icyaro, aho abakozi ari bake cyane, ndetse bakagira ubumenyi buke n'imishahara ikaba mito cyane.” Bamwe mu bakozi muri ibi bice basigara nta kindi bafite bakora uretse kugeraza kuzamura imishahara yabo bakora hanze y'urwego rw'ubuzima- ari ko abarwayi bakomeza kubihomberamo.

Umubare uhagayikishije w'abana n'abagore bapfa

Dr Djiddi Ali Sougoudi, minisitiri w'ubuzima rusange muri Chad avuga ko guverinoma yamye ikora ibyo ishoboye ngo iteze imbere urwego rw'ubuzima, ari nako yubaka ibikorwa remezo mu bice by'icyaro. Yemera ko abaturage batereye ikizere urwego rw'ubuzima kandi akemera ko benshi bishakira uburyo bwabo bwo kubona ubuvuzi, harimo kwifashisha



Patients waiting for healthcare

abavuzi batari abanyamwuga ndetse n'abagakondo bazwi ku izina rya Marabouts. Abagore n'abana bakomeza kuba ari bo bazahazwa cyane n'imikorere mibi y'urwego rw'ubuzima muri Chad. WHO igaragaza ko abagera kuri 860 mu 100,000 b'abagore n'abana b'impinja bapfa babyara cyangwa bavuka, ndetse Banki y'Isi yo ikavuga ko abana b'impinja bapfa bageraga kuri 690 ku bana 1000 mu mwaka wa 2019.

Uko ibintu bimeze bigora cyane abantu bafite indwara zidakira. Adoumadiji Alexis, umaze imyaka arwaye diyabete, yicumba inkoni kugirango abashe kugenda bitewe n'uko yamugaye ukuguru kandi ahorana ububabare bwinshi mu kuguru kwe. Agira ati “Serivisi zo kwa muganga zitangwa buhoro cyane mu gihugu cyacu kandi bikorwa ku bushake. Kumara ibyumweru bibiri cyangwa bitatu ngo ubonane na muganga akuvure indwara ikaze ni iyicarubozo nk'irindi.” Adoumadiji agereranya serivisi z'ubuzima mu gihugu cye no mu mijyi imwe n'imwe yo mu gihugu baturanye cya Kameruni, aho mu minsi ibiri umurwayi ashobora gufatwa ibizami ndetse no kubonana na muganga.”

Abanya-Chad bibazo impamvu abaganga baba barize mu mashuri yigisha ubuganga ya leta bataboneka mu mavuriro iyo bakenewe. Utarashatse ko amazina ye atangazwa yabwiye Amjambo Africa ko uko ibintu bimeze mu nzego z'ubuzima za leta bitashobora kugumana aba baganga. “Aba baganga bahitamo gukorera amavuriro yigenga, cyangwa bakikorera amavuriro yabo mato kugirango babashe kubona imibereho. Del Palou, ukorera urwego rw'ubuzima muri N'Djamena, agira ati “mu bice bimwe na bimwe, ukora urugendo urugendo rurenga kilometer 25 kugirango ugere kwa muganga igihe rihari nabwo ugasanga nta bikorereho n'abaganga babihuguriwe bahagije bahari.” Del Palou asobanura ko abashakira ubuvuzi hanze y'igihugu batereye ikizere urwego rw'ubuzima rwa Chad. “Uru rwego rubura ibikorereho. Abafatanyabukorwa ba leta ya Chad batanga inkunga nyamara iyo nkunga ihita iyyanwa mu bindi. Biteye impungenge uburyo abafata ibyemezo badaha agaciro ibyifuzwa by'abaturage iyo bakora igenamigambi.”

Del Palou agira ati “Hari ibice bimwe na bimwe bitashyizwemo amavuriro hagendewe ku byifuzo by'abaturage ahubwo hagendewe ku byifuzo bya bamwe mu bayobozi bafite ijamba muri guverinoma. Ibyo icyo bibyara ni uko ibice bituwe na benshi usanga nta mavuriro bifite, nyamara ibituwe na bake

ugasanga biyafite”. Akomeza avuga ko abagize guverinoma bo bivuzza hanze “Aba bayobozi bazi neza ko nta kigenda hano, ibikorereho ntabwo, mbese urwego rw'ubuzima ruyobowe nabi cyane muri (Chad) byose bikabanzirizwa no kutagira umubare uhagije abaganga babihuguriwe. Ibi ntabwo bituremamo umutima wo kwizera amavuriro yacu n'urwego rw'ubuzima muri rusange.”

Guverinoma igomba kugira icyo ikora niba ishaka ko abantu bongera kugirira ikizere inzego z'ubuzima. Diarabeye Justin, umunyamategeko ahagayikishwa no kuba hari ukwirengagiza gukabije ibibazo biri mu nzego z'ubuzima muri Chad. Agira ati “Ibi biterwa n'uko politiki yinjiye munzego z'ubuzima, maze abaturage bo hasi b'amikoro make bakaba ari bo bahura n'ingaruka z'imirungire idahwitse mu nzego z'ubuzima.”

— SPANISH —

Sistema de salud en Chad en ruinas, con 5.4 médicos por cada 100,000 habitantes

Por Vincent Niebede Kende

Aunque Chad es una nación rica en petróleo y ha estado invirtiendo en atención médica durante años, la mayoría de los chadianos que pueden hacerlo, viajan al extranjero a los países vecinos para recibir atención médica. El país cuenta

con un hospital moderno, construido en la capital, N'Djamena, que según las autoridades chadianas cumple con los estándares internacionales – pero esto es solo una gota en el balde de lo que se necesita. Los chadianos que no viajan al extranjero para recibir atención, a menudo optan por curanderos tradicionales o compran medicamentos en la calle – donde están a la venta como si fueran dulces. Los centros de salud revitalizados y los médicos capacitados que el gobierno cataloga como logros, son insuficientes para llegar a la mayoría de la población del país.

El estándar de la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) es de veintitrés médicos y veintitrés enfermeras por cada 10,000

habitantes; sin embargo, según la OMS, Chad tenía sólo 5.4 médicos por cada 100,000 habitantes en el 2019. El mismo año, Chad asignó 119,175,318 dólares del presupuesto para el sector de la salud, y esta suma se complementa con el apoyo de los socios internacionales para el desarrollo. Sin embargo, el sector continúa enfrentándose a enormes desafíos, casi como si la inversión nunca hubiera sucedido.

Entonces, ¿por qué es tan difícil obtener tratamiento médico en Chad?

Un médico jubilado, que pidió que se ocultara su nombre, le dijo a Amjambo África que la corrupción, el nepotismo y el regionalismo plagan el sistema de salud en Chad. Denise Tarassem, maestra de escuela primaria en Chad, estuvo de acuerdo. Entre otros problemas, la mafia tiene control sobre el sistema de salud, dijo. “Hay una mafia establecida que controla al personal de salud, por lo que cuando llegamos al hospital, no nos atienden como deseamos”, dijo Tarassem, quien continuó quejándose de que médicos y enfermeras recién graduados eligen unirse a clínicas de salud privadas, en lugar de hospitales públicos, debido a los bajos salarios, así como a una atmósfera generalmente inestable en los centros de salud pública, con cambios de política y cambios de personal, que con frecuencia ocurren de la noche a la mañana, sin previo aviso.

Recibir tratamiento de cualquier tipo en Chad nunca es fácil, pero se vuelve exponencialmente más difícil cuando alguien necesita urgentemente un especialista. Aubertine, una mujer de unos treinta años, que ya había estado esperando en el piso de una clínica privada durante varias horas para consultar con un ginecólogo cuando compartió sus pensamientos, dijo: “En muchos hospitales públicos, se necesita una semana para ver a un especialista. Pero la enfermedad no puede esperar, estoy enferma, necesito que me traten para evitar lo peor”. Aubertine, preocupada y enojada, agregó que en la clínica de salud privada tuvo que pagar \$17 por adelantado en honorarios de consulta, una gran suma para ella. “Esta tarifa de consulta es una pesadilla, porque tienes que pagarla primero y, a veces, no habrá un médico especialista que te consulte, y tendrás que pagar la misma

Continued on page 12

cantidad nuevamente cuando regreses. El sistema de salud es extremadamente caro en Chad". Aubertine dijo que ya había pasado días esperando en un hospital público para recibir tratamiento - sin éxito.

Tarrassem señaló la proporción médico-paciente, así como el entrenamiento profesional inadecuado y los salarios bajos, por la insuficiencia del sistema de atención de la salud. Él insiste a las autoridades de Chad a tomar medidas para aumentar la oferta de médicos capacitados. "Por ejemplo, se dice que el tratamiento de la malaria es gratuito en Chad, pero en realidad no es gratuito. Y el tratamiento es aún peor en las aldeas remotas, donde el personal es críticamente in-



suficiente, tienen menos capacitación y peor paga". Algunos miembros del personal en estas áreas no tuvieron más remedio que aumentar sus ingresos trabajando fuera de la profesión médica, dijo, y los enfermos son las verdaderas víctimas.

Número alarmante de muertes maternas e infantiles.

El Dr. Djiddi Ali Sougoudi, Ministro de Salud Pública de Chad, ha dicho que el gobierno ha estado haciendo todo lo posible para mejorar el sistema de atención médica existente, al mismo tiempo que construye infraestructura en las zonas rurales. Ha reconocido que la población ha perdido

gradualmente la confianza en el sistema de salud pública y admite que muchas personas están encontrando sus propias formas de obtener tratamiento, incluidos médicos charlatanes visitantes y practicantes tradicionales, llamados marabouts. Las mujeres y los niños siguen siendo las víctimas más vulnerables de la farsa de la asistencia sanitaria. La OMS informa que en Chad, 860 por cada 100,000 mujeres mueren durante el parto, y el Banco Mundial estima 690 muertes por mortalidad infantil por cada 1,000 bebés en 2019.

La situación también es difícil para quienes tienen condiciones preexistentes. Adoumadji Alexis, que padece diabetes desde hace varios años, camina dolorosamente con las piernas hinchadas y con la ayuda de un bastón, dijo: "Hay una lentitud deliberada en el funcionamiento del sistema de salud de nuestro país. Pasando de dos a tres semanas antes de reunirse con un médico por un problema de salud agudo es un verdadero suplicio". Adoumadji comparó los servicios de Chad con los disponibles en las ciudades vecinas de Camerún, donde dijo que en dos días un paciente podría completar tanto el trabajo de laboratorio como las consultas médicas.

Los chadianos se preguntan por qué los médicos entrenados en las escuelas de medicina públicas no se encuentran por ningún lado cuando se les necesita. Una fuente anónima le dijo a Amjambo África que las condiciones en el sector público no son las adecuadas para retener a estos profesionales. "Estos médicos prefieren trabajar en el sector privado o crear sus propias clínicas para ganarse la vida. Del Palou, un sociólogo de N'djamena, dijo: "En algunas áreas, debes viajar más de 25 km para llegar a un centro de salud, y el centro de salud, si existe, entonces carece de equipo y personal calificado. "Del Palou explicó que quienes buscan tratamiento en el extranjero simplemente han perdido la confianza en el sistema de salud de Chad. "El sistema carece de instalaciones médicas. Los socios del gobierno de Chad están proporcionando fondos, pero estos a veces se desvían a otros sectores. Es alarmante que en algunos casos, los formuladores de políticas no están considerando las necesidades de la población al hacer su planificación".

"Hay algunas áreas donde el establecimiento de los centros de salud no se hizo según las necesidades de la población,

sino según las orientaciones de ciertos líderes influyentes dentro del gobierno. Como resultado, las localidades densamente pobladas no tienen instalaciones de salud y las menos pobladas las tienen", explicó Del Palou. Mientras tanto, los miembros del gobierno buscan tratamiento en el extranjero, dice Del Palou. "Estos funcionarios son conscientes del sistema de salud deficiente, mal equipado y mal administrado [en Chad] que sufre una grave escasez de personal calificado. Esto no nos anima a confiar en nuestros hospitales y centros de salud".

El gobierno tiene mucho trabajo por hacer si quiere restaurar la confianza en el sistema de salud. Diarabeye Justin, un abogado, lamentó que haya un notorio descuido del gobierno hacia el sistema de salud en Chad. "Esto se debe a que la política se ha infiltrado en el sector de la salud, y son las personas vulnerables con bajos ingresos las únicas perdedoras en esta mala gestión del sistema de salud".



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My version of the American dream

By Isaac Kinzambi

*It is the seed that was planted in my genes
in the genesis of my quest for inspiration
My version of the American dream embodies the
spirit of the African poet
It is indeed the undulation of the Atlantic waving*

*It seeks to unleash the sentence of my adverbs
It seeks an oasis of legends for my narration
My version of the American dream is a room
My version of the American dream is a street*

*If I can just lay my papyrus to rest
If I can just walk the Presumpscot River
If I can just read in the library and write it down
My version of the American dream is life
It is not an achievement, it is an enlightenment.*

*I came here to live, to think, to write, to edit
I came here to converse, to pray, to spell.
My version of the American dream tells it
It is the seven last chapters of my life crusade
My version of the American dream converges
It is the opposite side of the first half of my living
nightmare.*

*If I can have a bed to sleep on, a cup of water to
refresh.
If I can have a friend to smile to, if I can be me.
If I can just swim in the cold ocean and dive
Rest on the ashes of my ancestor's inspirations.*

*I came here to learn from their shackles
I am decoding each sound of their rings
My version of the American dream envelopes.
It conveys me by the locomotion of slow no-re-
turn,
It is boarding me in the confinement of a clay-
molding.*

*My version of the American dream is
the calling of the toddler poet learning the recital
My version of the American dream is
the tempo of the African drummer who preceded
me.
My version of the American dream is the vocation
of the African woman who breastfeeds in the dark
corner of her master's house.*

*My version of the American dream is
the narrative of the African philosopher who
wrote, "I have a dream."
My version of the American dream is*

*rooted in the voice of the speaker, who announced
my departure.
My version of the American dream connects me to
the aspirant, who wishes the travelers many re-
turns.*



"My version of the American dream" is from Kinzambi's book *I Have a Word*, a collection of poems inspired by the poetry of Langston Hughes and by Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. Kinzambi is an immigrant from Angola. To contact him, email: kinzambi@gmail.com

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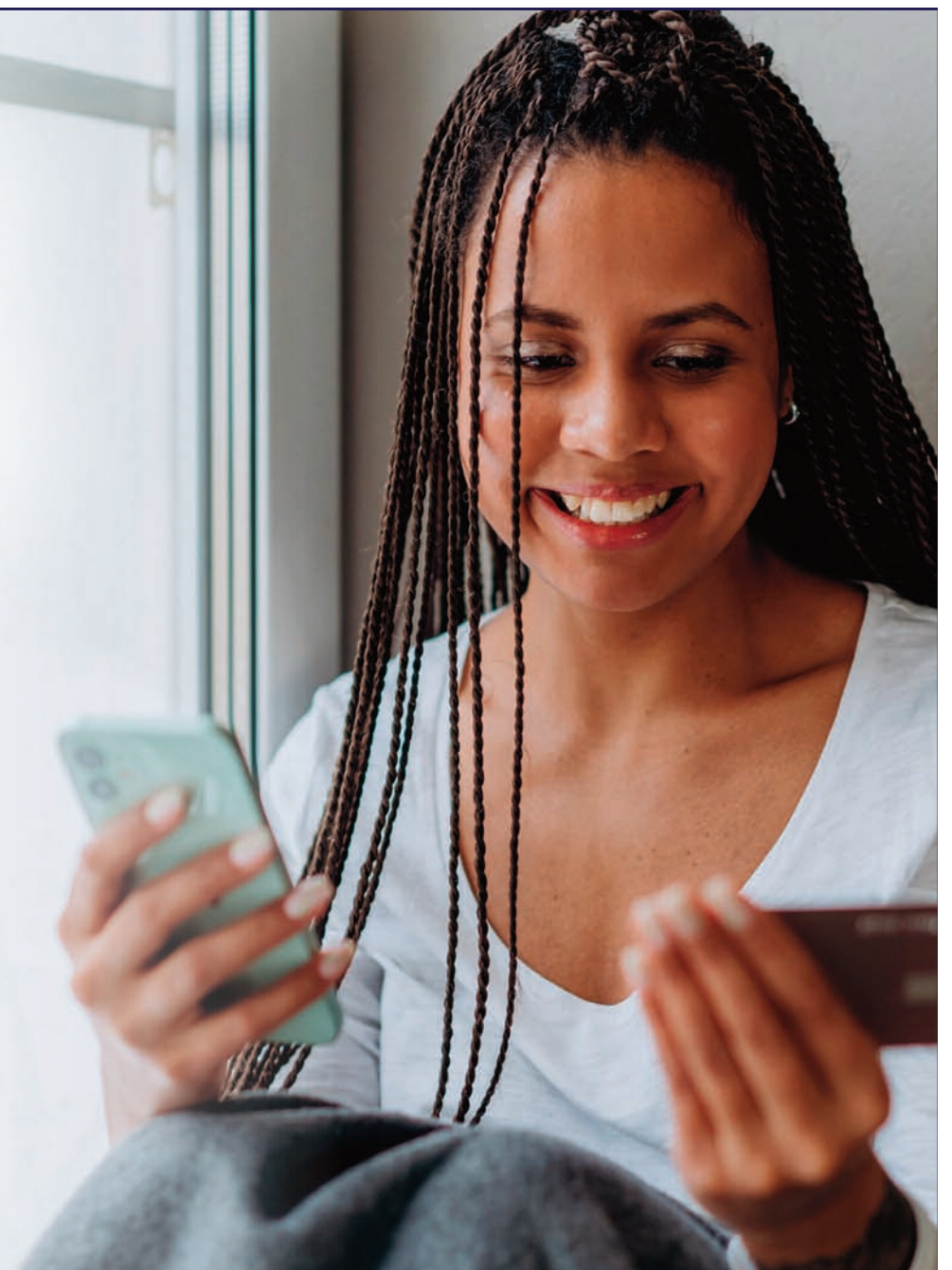
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Meet Ladder to the Moon's Hermenegildo Paulo and Mathilde Micomyiza

Amjambo Africa is a program of Ladder to the Moon Network

By Karen Cadbury

Hermenegildo Paulo

immigrated from Angola to Portland, Maine, in 2016, where he lives with his wife and 6-year-old son. He also has two daughters, ages 18 and 8, who have remained in Angola with his mother and brothers, and with whom he keeps in daily touch through social media.



Paulo arrived in Maine in winter. "Snow was everywhere. It was a shock that I had never experienced before. I knew the adaptation would be super hard for me; the weather I was coming from was warm and I had never felt such cold."

When he arrived in the U.S., he had already earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics education from the University of Agostinho Neto, in Luanda and Talatona, Angola. However, he did not speak English.

"My first challenges were to obtain the basic living skills that my family and I needed to survive in this new environment, to acquire English as quickly as possible, and to become familiar with the American school system," said Paulo. He had decided to settle in Maine after a friend recommended the state as a very good place to live. "My friend lived here, and he gave me information about how to settle here. We were enthusiastic when we found out about the support that Maine is giving immigrants. So, in spite of the cold, my friend persuaded me to move here. But when I arrived in December, I felt like I was living in a freezer!"

The first thing Paulo did was find housing, and then he immediately started taking English classes. "I also got a job volunteering at the Wayside Food Programs and Community Meal Programs at the Salvation Army. I would go there a few times a week to help cook, load, and serve food, and clean up after the meals for the elderly. I wanted to use my degree in mathematics and my training, but I had to learn English and get up to speed," he said.

"So, while I was volunteering, I signed up for three English classes a day. The Salvation Army had a program in the morning, I attended an adult education English education class in the afternoon, and a third English program at night. I also did homework every day during my breaks I took through the afternoon and up until nine at night."

Paulo said he has had great support, living in the Portland community. "When I arrived, I couldn't speak any English, but I had some financial support – part of my expenses and meals, which really helped. It is very hard to work and take classes. I'm so thankful to be part of this. I've had the support that I needed." One difficulty he faced was specific to American society: it was very hard for him to make American friends. "I was looking for someone to talk with, and I would go to an appointment and [meet someone], but there was never a 'next step' in getting to know the person. It was difficult to get to know people from different backgrounds than my own."

Finally, at Learning Works in Portland, he was assigned a mentor, who became his first American friend. "He has opened many opportunities for me, taking me different places, and helping me meet other people. He is still my best friend," Paulo said.

In 2018, after several years of intensive English language training and preparatory work, Paulo had gained the skills he needed to compete for a math educational technician (ed tech) position in the Portland school system, where he hoped to use his prior training in mathematics. His first position was short term. Since he wanted more permanent employment, he applied – and was hired – as a full-time math ed tech at King Middle School, in grades six through eight.

"I began to learn how the American school system works, and how different it is from the system used in Angola," said Paulo. "The American classrooms have more educational materials and greater diversity than most African and Angolan schools. There is more technology available, and enough books for everyone in the classroom." He also noticed that students transition from class to class, unlike in Angola, where the teachers move from class to class instead of the students. "That was a very big change for me. Also, I was impressed by the number of different languages that I found people speaking in the school. At King Middle

School, we have students speaking more than 20 languages. I speak Portuguese, my first language, and English and Spanish."

Paulo acquired his love of mathematics from an uncle who teaches math, and who supported his educational goals when he was growing up. "I wanted to be like him. I looked up to him. When I got to high school, I had good teachers, and I was able to use books from my uncle, so I felt I understood math, and I became confident that I could teach." In Africa, he said, students can start building a concentration on a specific occupation during high school, and math was considered the school's highest level program. "So, I thought that in society, [a person] could do much as a mathematician. Now, the field of mathematics that I like is algebra, and I could teach algebra every day without complaint."

In 2019, Paulo founded Reading Refuges, a program that gives books to young immigrants in their first languages. He said his intention is to create more opportunities for students to read literature. "I started with Iraqi refugees in Portland, and focused on creating libraries in the kids' homes, with books in their own languages. The goal is for families to interact and read books together, even if the parents do not speak English. I was trying to collect bilingual books for refugees because I found that the families didn't know how to find the books." Reading Refuges has been a great success, distributing more than 2,000 books to families in the Portland community. He now is also meeting requests from families living beyond Portland.

"People who want books can get in touch with us at ReadingRefuges.com and we will mail books to them. I also drop off books at peoples' homes on weekends," he said. "Finding the books and organizing them takes a lot of time, but I am always getting donations of used and new books."

In addition to teaching and operating Reading Refuges, Paulo coaches the Portland High School girl's junior varsity (JV) soccer team. He is also slowly pursuing a graduate degree in education, with a focus on middle school. "I'm not rushing [with the degree program] because the teaching I am doing now with sixth graders is draining my energy," said Paulo. "It will take me a while to complete, working days and going to school at night."

"I am proud to be a board member of Ladder to the Moon Network and Amjambo Africa!" he said. "The organization has grown a lot. It's a very diverse board and I want to help make the organization successful. Though it started quite small, the amount of work that has been accomplished so far is amazing. I was looking for different ways to work in the community and I am glad I will be able to lend my time and expertise to making this organization successful."

Right now, I am teaching, and it is my priority, but I have an idea about how to expand education around the world – a dream – of traveling and educating kids in the parts of the world where it is needed the most."

Mathilde (Mamie) Micomyiza was born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, grew up in Rwanda, and immigrated to New York in 2013. In 2018, because of her desire to live in an immigrant community with people she knew and trusted, she and her 10-year-old daughter moved to Portland. She has family in both Rwanda and the United States.



Rwanda, like many other African countries, is a family-centered culture, Micomyiza said. "I have always been close with my siblings and other family members. If I was not hanging out with my family and friends, I was attending a friend's or colleague's wedding. People in the African community in Maine still have the values that we had in Africa, to some extent. We help each other with baby showers, births, sickness, birthdays, weddings, funerals, and other events. We still value brotherly/sisterly love and community support."

Micomyiza's goal in moving to Maine was to live in a less busy neighborhood, where if she had an emergency or need, someone would be there who could help her. "I live in the Congolese community, where we are able to go to church together and support each other," she said. "My community here is my little village."

Micomyiza was recruited to the Board of Directors of the Ladder to the Moon Network and Amjambo Africa by Georges Budagu Makoko, the board president and founder. "Georges told me that they were looking for people to help in the community. I think what they are doing is very good – trying to make sure people in the immigrant community have access to information [they need]. I like that the board has French-speaking people, and immigrants from other ethnic and intercultural communities in Maine," she said.

Micomyiza received an undergraduate degree in human

resource management from the Independent University of Kigali. While earning her degree, she worked full time at a five-star hotel and took care of her siblings. "I worked long hours and I went to school full time. I'm proud that I was able to do [this]," she said. After graduating, she worked for a nonprofit organization and then for an auditing firm until she immigrated to the United States.

"My first job in Maine was volunteering with Hope Acts, an organization that manages apartments for asylum seekers and immigrants, and offers English programs and support for individuals," said Micomyiza. "I also worked as an administrative specialist in human resources at the University of Southern Maine until this past September, but it's been hard finding work that matches my education and experience."

Even though she had a senior-level job in management in Rwanda, finding positions here at the same level has been difficult. "There is a sense that I come from the 'developing world' and, when I apply for positions, they have been less appealing, often because they are at lower levels and with less pay. When you have a bachelor's degree [from a U.S. school], you get more offers here than someone who has a bachelor's from another country," she said. "My goal is to do a master's degree and see where it takes me. But it's expensive, and I'm not financially able yet."

When Micomyiza first arrived in Portland, she felt "...a bit shut out, since the area is not as diversified as is New York City. "In New York, on the street or at a B&B or hospital, you see Black, Hispanic, and Asian people. Here, most places I went were all white. Initially, I felt strange, but then I reminded myself that Maine is mostly white, and – I have found – that the longer I have stayed here, the more I have realized that when I really need help, and I ask the right questions, people will help me."

When she arrived in Maine, she wanted to complete a master's degree or an MBA, but there was not scholarship money for immigrants," said Micomyiza. "So I started by taking classes in QuickBooks, accounting, and computers. But I continued to ask about what resources might be available to me and, finally, I heard about a certificate program in human resources that is offered at the University of Southern Maine." After a coworker named Martha told her scholarships might be available, she applied for and received funds to cover three of the classes she needed. "The school couldn't pay for more, so I asked Fedcap for funds. Although their process was long, they sponsored the rest." Martha, the coworker, became a friend and has been a reference for Micomyiza.

"I believe that all [immigrants] found ourselves here with a dream of a better future, and asking the right questions is what New Mainers need to do," Micomyiza said. "If your questions are not answered, then I encourage you to ask someone else, at maybe another institution. Ask until someone gives you an answer. Don't settle for less. If you are dreaming of higher education, ask around and apply for various scholarships. One day a door will open. If you are dreaming of starting a business, ask those in business for help. If you don't know anyone, do research, make phone calls, until you find the someone who will give you the information you need."

Micomyiza has cousins, also immigrants, who were living in Maine before she moved here. In the beginning, they did not have financial security. But, over time, she has seen how they survived and thrived. "For instance, my aunt – who is really my dad's cousin, but in the African culture, I call her 'aunt' – owns the Moriah Shop." The business is on Cumberland Street in Portland. "When she started her store, I was wowed and impressed, and now she is doing well and has become a big part of the community. Everybody knows and likes Moriah's and her family has made Maine their home."

Those willing to work hard here can gain opportunities, she said, because Maine is more of a level playing field than many other places. But immigrants in Maine need to be resilient. "There are good people in Maine," she said. "I love the community I have here. I love the friendships I have. My daughter loves it here and she's made me promise that I will not move. She wants to stay here. She has a lot of friends; she's learning how to dance – big things for her. Those are important things, and this is her home."

Micomyiza said, "I believe in myself, but I believe in God more than I believe in myself and my own capabilities, and in His plan for my life and family. He has equipped me with all the skills and knowledge that I need to become successful and achieve my dreams. And once those dreams are achieved, I know he would want me to share them with others and inspire them to dream big and work towards reaching them. I believe he didn't bring me to this country just for myself, but also for my community, and for the people that will come after me. For me, people believing in themselves is acknowledging the gifts and talents that God gave them, and using them not only for their personal benefits, but also for others."

Continued from page 1

ter would be taken from him and his wife. So they left everything – land, house, car, savings. “We came looking for a safe, stable life for our daughter. She needs friends, a school, a life. We came to the U.S. to find safety. We came because we had no choice. But now we hope to find refuge in Canada.”

Diane Noiseux, Immigration Coordinator at the Office of New Americans/Joint Council for Economic Opportunity in Plattsburgh, N.Y., confirmed that refugees are treated better in Canada than in the U.S. “They are given shelter, health insurance, work papers, access to education,” she said. And this financial and social support – including the opportunity to apply to work right away (though there can be a processing delay) – is one reason so many asylum seekers choose to file claims in Canada instead of in the U.S.

Another major reason is the shorter wait time for a hearing, or review of refugee claims. In recent years that wait time has lengthened to approximately two years in Canada, because of the large number of applications filed, but that is still shorter for some in Canada than in the U.S., where asylum seekers have been known to wait upwards of a decade just to have their hearing. While waiting, asylum seekers in the U.S. may not be allowed to work for their first year in the country, must rely on charity, and are unable to see family members they had to leave back in their country of origin. The wait in Canada for family reunification can also be quite long. On top of leaving a homeland, this loss of family compounds trauma. And so does worry for those in harm’s way back home.

One distressed man, A.K., waiting for his asylum hearing in the U.S., wrote Amjambo Africa to say, “The government has started harassing my family back home now. Also, my medical condition is really bad, and I don’t know the right way to protect my family back home in the time I have to wait for the asylum inter-



Alex Vernon

view in the asylum office, as it may take years and end in disappointment.”

Ahmed H. wrote to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in October, referring to Canada as “the guardian of humanity and human rights,” and deploring the “miserable life and unstable situation” of many refugees in the U.S. He wrote to express the sentiments of asylum seekers in the U.S., saying that compared to so many, he and his family were lucky. “For us, we have enough money to survive ... we have a bed – but some we know don’t ... some people have spent all their money, and in the end they are deported. Everything is lost ... you can’t close the door in people’s faces. They don’t have other options. They lose all hope ... so many people in the U.S. are suffering. Asylum seekers should be treated a different way.”

While some people, like Ahmed H. and A.K., arrive in the U.S. with the intention of applying for asylum here, others plan to continue to Canada right from the beginning. Most migrants who arrive in the northeast U.S. come from Central America, Africa, and Haiti. Many flew from Africa into Ecuador or Brazil, because visa rules are less stringent in these countries, and then crossed the Darien Gap – which straddles Columbia and Panama – on foot. This involved a trip rife with both natural and man-made dangers, often including smugglers, bandits wielding machetes, treacherous river crossings, death following starvation or injuries – and often all this is done with young children and babies in tow.

Some of these migrants are now in Maine, including those who arrived during the summer of 2019, known in Maine as the “Expo Summer.” Others have arrived more recently, over the course of the pandemic, and are living in budget motels in the greater Portland area and surrounding towns, awaiting asylum interviews. Still others are on the way now, with no end of migrants in sight.

Dr. Kathryn Dennler, a researcher affiliated with the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University, Canada, points to “a massive number of dynamics” coming together to drive



U.S. Canada Border

the situation at the U.S.-Canada border: a rise in persecution across the globe, shrinking access to asylum in the U.S., more and more countries restricting immigration, the pandemic, and countries behaving counter to international commitments to protect refugees.

Since 2016, so many asylum seekers in terrible straits have approached the Canadian border from the U.S. side that a grassroots coalition of non profits, legal experts, faith communities, and others, formed to try to help these asylum seekers understand the immigration rules on both sides of the border, and provide humanitarian assistance when needed. A few of the organizations involved are Bridges Not Borders, Plattsburgh Cares, Canadian Sanctuary Network, and University of Detroit Mercy School of Law Immigration Clinic - which has represented about 16 family groups in connection with Canada/U.S. border issues, and consulted with many more.

Quebec sees the largest numbers of crossings in Canada, with Ontario a close second. In 2019 alone, 16,660 people crossed at official land ports of entry in Quebec (out of a total of 20,485 in all of Canada), and 16,136 crossed at irregular locations in Quebec (out of a total of 16,503 known irregular crossings).

But in March 2020, the entire U.S.-Canada border slammed shut to most asylum seekers, as well as to everyone else. Those who were stuck on the U.S. side, and those who were still en route to the U.S. – possibly slogging through the Darien Gap, or somewhere else in Central America – on the long journey to claiming asylum in Canada – could do nothing but wait for the border to open again. People depleted all their resources; families with children crowded into the apartments of acquaintances or lived on the streets;

Continued on page 31

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Caldendar Party

Photos by John Ochira

The nonprofit Chance to Advance, whose motto is “Diversity makes us stronger,” has launched its third annual Celebrating Diversity in Maine calendar in partnership with the Office of Maine Refugee Services at Catholic Charities of Maine. The calendar’s 2022 theme is racial and social justice, and the calendar features the life stories and photographs of 12 Mainers from different communities. All proceeds from sales of the calendar benefit Chance To Advance’s Refugee Student Scholarship Program, which helps refugee and asylee youth pursue higher education in Maine. This year’s scholarship recipients included Placide Siyangoli, Westbrook High School; Sumaya Shueib, Casco Bay High School; and Farhia Gedow, Portland High School. Ekhlash Ahmed, a refugee from Sudan, is the founder and executive director of Chance to Advance.

To purchase a calendar please visit www.ChanceToAdvanceME.org. Price varies depending on the number of calendars ordered. To place a bulk order, please contact Siobhan Whalen at (207) 317-1229 or email omrs@ccmaine.org.



The dance group led by Bojana Stankovic-Hejabian is named Sokolica and the dancers are all former refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The group was established in 2010 in hopes of preserving the traditional folk dance of the region.





2022 2022





Financial Literacy

All About Cars

Four car buying options



This article reviews the top four kinds of places people buy cars, and the pros and cons of each.

Car dealership

At a dealership, car shoppers can see available vehicles in person. Shoppers can experience a car and go for test drives. A salesperson is readily available to offer expert opinions and answer most questions, and extras can be added to a purchase, such as special parts or a maintenance agreement. However, some people feel uncomfortable working with a salesperson who knows so much more about automobiles than they do. Deciding to buy a particular car from a lot with so many options to choose from can be difficult, and some people may feel overwhelmed. In addition, a high level of customer service may come with higher prices, but there's always room to negotiate when buying a car. On the positive side, some people create a trusting relationship with a dealership that builds over the years, since the dealer's reputation depends on customer satisfaction. Having the sale be an overall positive experience for the buyer makes good business sense. Another plus about purchasing from a dealership is the possibility of finding a car and driving it off the lot and home on the same day!

Private car sales

Finding a good deal is possible when purchasing a car through a listing service such as Uncle Henry's or Facebook Marketplace. However, the buyer and the seller have to work things out for themselves, with no oversight from a dealership. Transactions should be made in a public setting with friends or family around for support, possibly right at a credit union or bank – this is a safe and neutral location. The car must be inspected by the buyer, and negotiations and proper contract agreements are the responsibility of the buyer and seller. Most buyers arrange for the car to be looked over by a trusted mechanic to be sure the car does not hide defects that the seller is not disclosing. Once money is exchanged, the sale is final. The car can't be returned to a dealership and the sale can't be cancelled, once it is complete.

Online car buying websites

Shopping for a car online is like window shopping. The many popular websites include Carvana.com, AutoTrader.com, and CarsDirect.com. People can take their time and research vehicles with no pressure to buy, and car shopping can happen at any time of day or night. This is an excellent way to compare prices and really study a car's features. Sometimes sites arrange for cars to be delivered to a buyer's residence. However, making a very large purchase this way, without being familiar with the business, is risky. Sometimes the buyer has only a few photos and a short description to go on. Details about the condition of the car are not always apparent until the buyer sees the car in person – sometimes after the sale has been made. Finally, obtaining the car takes longer. Days could pass between buying the car and driving it around. For example, a car with an excellent price tag might be six states away from a buyer. The vehicle must be transported to the buyer's location, and arrangements must be made for that, or a buyer will have to make plans to travel to pick up the purchased vehicle.

Auto buying service

Some financial institutions provide an auto buying service to help people find their perfect vehicle. For a fee (or sometimes for free), shoppers can tap into the automotive experience of the buying service's staff to purchase a car. The staff works to determine the best value and options available to meet their client's needs. Their goal is to find the lowest purchase price for the buyer and to ensure the transaction goes smoothly. Many times, the staff will negotiate on a buyer's behalf and guide them through all the steps. However, this service may not be for everyone because some people enjoy the process of buying a car, and prefer to handle the business themselves. Check with a credit union or bank to see if they offer this service.

Finding the perfect vehicle is a process. The more information a buyer has, the more confidently they can step into the transaction.



How Rate Shopping Impacts Credit Scores

Vehicles are one of the most expensive purchases most people make. Because of this, many people apply for automobile loans. When someone inquires about a loan, the lender asks a credit bureau for a copy of their credit report. A credit report is a detailed accounting of someone's credit history, or score. The results determine how much confidence the lender will have that someone may be able to pay back a big debt.

A loan request is viewed as a risk to lenders. When someone applies for a loan, credit bureaus sometimes slightly decrease the applicant's credit score. But we recommend that people shop around for auto loans from a number of different lenders because some lenders offer better interest rates than others. An interest rate is the amount a lender charges for the use of funds, expressed as a percentage of the original loan. The lower the interest rate, the less someone will pay over the life of a loan, which is usually many years. Loans can help people afford an expensive purchase like a new car.

People who shop around for the best auto loan rate should try to fill out all their loan applications within 2 weeks. This is known as rate shopping – when someone makes a number of inquiries for a single purpose (such as searching for the best rates on an auto loan). The major credit bureaus will recognize that the applicant is shopping around, and only count the requests as one hard pull, if shoppers keep within a given credit bureau's allotted time frame for rate shopping – usually between 14 and 45 days, depending on the bureau. To be safe, people who are shopping around for the best auto loan rate should try to fill out all their loan applications within 14 days.

For many, the assumption that multiple individual loan inquiries will have a negative impact on their credit score has been enough for them to steer away from finding the best deals. However, people should take advantage of the rate shopping time frame. Even a slightly lower interest rate can add up to big savings over the life of an auto loan, so it's best to gather and compare quotes from different lenders.



I've bought a car - what's next?

For anyone thinking about buying a car, it is important to look beyond the price tag of the vehicle itself to all of the other expenses connected with car ownership. The Portland Office of Economic Opportunity sat down with the Maine State Treasury Department to help readers anticipate expenses.

Can I buy a car if I don't have a driver's license?

Yes, you can. A driver's license is not required to own or register a vehicle in the state of Maine. However, to operate the vehicle, you must be a licensed and insured driver.

Once I buy a car, what is the first thing I need?

You should insure the vehicle as soon as possible. Proof of insurance is necessary to drive the vehicle, and it is also required prior to registering the vehicle.

What do I do next?

The next step is to go to your town or city office to pay your excise tax. The excise tax is paid to the town or city for road maintenance, construction, and repair.

What is the next step?

Once you have paid the excise tax, take all of the paperwork to any Bureau of Motor Vehicles branch in Maine to complete the registration. In most cases, you will need to bring the original title signed by all previous owners, the original bill of sale created and given to you by the seller, the current insurance card for the vehicle you are registering (an electronic copy is accepted), proof of your residence (this can be a bill or identification card – something official with your name and address on it that is not handwritten), your driver's license, the current mileage on the vehicle, and the fee. (Paying with cash or a check saves the debit/credit card fee). If you purchase the vehicle from a dealership, they will give you all the necessary documents for the registration process.

Once my car is registered, do I need to do anything else?

After you register the vehicle, you will need to get an inspection sticker. Mechanics, dealers, or other companies that are licensed to issue auto inspections will display a yellow "Inspection Station" sign. Vehicle registrations and inspection stickers need to be annually renewed for each vehicle in Maine.

How can I predict how much it might cost to register my car each year?

You can ask the clerk to calculate what the registration cost will be the following year so you know how much to expect. When a vehicle is brand new, it is most expensive. Then each year after that, the registration fees slowly decrease, until the vehicle is six years old. After that the registration fees will stay the same every year. You can always call or email your city or town office to request the amount owed for renewing your registration.

Can I renew online?

If nothing has changed on your registration, you should be able to renew online each year. However, if you change your address, name, or license plate number, you may need to renew the registration in person.



Importance of culturally appropriate meals

Contributed by Preble Street

Preble Street helps meet the nutritional needs of Maine community members experiencing homelessness and food insecurity through mobile food services, a food pantry, and soup kitchens. In 2020 alone, Preble Street provided over one million meals, a reflection of the increasing needs in the community for food support and access to healthy meals. These meals meet a variety of dietary and cultural needs and always include vegan, pork-free, dairy-free, and vegetarian options.

To help ensure that our New Mainer neighbors experiencing food insecurity have access to healthy, nourishing, culturally appropriate food, Preble Street launched a Culturally Appropriate Meals initiative in February 2021. The initiative recognizes that new arrivals to the United States need not only healthy and nourishing food, but familiar and comforting foods as well. Over seven months, the Culturally Appropriate Meals program provided more than 43,000 meals. But the program is now on pause as Preble Street searches for someone with the ability to successfully manage large-scale food sourcing, menu planning, and preparation of high quality, nutritious meals to lead the program. This person also needs experience in planning and preparing culturally appropriate foods, with a focus on Central African meals.

"One of our top priorities at Preble Street is to provide food that is healthy and nutritious. Many of the people we serve are not used to the heavily processed foods frequently consumed in the United States. We've worked hard to ensure that New Mainers have access to the food they are familiar with," said Natalie Varallo, Food Programs Director at Preble Street. "I am hopeful that we can find someone soon with the knowledge and skill to create these meals. Our goal is to be able to provide these meals seven days a week – we just need the right person to join our team." To learn more, please visit www.preblestreet.org/about-us/employment/.

Beyond providing cooked meals in area shelters, over 60% of Preble Street Food Pantry clients are New Mainers. Preble Street aims to provide raw, whole, fresh ingredients in pantry boxes so that people from all cultures can create foods that give them a sense of home. To do this, Preble Street sources food and produce from local farmers, including New Mainer-run farms that provide ingredients that may otherwise be hard to find.

Preble Street has also been reaching out to New Mainers to enroll them in the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) and pandemic electronic benefit transfer (PEBT), providing services to asylum-seeking youth at its Teen Center, and offering care to these families through health services programs in partnership with MaineHealth and Greater Portland Health. These services require a community effort, and Preble Street stays up-to-date on immigration trends by actively gathering data and information through community partners, including the City of Portland, and uses this information to assess food needs.



What you need to know about “Public Charge” rules, right now

| By: Kathy Kilrain del Rio

Over the last few years, if you are part of an immigration process or know someone who is, you may have heard a lot about something called “public charge.” Many people have questions about it, and we’d like to help everyone better understand what it is and who it applies to.



It is important to know that the expanded public charge rule from the Trump administration has ended. The policy has returned to what it was before President Donald Trump took office. Using most public benefits programs, including health care, food, and housing programs, will not have an impact on an individual’s immigration status.

Federal immigration law includes a public charge policy that affects some immigrants when they are applying for a green card or before they enter the country. It is meant to determine if someone will need to rely on the government for financial support. The public charge policy has been in place for decades, but the Trump administration significantly expanded the policy in harmful ways. Because of that, many more people learned about the policy, and it created a lot of confusion.

Unfortunately, the Trump administration’s actions caused many immigrants to stop using all public benefit programs or to not apply for needed help out of fear of the policy. That “chill effect” harmed immigrants who were subject to the public charge policy and also harmed immigrants and their U.S. citizen families who are not subject to it. At Maine Equal Justice, we expect the Biden administration to propose a new public charge rule, but that rule would not affect anyone for many months or potentially years, so it should not be a factor in deciding whether to apply for public benefits now. We also do not expect that proposed rule to be harmful in the ways the Trump administration rule was.

The public charge rule primarily affects family-based immigrants applying for green cards or applying for entry into the U.S. It does not apply to immigrants with a humanitarian status, including asylees, refugees, survivors of trafficking or victims of crimes (U or T visa applicants), Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) petitioners, or people seeking or granted Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS). There is no public charge test when applying for U.S. citizenship, to renew a green card, or to apply for or renew asylum, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Temporary Protected Status (TPS), or Deferred Enforced Departure (DED).

Many factors go into a public charge decision. The only public benefits that are considered are federal or state cash assistance, including Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and General Assistance (GA), and long-term institutional care paid for by the government, such as nursing home care paid for by Medicaid (MaineCare). Other factors will also be considered. These include education, employment, health, and family status. The use of public benefits by other family members does not affect an individual’s public charge decision.



Recovering from career rejection (now is the time!)



By Stefanie Trice Gill
Rejection isn’t easy. It hurts.

Trying to build your career in the U.S. can feel like a series of doors closing. But with today’s economy, some doors are opening. To walk through those open doors and be successful, you have to decide to renew both the “skill” and the “will” to move forward again.

I recently met a woman who was a successful accountant in Africa. After arriving in the U.S., she spent years applying for accounting jobs, with no results. She became convinced that her foreign degree and overseas experience had no value here. She decided to “start again,” focusing on a low-paid home health job. Just this month, after a decade, she got a phone call inviting her to interview for an accounting job that pays \$75,000 a year.

If you’re an immigrant professional stuck in a job outside of your career of choice, the stars may be aligning for you. The U.S. economy is booming. Employers are desperate for skilled workers. And, now, for the first time in decades, your “diversity” and international experience are being seen as an advantage.

Here are some strategies to bounce back from rejection and get professional-level work experience:

Make yourself accountable to someone. Show this column to a friend, family member, or mentor and share your vision. Sharing your goal with someone can help you follow through and stay focused.

Take small steps. The following tasks are easy-to-do and will help you prepare for opportunities:

Update your resume to include your prior (home country) experience and degrees.

Use a resume template to help you tell your story.

Upload your resume on job boards, such as Indeed and Maine Joblink, IntWork, and other sites.

Update your LinkedIn profile, adding your relevant skills. (See Amjambo Africa, June 2021 for tips.)

Learn one new thing a week: read an article, do online research, attend a university class or watch a LinkedIn tutorial or YouTube video to stay up-to-date with your profession.

Learn new English vocabulary and practice talking about what you know how to do; practice your “elevator speech” (see Amjambo Africa, November 2021 for examples) so if you meet someone, you can tell them about your career vision.

Now is the time.

MIRC at NIIC 2021

By Fatima Saidi

In the first week of October, I had the honor, privilege, and responsibility of representing Maine’s 70,000+immigrants and refugees at the National Immigrant Integration Conference (NIIC) in Las Vegas Nevada, alongside MIRC Executive Director Mufalo Chitam and Program and Community Engagement Manager Madeline Saucier. The annual conference is organized by the National Partnership for New Americans and is the largest conference on immigration and refugee issues in the United States. The conference provides a safe space for participants to learn from one another; to uplift and share ideas, information, strategies and innovations; to develop and enhance relationships; to amplify shared values; and to build campaigns and collaborations to better the lives of immigrants and refugees in the U.S.



For me, one of the most reflective moments of this conference was when I participated in “Black Trans Migrant Justice: A Conversation on Healing and Global Anti-Blackness.” I have always believed that the immigrant issue is a race issue, a Black and Brown issue in this country. In my line of work, I often hear the phrase “one small step in the right direction” – and this scares me because white supremacy and racism, like any other oppressive system and regime, is very adaptive. Racism survives and thrives on compromises. For example, if the U.S. fired all white police officers and replaced them with people of color, tomorrow unarmed Black men would still be shot to death. It is not about the actors; it is about the system. And we can’t change the system unless we intentionally center Black immigrants at the forefront of the fight for liberation and justice. For me, being in the presence of immigrant rights activists, immigrant service providers, immigrant advocacy and organizing groups, immigrant organizations, immigrant coalitions, and ethnic-based organizations from all over the United States was an overwhelming, humbling, and inspiring experience. At the conference, we learned a lot and we taught a lot. In this line of work, the end goal is not equality; the end goal is equity and liberation for all.

The NIIC joins Black-led groups in denouncing the Biden administration’s use of policies that harm Black migrants, including the use of torture devices, other forms of abuse by U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, Title 42 expulsions, and the planned reimplementing of the “Remain in Mexico” policy. Please join partners in urging members of Congress to do everything possible to put an end to the cruel, racist policy which blocks migrants at the U.S. southern border from seeking asylum.



Updates from ILAP

By Julia Brown



Advocates file lawsuit to fight asylum work permit renewal delays

Individuals waiting for their asylum case to be adjudicated need to be able to work in order to provide for their families. Some Mainers with pending asylum applications have lost or will lose their jobs due to the government’s extreme delays in renewing their work permits. The government is sometimes taking 10 months (or more!) to approve a work permit renewal.

The American Immigration Council and Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project filed a class action lawsuit to fight these illegal delays. The lawsuit seeks to force the government to address delays and renew asylum seekers’ work permits in a timely manner.

DHS expands sensitive location policy

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has expanded its “sensitive location” policy. This policy previously limited immigration enforcement by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) in places such as schools, hospitals, and places of worship.

The policy now also includes places where children gather, like playgrounds, school bus stops, and recreation centers; social services establishments like domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters, and food pantries; religious ceremonies; and public demonstrations.

These protections are vitally important so immigrants, as well as their family and friends, can feel safe in carrying out daily activities such as taking children to school, showing up to traffic court or attending a hearing as a witness, going to a place of worship, or even taking a sick family member to the hospital.

While ILAP is disappointed in other Biden administration enforcement guidelines, we thank Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas for safeguarding more locations that are central to families’ daily lives.

Biden administration issues memo terminating “Remain in Mexico” policy; may restart program anyway

ILAP welcomed the news that DHS had issued a memorandum terminating the cruel and inhumane “Remain in Mexico” policy (called the Migrant Protection Protocols or MPP). This policy forcibly returns asylum seekers to Mexico to wait for their immigration court hearing after they are processed at the southern border, and a federal court recently ordered the United States to reinstate the program. Unfortunately, the Biden administration has said it will be reinstating the MPP program due to the court order, despite the memo.

This program has abjectly failed to “protect” asylum seekers. By forcing families fleeing violence to await their hearings in border cities in Mexico, families have been exposed to even more traumatizing violence, torture, and kidnapping.

We must see quick action by the Biden administration to end MPP and welcome asylum seekers with dignity. The administration must also end its use of Title 42, a Trump-era policy the Biden administration is still utilizing to expel asylum-seeking families at the border.

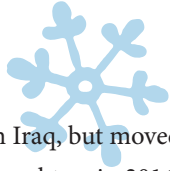


IMMIGRANT LEGAL ADVOCACY PROJECT



Holiday traditions celebrated by Mainers

By Ulya Aligulova



Nahla Alsafar is originally from Iraq, but moved to Portland with her husband and three daughters in 2016. "In my culture, one of the biggest celebrations is Ramadan," Alsafar said. "We fast for one month, from sunrise to sunset, and we have special food that we cook during that time. When the whole family breaks the fast at sundown, we eat a special kind of lentil soup. Because you fast for so many hours, when you break your fast, you need to eat something very nutritious. I have my own recipe for the lentil soup which I've shared with my American friends, and they love it. We also make a special kind of biryani, which is rice mixed with different kinds of meat and vegetables. After the fast, people also go to the mosque to pray." Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and commemorates Prophet Muhammad's first revelation, during which Muslims worldwide observe a fast and focus on prayer, reflection, and community.



Another Islamic holiday that Alsafar and her family celebrate is Eid al-Adha. This celebration honors the patriarch Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his son according to God's command. Animals such as cows and sheep are ritually sacrificed, and more than half of the meat is given away by the family, as an offering to the poor and needy. "We celebrate Eid al-Adha for three days," Alsafar explained. "We make traditional pastries like kleche and baklava. Some people buy them from the store, but I make

Continued on page 22

Les traditions des fêtes célébrées par les habitants du Maine

Par Ulya Aligulova



Nahla Alsafar est originaire d'Irak, mais elle a déménagé à Portland avec son mari et ses trois filles en 2016. "Dans ma culture, une des plus grandes célébrations est le Ramadan", a déclaré Alsafar. "Nous jeûnons pendant un mois du lever au coucher du soleil et nous avons des aliments spéciaux que nous cuisinons pendant cette période. Lorsque toute la famille rompt le jeûne au coucher du soleil, nous mangeons une sorte spéciale de soupe aux lentilles. Comme vous jeûnez pendant de nombreuses heures, lorsque vous rompez votre jeûne, vous devez manger quelque chose de très nutritif. J'ai ma propre recette de soupe aux lentilles que j'ai partagée avec mes amis américains, et ils l'adorent. Nous préparons également un type spécial de biryani, qui est du riz mélangé à différentes sortes de viande et de légumes. Après le jeûne, les gens vont aussi à la mosquée pour prier." Le Ramadan est le neuvième mois du calendrier islamique et commémore la première révélation du prophète Mahomet. Pendant cette période, les musulmans du monde entier observent un jeûne et se concentrent sur la prière, la réflexion et la communauté.

Une autre fête islamique que Alsafar et sa famille célèbrent est l'Aïd al-Adha. Cette fête honore la volonté d'Abraham de sacrifier son fils selon l'ordre de Dieu. Des animaux tels que des vaches et des moutons sont sacrifiés

Suite sur la page 22

Tradiciones festivas celebradas por los habitantes de Maine

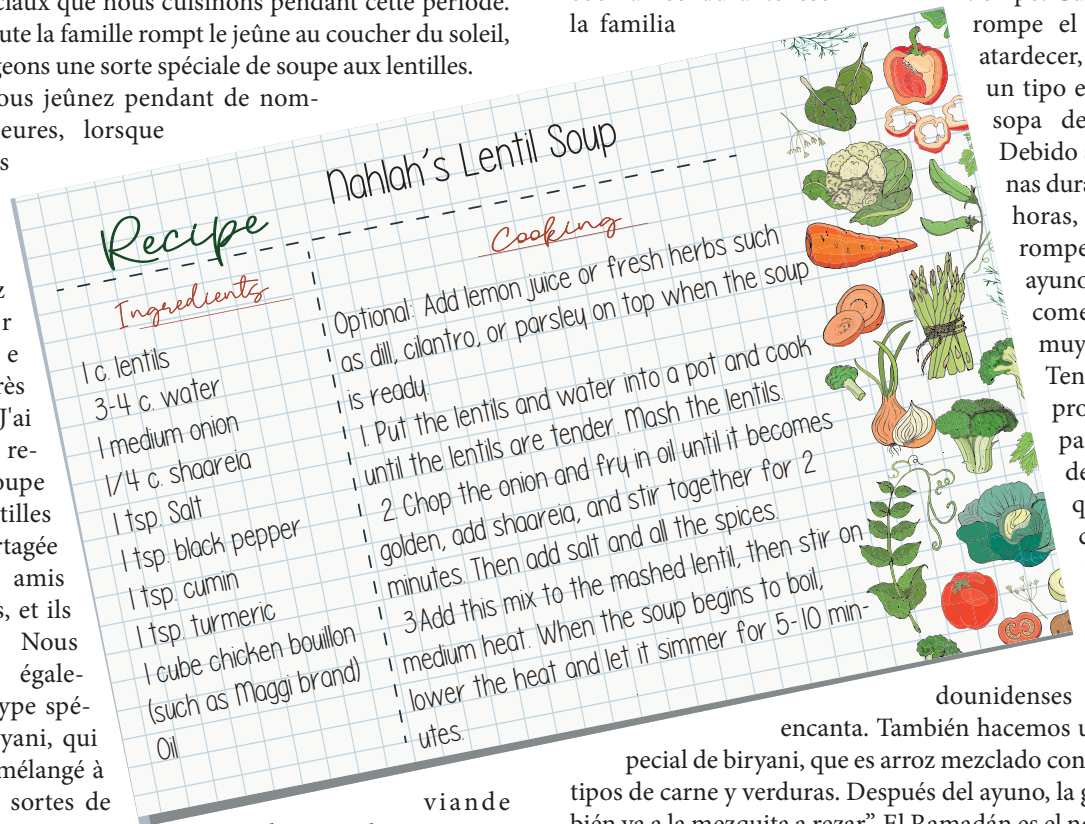
Por Ulya Aligulova



Nahla Alsafar es originaria de Irak, pero se mudó a Portland con su esposo y sus tres hijas en 2016. "En mi cultura, una de las celebraciones más importantes es el Ramadán", dijo Alsafar. "Ayunamos durante un mes desde el amanecer hasta el atardecer y tenemos comida especial que cocinamos durante ese tiempo. Cuando toda la familia rompe el ayuno al atardecer, comemos un tipo especial de sopa de lentejas. Debido a que ayunas durante tantas horas, cuando rompes tu ayuno, necesitas comer algo muy nutritivo. Tengo mi propia receta para la sopa de lentejas que he compartido con mis amigos esta-

dounidenses y les encanta. También hacemos un tipo especial de biryani, que es arroz mezclado con diferentes tipos de carne y verduras. Después del ayuno, la gente también va a la mezquita a rezar". El Ramadán es el noveno mes del calendario islámico y conmemora la primera revelación del Profeta Muhammad, durante la cual los musulmanes de todo el mundo hacen un ayuno y se centran en la oración, la reflexión y la comunidad.

Otra festividad islámica que celebran Alsafar y su familia es Eid al-Adha. Esta celebración honra la disposición de Abraham de sacrificar a su hijo según el mandato de Dios. Se sacrifican ritualmente animales como vacas y ovejas, y la



WELCOME HOME. WORK SAFELY.



Dhaqanka fasaxa ee ay xusaan Mainers

Waxaa qoray : Ulya Aligulova



Nahla Alsafar waxay asal ahaan ka



Nahla, second from right with friends from In Her Presence

timid Ciraaq, laakiin waxay u guurtay Portland iyada iyo ninkeeda iyo saddex gabdhood 2016. "Dhaqankeyga, mid ka mid ah dabaaldegga ugu weyn waa Ramadan " Al Safar ayaa tiri. "Waxaan soomnaa hal bil laga bilaabo qorrax ka soo baxa ilaa qorax dhaca, waxaan ahay sanaa cunto gaar ah oo aan karsano muddadaas. Markay qoyska oo dhami afurakan markay qorraxdu dhacdo, waxay u cunnaa maraq digir ah oo gaar ah. Sababto ah waxaad soomaysaa saacado badan, marka aad afurto, waxaad u baahan tahay inaad cunto wax nafaqo leh. Waxaan haystaa cunto karis ii gaar ah oo maraq lentil ah oo aan la wadaagay saaxiibaday Maraykanka ah, wayna jecel yihiin. Waxa kale oo aanu samaynaa nooc gaar ah oo biryani ah, kaas oo ah bariis lagu daray hilib iyo khudaar kala duwan. Soonka ka dib, dadku waxay aadaan masaajidka si ay ugu tukadaan.

"Ramadaanku waa bisha sagaalad ee taariikhda Islaamka, waxaa lagu xusa waxyigii ugu horeeyay ee Nebi Muxamed, xilligaasoo Muslimiinta aduunku oo dhami ay soomaan oo ay salada saaraan xooga fekerka, iyo bulshada. Ciid kale oo Islaami ah oo Alsafar iyo qoyskeedu ay u dabaaldeggaan waa Ciidul-Adxa. Dabaaldeggaani wuxuu sharfayaa diyaar garowga Ibraahim inuu u bixiyo wiilkiisa sida uu qabo amarka Ilaahay. Xoolaha sida Lo'da iyo Idaha ayaa sida caadada ah loo sadqeeyo, waxaan hilibka kala bar in ka badan ay qoysku bixiyan, si ay u bixiyaan masaakiinta

Waxaan u dabaaldegaynaa Ciidul-Adxa muddo saddex maalmood ah," ayuu yidhi Alsafar. "Waxaan samaynaa macmacaan dhaqameed sida kleche iyo baklava. Dadka qaar baa dukaanka ka soo iibsada, laakiin meel eber ah ayaan ka sameeyaa. Inta lagu jiro wakhtigan, waxaan booqanaa asxaabta iyo qoyska si aan u wadaagno hadiyado iyo macmacaanka iyo sidoo kale iibsashada dhar cusub Waxaan xasuusta markii aan yaraa ee waddankeyga, aan wada diyaarinnay dhammaan cuntadii, waxaan nadiifin jirnay guriga oo dhan, subaxdii ka dib waxaan booqannay qaraabadayada. Waalidiinteenaa waxay iibsadeen wax kasta oo cusub, gaar ahaan carruurta, si ay ugu dabaaldegga ciida. Inkasta oo halkan Ameerika noloshu ay aad uga duwan tahay, waxaan isku daynaa inaan abuurno xaalad la mid ah tii aan ku haysanay carruur ahaan si aan u tusno carruurteeda sida aan ugu dabaaldegga ciidaha dhaqan ahaan."

Madbacadihii Amjambo Africa
Georges Budagu Makoko

waxa uu ku dhashay kuna barbaaray jamhuuriyada dimuquraadiga ah ee Congo waxa uuna u guuray Rwanda kadib xasuuqii ka dhanka ahaa Tutsi-ga 1994. 2002, Makoko iyo qoyskiisu waxa ay u haajireen Portland. "Markii aan ku soo noqday dalkaygii, ma aan haysan fasaxyo sida Thanksgiving ama Hal-

Ku sii soconaya bogga 23

Tamaduni za lik-izo zinazoad-himishwa na Wakazi wa Mai

Na Ulya Aligulova

Nahla Alsafar mwenye ukoo wa Iraki, lakini aliyehamia Portland na mumewe na binti zake watatu mwaka wa 2016. "Katika utamaduni wangu, moja ya sherehe kubwa zaidi ni Ramadhani," Alsafar alisema. "Tunafunga kwa mwezi mmoja kuanzia mawio hadi machweo na tuna chakula maalum ambacho tunapika wakati huo. Familia nzima inapofunga jua linapotua, tunakula supu maalum ya dengi. Kwa sababu unafunga kwa masaa mengi, unapofungua, unahitaji kula kitu chenye lishe. Nina kichocho changu cha supu ya dengi ambayo nimeshiriki na marafiki zangu wa Marekani, na wanaipenda. Pia tunatengeneza aina maalum ya biryani, ambayo ni wali uliochanganywa na aina mbalimbali za nyama na mboga. Baada ya mfungo, watu pia huenda msikitini kuswali." Ramadhani ni mwezi wa tisa wa kalenda ya Kiislamu na inaadhimisha ufunuo wa kwanza wa Mtume Muhammad, ambapo Waislamu duniani kote hufunga na kuzingatia sala, tafakari na jumuiya.

Kuna sikukuu nyingine ya Kiislamu ambayo Alsafar na familia yake husherehekeka nayo ni Eid al-Adha. Sherehe hii inaheshimu utayari wa Abrahamu kumtoa mwanawe dhabihu kulingana na amri ya Mungu. Wanyama kama vile ng'ombe na kondoo hutolewa dhabihu kidehuri, na zaidi ya nusu ya nyama hutolewa na familia, kama sadaka kwa maskini na wahitaji. "Tunasherehekeka Eid al-Adha kwa siku tatu," Alsafar alielezea. "Tunatengeneza keki za kitamaduni kama kleche na baklava. Watu wengine huzinunua kwenye duka, lakini ninazifanya kutoka mwanzo. Wakati huu, tunatembelea marafiki na familia ili kushiriki zawadi na peremende na pia kununua nguo mpya. Nakumbuka nilipokuwa mtoto katika nchi yangu, tulitayarisha chakula chote pamoja, tukasafisha nyumba nzima, na asubuhi iliyofuata tuliwatembelea jamaa zetu. Wazazi wetu walinunua kila aina ya vitu vipya, hasa kwa ajili ya watoto, kusherehekeka sikukuu hiyo. Ingawa hapa Amerika maisha ni tofauti sana, tunajaribu kuunda hali zile zile tulikuwa nazo tukiwa watoto ili kuwaonyesha watoto wetu jinsi tunavyosherehekeka sikukuu hizi kimila."

Mchaphishaji wa Amjambo Africa
Georges Budagu Makoko

aliyezaliwa na kukulia katika Jamhuri ya Kidemokrasia ya Kongo na kuhamia Rwanda baada ya Mauaji ya Kimbari dhidi ya Watutsi mwaka wa 1994. Mnamo 2002, Makoko na familia yake walihamia Portland. "Nchini kwetu hatukuwa na likizo kama vile Shukrani au Halloween. Sikukuu pekee nilizosherehekeka ni Krismasi na Mwaka Mpya," Makoko alisema. "Krismasi ilikuwa ya kiroho zaidi kuliko ilivyo kawaida huko Marekani. Ulikuwa ni wakati wa kukumbuka kuzaliwa kwa Yesu na kusherehekeka pamoja na watu wengine kanisani. Hapakuwa na utoaji zawadi kama hapa, ilikuwa sherehe ndogo tu ya kiroho. Kinyume chake, Mwaka Mpya ulikuwa wakati ambapo ulikutana na marafiki na familia yako, tukapika, tukala, na kusherehekeka pamoja."

Ijapokuwa hivyo, baada ya kuhamia Marekani, Makoko na familia yake walikubali desturi za Krismasi za Marekani,

Inaendelea kwenye ukurasa 23

Umuco w'ibiruhuko urubahirizwa mu batuye Maine

Yanditswe na Ulya Aligulova

Nahla Alsafar akomoka muri Iraq, ariko yimukiye muri Portland hamwe n'umugabo we n'abakobwa babo batatu mu 2016. Agira ati "Mu mucu wacu, umwe mu minsi mikuru yizihizwa cyane ni Ramadan," Akomeza agira ati "turiyiriza mu gihe cy'ukwezi kose kuva izuba rirashye kugeza rirenze ndetse tukagira indyo zihariye duteka muri icyo gihe. Iyo umuryango wose urangije



kwiyiriza ku mugoroba, umuryango wose urya isupu ya Lentil. Kuko uba wiyirije amasaha menshi, iyo ufunguye, uba ugomba kurya ikintu gifite intungamubiri nyinshi. Mfite uburyo bwanjye nteka isupu ya Lentil, nkaba narabwigishije inshuti zanjye z'Abanyamerika kandi barayikunda. Duteka kandi ku buryo bwihariye Biryani, uku akaba ari umuceri uvanze n'imboga zitandukanye ndetse n'inyama. Nyuma yo kwiyiriza abantu kandi bajya ku musigiti bagasenga". Ramadan, ni ukwezi kwa kenda mu mezi ya karindari ya ki-islam, kikaba igihe cyo kwibuka iyerekwa rya mbere ry'intumwa y'Imana Muhammad. Icyo gihe ab-Islam bose ku isi yose bariyiriza bagahanga amaso isengesho, gutekereza ku magambo y'imyana ndetse no ku baturanyi.

Undi muni w'ikiruhuko Alsafar n'umuryango we bizihiza ni Eid al - Adha. Uyu muni ni umuni hibukwa uburyo Abraham yari yiteguye guturira Imana umuhungu we nk'uko yari yabitegetswe. Inyamaswa zirimo inka, intama ziratambwa ndetse ibirenga icyakabiri zigahabwa imiryango nk'impano ku bakene. Alsafar agira ati "Twizihiza Eid al - Adha iminsi itatu," akomeza agira ati "Duteka imitsima imenyereye mu mico yacu nka Kleche na Baklava. Bamwe bayigura mu maduka ariko nnye ndayikorera. Muri icyo gihe dusura imiryango maze tukayihira impano harimo no kugura imyenda mishya. Ndirubuka ubwo nari umwana mu gihugu cyanjye, twatekeraga ibyo kurya hamwe, tugasukura inzu yose mu gitondo cyakurikiraga ugusura bene wacu. Ababyeyi bacu baguraga ibintu bitandukanye kandi bishya cyane cyane bakabigurira abana, kugirango bizihize ikiruhuko. N'ubwo hano muri Amerika ubuzima butandukanye, tugerageza kwizihiza uyu muni nk'uko twari dusanzwe tubikora tukiri abana kugirango twereke abana bacu

komereza ku ipaji 23

Tradições de férias celebradas por Mainers

Por Ulya Aligulova



Nahla Alsafar é originária do

Iraque, mas mudou-se para Portland com o marido e três filhas em 2016. "Na minha cultura, uma das maiores celebrações é o Ramadão", disse Alsafar. "Aceleramos durante um mês do nascer ao pôr-do-sol e temos comida especial que cozinhamos durante esse tempo. Quando toda a família quebra o jejum ao pôr-do-sol, comemos um tipo especial de sopa de lentilhas. Porque é rápido durante tantas horas, quando quebras o jejum, precisas de comer algo muito nutritivo. Tenho a minha própria receita para a sopa de lentilhas que partilhei com os meus amigos americanos, e eles adoram. Também fazemos um tipo especial de biryani, que é arroz misturado com diferentes tipos de carne e legumes. Depois do jejum, as pessoas também vão à mesquita para rezar." O Ramadão é o nono mês do calendário islâmico e comemora a primeira revelação do Profeta Maomé, durante o qual os muçulmanos em todo o mundo observam um rápido e se concentram na oração, reflexão e comunidade.

Outro feriado islâmico que Alsafar e sua família celebram é Eid al-Adha. Esta celebração honra a prontidão de Abraão para sacrificar o seu filho de acordo com o comando de Deus. Animais como vacas e ovelhas são ritualmente sacrificados, e mais de metade da carne é dada pela família, como uma oferenda aos pobres e necessitados. "Celebramos Eid al-Adha por três dias", explicou Alsafar. "Fazemos bolos tradicionais como kleche e baklava. Algumas pessoas compram na loja, mas eu faço-as do zero. Durante este tempo, visitamos amigos e familiares para partilhar presentes e doces, bem como comprar roupa nova. Lembrome de quando era criança no meu país, preparámos toda a comida juntos, limpamos a casa toda, e na manhã seguinte visitámos os nossos parentes. Os nossos pais compraram todo o tipo de coisas novas, especialmente para as crianças, para celebrar o feriado. Apesar de aqui na América a vida ser muito diferente, tentamos criar as mesmas condições que tínhamos quando crianças para mostrar aos nossos filhos como celebramos estes feriados tradicionalmente."



Continúa en la página 23

them from scratch. During this time, we visit friends and family to share gifts and sweets, as well as buy new clothes. I remember when I was a child in my country, we prepared all the food together, we cleaned the whole house, and the morning after we visited our relatives. Our parents bought all kinds of new things, especially for the children, to celebrate the holiday. Even though here in America life is very different, we try to create the same conditions that we had as kids to show our own children how we celebrate these holidays traditionally."

Georges Budagu Makoko

Amjambo Africa publisher Georges Budagu Makoko was born and raised in the Democratic Republic of Congo and moved to Rwanda after the Genocide against the Tutsi in 1994. In 2002, Budagu and his family immigrated to Portland. "Back in my home country, we didn't have holidays like Thanksgiving or Halloween. The only holidays I celebrated were Christmas and New Year," Budagu said. "Christmas was more spiritual than what is common in America. It was the time to remember the birth of Jesus and celebrate with other people in the church. There was no gift giving like here, it was just a small spiritual celebration. By contrast, New Year's was the time when you met with your friends and family, cooked, ate, and celebrated together."

After moving to the United States, however, Budagu and his family adopted American Christmas traditions, such as giving gifts and decorating the house. But they still don't lose the spiritual aspect of the holiday, and attend church service as well.

"New Year's was also a spiritual holiday in Congo, since we believe that we wouldn't have made it through the year without God's help," he explained. "On New Year's Eve we would go to church until midnight, reflect on the past year, and commit ourselves to God's hand for the coming year. And the following day, we would gather family members and relatives and celebrate together. I grew up in a remote village in Congo, and we rarely ate meat. But during New Year's, a cow would be killed and the whole village would come together and share the meat and celebrate." One of the staple traditional Congolese dishes consumed alongside meat at New Year's was fufu, which is made by mixing water with cassava flour until it forms a thick paste.

"I love the diversity of cultures here in America, and seeing how they intermingle. For example, I love the fact that you get to meet with family members on Thanksgiving and reflect on things you're grateful for."

Tarlan Ahmadov

Originally from Azerbaijan, Tarlan Ahmadov moved to Portland in 2004, where he currently works as State Refugee Coordinator at the Office of Maine Refugee Services. "Back in Azerbaijan on December 31st, we actually celebrate two holidays – the New Year's and World Azerbaijanis Solidarity Day," Ahmadov said.

World Azerbaijanis Solidarity Day is a public holiday commemorating the global solidarity and unity of Azerbaijanis. It was motivated by the demolition of border barriers between Azerbaijan and Iran in December 1989, allowing the reunification of Azeri families. "It's a day when the whole family, including relatives, friends, and neighbors get together to eat, dance, sing, and exchange gifts." The staple traditional meal prepared for the occasion is the rice dish called plov (also pilaf or pilau), of which there are over 40 variations in Azerbaijan. Though plov is indigenous to many regions in Asia, some varieties, like the shah plov, which is most commonly served for holidays, are unique to Azerbaijan. Other traditional foods present at the holiday table are pastries like pakhlava and shekerbura.

"During my childhood in the Soviet Union, we were all very excited for New Year's because we'd receive presents and go to the children's celebration of New Year's at cultural centers," Ahmadov reflected. "There they would have shows for children, with people dressed up as characters from fairy tales like Father Frost and Snow Maiden. I particularly remember that we always got tangerines and oranges at this event, which was very special because they were hard to find in the USSR. There was always a community feeling – not only your family, but your friends and neighbors would all

rituellement, et plus de la moitié de la viande est donnée par la famille, comme une offrande aux pauvres et aux nécessiteux. "Nous célébrons l'Aïd al-Adha pendant trois jours", explique Alsafar. "Nous faisons des pâtisseries traditionnelles comme le kleche et le baklava. Certaines personnes les achètent au magasin, mais je les fais moi-même. Pendant cette période, nous rendons visite à nos amis et à notre famille pour partager des cadeaux et des sucreries, mais aussi pour acheter de nouveaux vêtements. Je me souviens que lorsque j'étais enfant dans mon pays, nous préparions tous les repas ensemble, nous nettoiyions toute la maison et, le lendemain matin, nous rendions visite à nos proches. Nos parents achetaient toutes sortes de nouvelles choses, surtout pour les enfants, pour célébrer la fête. Même si ici, en Amérique, la vie est très différente, nous essayons de créer les mêmes conditions que celles que nous avions quand nous étions enfants afin de montrer à nos propres enfants comment nous célébrons traditionnellement ces fêtes."

Georges Budagu Makoko, éditeur

d'Amjambo Africa, est né et a grandi en République démocratique du Congo et a déménagé au Rwanda après le génocide contre les Tutsis en 1994. En 2002, Makoko et sa famille ont immigré à Portland. "Dans mon pays, nous n'avions pas de fêtes comme Thanksgiving ou Halloween. Les seules fêtes que je célébrais étaient Noël et le Nouvel An", a déclaré Makoko. "Noël était plus spirituel que ce qui est courant en Amérique. C'était le moment de se souvenir de la naissance de Jésus et de la célébrer avec d'autres personnes à l'église. Il n'y avait pas de distribution de cadeaux comme ici, c'était juste une petite célébration spirituelle. En revanche, le Nouvel An était le moment où l'on se réunissait avec ses amis et sa famille, où l'on cuisinait, mangeait et faisait la fête ensemble."

Après avoir déménagé aux États-Unis, Makoko et sa famille ont toutefois adopté les traditions de Noël américaines, comme le partage de cadeaux et la décoration de la maison. Mais ils ne perdent pas pour autant l'aspect spirituel de la fête, et assistent également au service religieux.

"Le Nouvel An était aussi une fête spirituelle au Congo, car nous croyons que nous n'aurions pas réussi à passer l'année sans l'aide de Dieu", explique Makoko. "Le soir du Nouvel An, nous allions à l'église jusqu'à minuit, nous réfléchissions à l'année écoulée, et nous nous engageons dans la main de Dieu pour l'année à venir. Et le lendemain, nous réunissons les membres de la famille et les proches pour faire la fête ensemble. J'ai grandi dans un village reculé du Congo, et nous mangions rarement de la viande. Mais au Nouvel An, on

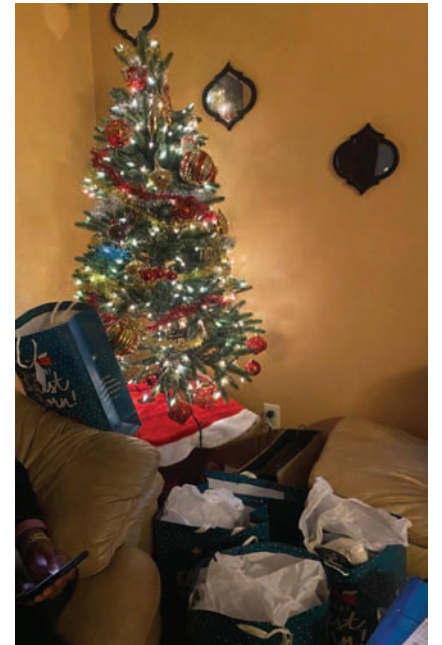
tuait une vache et tout le village se réunissait pour partager la viande et faire la fête." L'un des plats traditionnels congolais classiques cuisinés avec la viande au Nouvel An était le Fufu, qui est fabriqué en mélangeant de l'eau avec de la farine de manioc jusqu'à ce qu'il forme une pâte épaisse.

"J'aime la diversité des cultures ici en Amérique, et voir comment elles s'entremêlent. Par exemple, j'aime le fait que l'on puisse rencontrer les membres de sa famille à l'occasion de Thanksgiving et réfléchir aux choses pour lesquelles on est reconnaissant."

Tarlan Ahmadov, d'Azerbaïdjan

Originaire d'Azerbaïdjan, Tarlan Ahmadov s'est installé à Portland en 2004 où il travaille maintenant en tant que Coordinateur des Réfugiés de l'État à l'Office of Maine Refugee Services. "En Azerbaïdjan, le 31 décembre, nous célébrons deux fêtes : le Nouvel An et la Journée mondiale de solidarité avec les Azerbaïdjanais", explique Tarlan Ahmadov. La Journée mondiale de solidarité avec les Azerbaïdjanais est un jour férié en Azerbaïdjan qui commémore la solidarité et l'unité mondiale des Azerbaïdjanais. Elle a été motivée par la démolition des barrières frontalières entre l'Azerbaïdjan

familia regala más de la mitad de la carne como ofrenda a los pobres y necesitados. "Celebramos Eid al-Adha durante tres días", explicó Alsafar. "Hacemos pasteles tradicionales como kleche y baklava. Algunas personas los compran en la tienda, pero yo los hago desde cero. Durante este tiempo, visitamos a amigos y familiares para compartir regalos y dulces, así como para comprar ropa nueva. Recuerdo que cuando era niña en mi país, preparábamos toda la comida juntos, limpiamos toda la casa y a la mañana siguiente visitamos a nuestros familiares. Nuestros padres compraron todo tipo de cosas nuevas, especialmente para los niños, para celebrar la festividad. Aunque aquí en Estados Unidos la vida es muy diferente, tratamos de crear las mismas condiciones que teníamos cuando éramos niños para mostrarles a nuestros propios hijos cómo celebramos estos días festivos tradicionalmente".



Georges Budagu Makoko

El editor de Amjambo Africa, **Georges Budagu Makoko**, nació y se crió en la República Democrática del Congo y se mudó a Ruanda después del genocidio contra los Tutsi en 1994. En 2002, Makoko y su familia emigraron a Portland. "En mi país de origen no teníamos días festivos como el Día de Acción de Gracias o Halloween. Las únicas fiestas que celebré fueron Navidad y Año Nuevo", dijo Makoko. "La Navidad fue más espiritual de lo que es común en Los Estados Unidos. Era el momento de recordar el nacimiento de Jesús y celebrar con otras personas en la iglesia. No hubo regalos como aquí, fue solo una pequeña celebración espiritual. Por el contrario, el Año Nuevo era el momento en que te reunías con tus amigos y familiares, cocinabas, comías y celebraban juntos".

Sin embargo, después de mudarse a los Estados Unidos, Makoko y su familia adoptaron las tradiciones navideñas estadounidenses, como dar regalos y decorar la casa. Pero todavía no pierden el aspecto espiritual de la festividad y también asisten al servicio de la iglesia.

"El Año Nuevo también fue una fiesta espiritual en el Congo, ya que creemos que no hubiéramos podido pasar el año sin la ayuda de Dios", explicó Makoko. "En la víspera de Año Nuevo íbamos a la iglesia hasta la medianoche, reflexionábamos sobre el año pasado y nos comprometíamos con la mano de Dios para el año siguiente. Y al día siguiente reunimos a familiares y parientes y celebramos juntos. Crecí en un pueblo remoto del Congo y rara vez comíamos carne. Pero durante el Año Nuevo, se mataba una vaca y todo el pueblo se unía, compartía la carne y celebraba". Uno de los platos tradicionales congoleños básicos que se consumen junto con la carne en Año Nuevo era el fufu, que se prepara mezclando agua con harina de mandioca hasta formar una pasta espesa.

"Me encanta la diversidad de culturas aquí en Los Estados Unidos y ver cómo se entremezclan. Por ejemplo, me encanta el hecho de que puedas reunirte con miembros de la familia en Acción de Gracias y reflexionar sobre las cosas por las que estás agradecido".

Tarlan Ahmadov de Azerbaiyán

Originario de Azerbaiyán, Tarlan Ahmadov se mudó a Portland en 2004, donde actualmente trabaja como Coordinador Estatal de Refugiados en la Oficina de Servicios para Refugiados de Maine. "Atrás en Azerbaiyán, el 31 de diciembre celebramos dos días festivos: el Año Nuevo y el Día Mundial de la Solidaridad con Azerbaiyán", dijo Ahmadov. El Día Mundial de la Solidaridad con Azerbaiyán es un día festivo en Azerbaiyán que conmemora la solidaridad y la unidad global de los azerbaiyanos. Fue motivado por la demolición de las barreras fronterizas entre Azerbaiyán e Irán en diciembre de 1989, lo que permitió la reunificación de las familias azeríes. "Es un día en el que toda la familia, incluidos parientes, amigos y vecinos, se reúne para comer,



Laga sii waday bogga 21

loween. Fasaxyada kaliya ee aan u dabaaldega waxaay ahaayeen kirismaska iyo sanadka cusub,\" Makoko aya tiri. Fasaxyada kaliya ee aan u dabaaldega waxay ahaayeen kirismaska iyo sanadka cusub,\" Makoko aya tiri.

“Christmas wuxuu ahaa mid ruuxi ah oo ka badan waxa ku badan Maraykanka. Waxay ahayd waqtigii la xasuusan lahaa dhalashadii Ciise oo lala dabaaldegay dadka kale ee kaniisadda. Ma jirin wax hadiyad ah oo halkan la mid ah, waxay ahayd uun dabbaaldeg ruuxi ah oo yar. Taas beddelkeeda, Sannadaha Cusub waxa ay ahaayeen markii aan la kulanto asxaabtaada iyo qoyskaaga, oo aad wada kariseen, wax cuni jirteen, oo aad wada dabaaldegay jirteen.”

Kadib markii ay u soo guureen Maraykanka, sikastaba ha ahaatee, Makoko iyo qoyskiisu waxay qaateen caadooyinka Christmas-ka ee Maraykanka, sida bixinta hadiyado iyo qurxinta guriga. Laakiin weli ma lumin dhinaca ruuxiga ah ee fasaxa, iyo sidoo kale ka qayb galay adeega kaniisadda. “Sannadaha cusubi sidoo kale waxay ahayd fasax ruuxi ah oo Kongo ah, tan iyo markii aan rumaysanahay in aanaan ka gudbi lahayn sannadka oo dhan la'aanteed gargaarka Ilaah,\" Makoko aya sharraxay. \"Habeenka sanadka cusub waxaan aadi jirnay kaniisadda ilaa saqda dhexe, dib u milicsanaana sanadkii tagay, waxaana isu dhiibi jirnay gacanta Ilaah sanadka soo socda. Maalintii xigtayna waxa aanu ururin jirnay xubnaha qoyska iyo qaraabada oo aanu si wada jir ah u damaashaadi jirnay.

Waxaan ku soo koray tuulo fog oo ku taal Kongo, waxaana dhif ah inaan hilibka cunin. Laakiin inta lagu guda jiro sanadka cusub, sac aya la dili jiray oo tuulada oo dhan way isu iman jirtay oo way qaybsan jirtay hilibka oo way dabaaldegi jirtay. Mid ka mid ah suxuunta caadiga ah ee Congolese-ka ee hilibka laga cuno sanadka cusub waxa uu ahaa Fufu, kaas oo lagu qaso biyaha daqiiqda cassava ilaa ay ka noqoto koollo qaro weyn.

“Waxaan jeclahay kala duwanaanshaha dhaqamada halkan Ameerika, oo aan arko sida ay u dhexgalaan. Tusaale ahaan, waxaan jeclahay inaad la kulanto xubnaha qoyska Thanksgiving oo aad ka fikirto waxyaabaha aad ku mahadsantahay.”

Tarlan Ahmadov oo ka yimid Azerbaijan

Asal ahaan ka yimid Azerbaijan, Tarlan Ahmadov wuxuu u guuray Portland 2004tii halkaas oo uu hadda ka shaqeeya Isku Duwaha Qaxootiga Gobolka ee Xafiiska Adeegyada Qaxootiga Maine. “Ku soo laabashada Azerbaijan December 31-keeda waxaan dhab ahaantii u dabaaldegay laba fasax - Sannadaha Cusub iyo Maalinta Midnimada Asarbayjaan ee Adduunka,\" Ahmadov aya yidhi. Maalinta Wadajirka Asarbayjaaniga Adduunka waa maalin fasax dadweyne oo lagu xusayo midnimada caalamiga ah iyo midnimada Asarbayjaan. Waxaa dhiirrigeliyay burburintii isbaarooyinkii u dhexeeyay Asarbayjaan iyo Iran bishii Disembar 1989 taas ogolaatay dib u midaynta qoysaska Azeri. “Waa maalin qoyska oo dhan, oo ay ku jiraan qaraabada, asxaabta, iyo derisku isu yimaada si ay wax u cunaan, u dheelaan, u heesaan, oo hadiyado u kala qaataan hadiyaso.” Cunto-dhaqameedka aasaasiga ah ee loo diyaariyey munaasabadda waa saaxanka bariska ee loo yaqaan plov (sidoo kale pilaf ama pilau), kaas oo ay jiraan in ka badan 40 kala duwanaansho ah Azerbaijan. In kasta oo plov uu asal ahaan ka soo jeedo gobollo badan oo Aasiya ah, noocyo kala duwan, sida Shah Plov, oo inta badan loo adeego ciidaha, aya u gaar ah Azerbaijan. Cuntooyinka kale ee dhaqameed ee miiska fasaxa jooga waa keega sida pakhlava iyo shekerbura.

Intii caruurnimadaydii Midowga Soofiyeeti,

Iiendelea kutoka ukurasa 21

kama vile kutoa zawadi na kupamba nyumba. Lakini bado hawapotezi kipengele cha kiroho cha likizo, na kuhudhuria huduma ya kanisa pia.

“Sherehe ya Mwaka Mpya pia ilikuwa likizo ya kiroho nchini Kongo, kwa kuwa tunaamini kwamba hatukuweza kuumaliza mwaka bila msaada wa Mungu,” Makoko alieleza. “Katika Mkasha wa Mwaka Mpya tungeenda kanisani hadi usiku wa manane, kutafakari mwaka uliopita, na kujikabidhi kwa mkono wa Mungu kwa mwaka ujao. Na siku iliyofuata tungekusanya wanafamilia na jamaa na kusherehekea pamoja. Nililelewa katika kijiji cha mbali huko Kongo, na mara chache hatukula nyama. Lakini wakati wa Mwaka Mpya, ng’ombe aliuawa na kijiji kizima kilikusanyika na kushiriki nyama hiyo na kusherehekea.” Mojawapo ya sahani kuu za jadi za Kongo zinazotumiwa pamoja na nyama wakati wa Mwaka Mpya ilikuwa Fufu, ambayo hutengenezwa kwa kuchanganya maji na unga wa muhogo hadi kuunda unga mzito.

“Ninafurahia utofauti wa tamaduni hapa Marekani, na kuona jinsi zinavyochanganyika. Kwa mfano, ninapenda ukweli kwamba unakutana na wanafamilia kwenye Siku ya Shukrani na kutafakari mambo unayoshukuru.”

Tarlan Ahmadov kutoka Azerbaijan

Aliyekuwa hapo awali mkazi wa Azabajani, Tarlan Ahmadov alihamia Portland mwaka wa 2004 ambapo kwa sasa anafanya kazi kama Mratibu wa Jimbo la Wakimbizi katika Ofisi ya Huduma za Wakimbizi ya Maine. “Tumerudi Azabajani mnamo Desemba 31 tunasherehekea likizo mbili - Mwaka Mpya na Siku ya Mshikamano wa Waazabajani Ulimwenguni,” Ahmadov alisema. Siku ya Mshikamano wa Waazabajani Duniani ni sikukuu ya umma nchini Azabajani inayoadhimisha mshikamano wa kimataifa na umoja wa Waazabajani. Ilichochewa na kubomolewa kwa viziizi vya mpaka kati ya Azabajani na Iran mnamo Desemba 1989 kuruhusu kuunganishwa kwa familia za Azeri. “Ni siku ambayo familia nzima, kutia ndani watu wa ukoo, marafiki, na majirani hukutana pamoja kula, kucheza, kuimba, na kubadilishana zawadi.” Mlo mkuu wa kitamaduni unaotayarishwa kwa ajili ya tukio hilo ni wali unaoitwa plov (pia pilau au pilau), ambao kuna tofauti zaidi ya 40 nchini Azabajani. Ingawa plov ni ya kisasi katika maeneo mengi ya Asia, baadhi ya aina, kama vile Shah Plov, ambayo hutumiwa sana kwa likizo, ni ya kipekee kwa Azabajani. Vyakula vingine vya kitamaduni vilivyopo kwenye meza ya likizo ni keki kama pakhlava na shekerbura.

“Nilipokuwa bado mdogo nikiwa katika nchi za Umoja wa Kisovietii, wote tulifurahia sana Mwaka Mpya kwa sababu tungepokea zawadi na kwenda kwenye sherehe ya watoto ya Mwaka Mpya kwenye vituo vya kitamaduni,” Ahmadov alitafakari. “Hapo wangukuwa na maonyesho ya watoto walio na watu waliovalia kama wahusika kutoka hadithi za hadithi kama Father Frost na Snow Maiden. Ninakumbuka haswa kwamba kila wakati tulipata tangerines na machungwa kwenye hafla hii ambayo ilikuwa maalum sana kwa sababu ilikuwa ngumu kupata huko USSR. Kulikuwa na hisia za jamii kila mara - sio tu familia yako, lakini marafiki na majirani wako wote wangukusanyika pamoja. Tulikuwa na familia kubwa kwani mama yangu alikuwa na kaka saba na wote na familia zao wangukusanyika kwa sherehe. Nakumbuka sote tuli-furahi hatimaye kufungua hifadhi zote kama compote, kachumbari na jamu ambazo tulikuwa tumetayarisha wakati wa kiangazi.”

ibikurikira ipaji 21

uko twizihizaga iyi minsi mikuru mu mucu wacu.”

Umwanditsi wa Amjambo Africa Georges Budagu Makoko

yavukiye anakurira muri Repbulika Iharanira Demokarasi ya Congo, yimukira mu Rwanda nyuma ya Jenoside yakorewe Abatutsi mu 1994. Mu 2002, Makoko n’umuryango we bimukiye muri Portland. “Mu gihugu cyanjye ntabwo twagiraga iminsi mikuru y’ibiruhuko nka Thanksgiving na Halloween. Umunsi wonyine nizihizaga ni Noheli n’umwaka mushya,” Makoko agira ati “Noheli yizihizwaga cyane mu rwego rw’imyemerere kurusha uko bimeze ino muri Amerika. Cyabaga ari igihe cyo kwibuka ivuka rya Yesu ndetse no kwizihiza dufatanyije n’abandi mu rusengero. Nta mpano zo gutanga zabaga zihari nk’ino, byabaga ari umunsi muto wo kwizihiza mu by’imyemerere. Bigatandkana n’umwaka mushya aho wabaga ari umunsi wo guhura n’inshuti n’imiryango mugateka, mugasangira mbese mukawizihiza mufatanyije.”

Nyuma yo kwimukira muri Amerika, Makoko n’umuryango we bafashe umuco wo kwizihiza Noheli byo muri Amerika, nko gutanga impano no gutaka inzu. Gusa ntibataye n’igisobanuro cy’uyu munsi mu by’umwuka kuko kuri uyu munsi bitabira amasengesho ku rusengero.

Makoko asobanura ati “Umwaka mushya wabaga ari umunsi w’ikiruhuko ukomeye mu by’umwuka muri Congo, kuko twizera ko tutari kubasha kugera ku mpera z’umwaka iyo hataba ubufasha bw’Imana”, akomeza agira ati “Buri bucyere ari umwaka mushya, twajyaga kurusengero kugeza saa sita z’ijoro, dutekereza ku mwaka urangiye ari nako dushyira mu biganza by’Imana umwaka ugiye gutangira. Umunsi ukurikiyeho, cyabaga ari igihe cyo guhura n’imiryango tukizihiza twese hamwe. Nakuriye mu cyaro muri Congo, aho twaryaga inyama gake cyane. Gusa iyo habaga ari umunsi wo kwizihiza umwaka mushya, habagwaga inka maze umudugudu wose ukaza ugasangira inyama z’umunsi mukuru”. Imwe mu ndyo zo mu mucu w’abatuye Congo baryaga kuri bonane bwari ubugali, butekwa havangwa ifu y’imyumbati namazi ashyushye kugeza bikoze umutsima.

Agira ati “Nkunda imico itandukanye iboneka hano muri Amerika, no kubona uburyo igenda ihuzwa. Urugero, ni uburyo duhura n’imiryango kuri Thanksgiving tugatekereza ku bintu twishimira.”

Tarlan Ahmadov ukomoka Azerbaijan

Tarlan Ahmadov ukomoka muri Azerbaijan, yimukiye muri Portland mu 2004 aho kuri ubu akora nk’umuhuzabikorwa mu by’impunzi muri leta ya Maine, mu biro bishinzwe impunzi muri iyi leta. Agira ati “Muri Azerbaijan tariki 31 z’ukwa 12 twizihiza iminsi mikuru ibiri. Umwaka mushya n’umunsi w’ubumwe bw’Abanya-Azerbaijan”. Ahmadov avuga kuri uyu munsi mpuzamahanga w’ubumwe bw’Abanya – Azerbaijan ndetse n’ugushyirahamwe kwabo.

Ni umunsi washingiye ku isenywa ry’umupaka hagati ya Azerbaijan na Iran mu kwa 12 k’umwaka w’1989, bigatuma imiryango y’abanya Azeri yongera kuba imwe.

Ahmadov agira ati “ni umunsi umuryango wose, harimo n’inshuti n’abaturanyi bahura bagasangira, bakabyina, bakaririmba bakanahana impano”. Kuri uyu munsi hatekwa indyo za gakondo cyane cyane iyitwa Plov bakwe bita Pilau; iyi kandi ikaba irimo amoko agera kuri 40 muri Azerbaijan. N’ubwo Plov ari rusange mu bice byinshi

Continuación de la página 21

O editor da Amjambo Africa **Georges**

Budagu Makoko nasceu e cresceu na República Democrática do Congo e mudou-se para o Ruanda após o Genocídio contra os Tutsi em 1994. Em 2002, Makoko e a sua família emigraram para Portland. “No meu país natal não tínhamos férias como o Dia de Ação de Graças ou o Halloween. Os únicos feriados que celebri foram o Natal e o Ano Novo”, disse Makoko. “O Natal era mais espiritual do que o comum na América. Era a hora de recordar o nascimento de Jesus e celebrar com outras pessoas na igreja. Não havia presente como aqui, era apenas uma pequena celebração espiritual. Em contraste, o Ano Novo foi o momento em que se encontraram com os vossos amigos e família, cozinharam, comeram e celebraram juntos.”

No entanto, depois de se mudar para os Estados Unidos, Makoko e a sua família adotaram tradições americanas de Natal, como dar presentes e decorar a casa. Mas eles ainda não perdem o aspeto espiritual do feriado e vão ao serviço da igreja também.

“O Ano Novo também foi um feriado espiritual no Congo, pois acreditamos que não teríamos conseguido passar o ano sem a ajuda de Deus”, explicou Makoko. “Na véspera de Ano Novo iríamos à igreja até à meia-noite, refletiríamos sobre o ano passado, e comprometemo-nos com a mão de Deus para o próximo ano. E no dia seguinte reunimos familiares e parentes e festejamos juntos. Cresci numa aldeia remota no Congo, e raramente comíamos carne. Mas durante o Ano Novo, uma vaca seria morta e toda a aldeia se juntava e partilhava a carne e celebrava.” Um dos pratos tradicionais congolese agrafados ao lado da carne no Ano Novo foi Fufu, que é feito misturando água com farinha de mandioca até formar uma pasta espessa.

“Adoro a diversidade de culturas aqui na América e vejo como se misturam. Por exemplo, adoro o facto de te encontrares com familiares no Dia de Ação de Graças e refletires sobre coisas pelas quais estás grato.”

Tarlan Ahmadov do Azerbaijão

Natural do Azerbaijão, Tarlan Ahmadov mudou-se para Portland em 2004, onde atualmente trabalha como Coordenador estatal de Refugiados no Escritório de Serviços de Refugiados do Maine. “De volta ao Azerbaijão a 31 de dezembro celebramos duas férias - o Ano Novo e o Dia Mundial da Solidariedade do Azerbaijão”, disse Ahmadov. O Dia Mundial da Solidariedade do Azerbaijão é feriado no Azerbaijão comemorando a solidariedade e unidade globais do Azerbaijão. Foi motivado pela demolição das barreiras fronteiriças entre o Azerbaijão e o Irão em dezembro de 1989, permitindo a reunificação das famílias azeris. “É um dia em que toda a família, incluindo parentes, amigos e vizinhos se reúnem para comer, dançar, cantar e trocar presentes.” A refeição tradicional agrafada preparada para a ocasião é o prato de arroz chamado plov (também pilaf ou pilau), dos quais existem mais de 40 variações no Azerbaijão. Embora plov seja indígena de muitas regiões da Ásia, algumas variedades, como o Shah Plov, que é mais frequentemente servido para férias, são únicas no Azerbaijão. Outros alimentos tradicionais presentes na mesa de férias são pastelaria como pakhlava e shekerbura.

“Durante a minha infância na União Soviética, estávamos todos muito entusiasmados com o Ano Novo porque íamos receber presentes e ir à celebração do Ano Novo in-

gather together. We had a huge family as my mother had seven siblings, and all of them and their families would come together for celebration. I remember we were all excited to finally open all the preserves like compotes, pickles, and jams that we had prepared during summer.

"It didn't snow very much in Azerbaijan, but we always hoped for snow for New Year's. When it came, we'd go out on the morning of January 1st to have snowball fights and build snowmen. Now we've been living in Maine for 18 years and it snows a lot. And yet, every time it snows, I still feel the joy of the New Year spirit."

Belyse Ndayikunda

Amjambo Africa Board Member Belyse Ndayikunda was



born and raised in Burundi before moving to Portland in 2012. She graduated from high school in Maine, then went on to get a bachelor's degree in math from the University of Southern Maine (USM). She's currently pursuing a master's degree in applied statistics at USM and working in the finance department of Unum. "The most important holidays in my culture are Christmas and New Year's," Ndayikunda said. "The Burundi population is mostly Catholic, so Christmas is very much a faith-based holiday where the whole family goes to church, even the people who normally don't at other times of the year. Relatives often travel to different cities and villages to gather and celebrate. Often many other faith-based celebrations take place alongside Christmas, such as baptisms and communions. We have Christmas trees and some families exchange presents – depending on their financial capabilities – but these things are not as common as in the U.S. However, a tradition that is very common is buying new clothes, particularly for the children."

Ndayikunda explained that eating meat is a luxury for most people. On ordinary days, Burundian people normally eat meals made from beans, rice, and flour. But for the holiday season, even the poorest families manage to have some sort of meat at the Christmas table. Accompanying the meat are usually pilau, an aromatic rice dish, and sombe, a dish made from boiled, pounded cassava leaves.

"I remember on Christmas day we would all wake up very early in the morning, and we would get ready by putting on all the new clothes we received for Christmas, and the whole family would go to church. Afterwards, we would go home and start getting ready for lunch. Christmas lunch was very special. We would all help prepare it together; some of us would be helping Mom with cooking, others would be cleaning up. And our extended families – our aunts, uncles, cousins – would all come over to celebrate. What I remember most is just the whole joyful energy that was always present."

Ghomri Rostampour

Ghomri Rostampour moved from Iran to the United States with her family in 1999. After earning a bachelor's degree from the University of Southern Maine in computer technology, she worked in a public school information technology (IT) department for 16 years in Portland. Currently,

Suite de la page 22

jan et l'Iran en décembre 1989, permettant la réunification des familles azéries. "C'est un jour où toute la famille, y compris les parents, les amis et les voisins se réunissent pour manger, danser, chanter et échanger des cadeaux." Le repas traditionnel classique préparé pour l'occasion est le plat de riz appelé plov (également pilaf ou pilau), dont il existe plus de 40 variantes en Azerbaïdjan. Bien que le plov soit originaire de nombreuses régions d'Asie, certaines variétés, comme le Shah Plov, qui est le plus souvent servi pour les fêtes, sont uniques à l'Azerbaïdjan. Les autres aliments traditionnels présents à la table des fêtes sont des pâtisseries comme le pakhlava et le shekerbura.

"Pendant mon enfance en Union soviétique, nous étions tous très excités par le Nouvel An car nous recevions des cadeaux et allions à la célébration du Nouvel An pour les enfants dans les centres culturels", se souvient Ahmadov. "On y présentait des spectacles pour enfants avec des personnes déguisées en personnages de contes de fées, comme le Père Noël et la Vierge des neiges. Je me souviens particulièrement que nous recevions toujours des mandarines et des oranges lors de cet événement, ce qui était très spécial car elles étaient difficiles à trouver en URSS. Il y avait toujours un sentiment de communauté - non seulement votre famille, mais aussi vos amis et voisins se réunissaient tous ensemble. Nous avions une famille nombreuse, ma mère avait sept frères et sœurs et tous, avec leurs familles, se réunissaient pour fêter l'événement. Je me souviens que nous étions tous excités d'ouvrir enfin toutes les conserves comme les compotes, les cornichons et les confitures que nous avions préparés pendant l'été."

"Il ne neigeait pas beaucoup en Azerbaïdjan, mais nous espérions toujours avoir de la neige pour le Nouvel An. Quand elle arrivait, nous sortions le matin du 1er janvier pour faire des batailles de boules de neige et construire des bonhommes de neige. Maintenant, nous vivons dans le Maine depuis 18 ans et il neige beaucoup. Et pourtant, chaque fois qu'il neige, je ressens toujours la joie de l'esprit du Nouvel An."

Belyse Ndayikunda, du Burundi

Membre du conseil d'administration d'Amjambo Africa, Belyse Ndayikunda est née et a grandi au Burundi avant de s'installer à Portland, dans le Maine, en 2012. Elle a passé son baccalauréat dans le Maine, puis a obtenu une licence en Mathématiques à l'Université du Maine du Sud (USM). Elle poursuit actuellement un master en Statistiques Appliquées à USM et travaille dans le département des finances d'Unum. "Les fêtes les plus importantes dans ma culture sont Noël et le Nouvel An", a déclaré Ndayikunda. "La population burundaise est majoritairement catholique, donc Noël est une fête religieuse où toute la famille va à l'église, même les personnes qui n'y vont pas à d'autres moments de l'année. Les membres de la famille se déplacent souvent dans différentes villes et villages pour se réunir et faire la fête. Souvent, de nombreuses autres célébrations confessionnelles ont lieu parallèlement à Noël, comme les baptêmes et les communions. Nous avons des sapins de Noël et certaines familles échangent des cadeaux - en fonction de leurs capacités financières - mais ces choses ne sont pas aussi courantes qu'aux États-Unis. Cependant, une tradition très courante est l'achat de nouveaux vêtements, en particulier pour les enfants."

Ndayikunda explique que manger de la viande est un luxe pour la plupart des gens. Les jours ordinaires, les Burundais mangent normalement des repas à base de haricots, de riz et de farine. Mais pour les fêtes de fin d'année, même les familles les plus pauvres parviennent à avoir une sorte de viande à la table de Noël. La viande est généralement accompagnée de pilau, un plat de riz aromatique, et de sombe, un plat à base de feuilles de manioc bouillies et pilées.

"Je me souviens que le jour de Noël, nous nous réveillions tous très tôt le matin, et nous nous préparions en mettant tous les nouveaux vêtements que nous avions reçus pour Noël, et toute la famille allait à l'église. Ensuite, nous rentrions à la maison et commençons à nous préparer pour le déjeuner. Le déjeuner de Noël était très spécial. Nous aidions tous à le préparer ensemble - certains aidaient maman à cuisiner, d'autres à nettoyer. Et nos familles - nos tantes, nos oncles, nos cousins - venaient tous pour fêter ça. Ce dont je me souviens le plus, c'est de l'énergie joyeuse qui était toujours présente."

Ghomri Rostampour, d'Iran

Ghomri Rostampour a quitté l'Iran pour s'installer aux États-Unis avec sa famille en 1999. Après avoir obtenu une licence en Informatique à l'Université du Maine du Sud, elle a travaillé dans le service informatique d'une école publique

Continuado a partir da página 22

bailar, cantar e intercambiar regalos". La comida tradicional básica preparada para la ocasión es el plato de arroz llamado plov (también pilaf o pilau), del cual hay más de 40 variaciones en Azerbaiyán. Aunque el plov es autóctono de muchas regiones de Asia, algunas variedades, como el Shah Plov, que se sirve con más frecuencia durante las vacaciones, son exclusivas de Azerbaiyán. Otros alimentos tradicionales presentes en la mesa navideña son los pasteles como pakhlava y shekerbura.

"Durante mi infancia en la Unión Soviética, todos estábamos muy emocionados por el Año Nuevo porque recibíamos regalos e íbamos a la celebración infantil del Año Nuevo en los centros culturales", reflexionó Ahmadov. "Allí tendrían espectáculos para niños con personas disfrazadas de personajes de cuentos de hadas como "El padre escaracha" (Father Frost) y "la doncella de nieve" (Snow Maiden). Recuerdo particularmente que siempre conseguimos mandarinas y naranjas en este evento que fue muy especial porque eran difíciles de encontrar en la URSS. Siempre había un sentimiento de comunidad, no solo tu familia, sino también tus amigos y vecinos, todos se reunían. Teníamos una gran familia ya que mi madre tenía siete hermanos y todos ellos y sus familias se reunían para celebrar. Recuerdo que todos estábamos emocionados de poder abrir finalmente todas las conservas como compotas, encurtidos y mermeladas que habíamos preparado durante el verano."

"No nevaba mucho en Azerbaiyán, pero siempre deseábamos nieve para el Año Nuevo. Cuando llegaba, saldríamos la mañana del primero de enero para tener peleas de bolas de nieve y construir muñecos de nieve. Ahora hemos vivido en Maine durante 18 años y nieva mucho. Y, sin embargo, cada vez que nieva, sigo sintiendo la alegría del espíritu de Año Nuevo".

Belyse Ndayikunda de Burundi

Belyse Ndayikunda, miembro de la junta directiva de Amjambo África, nació y se crió en Burundi antes de mudarse a Portland, Maine en 2012. Se graduó de la escuela secundaria en Maine y luego obtuvo una licenciatura en Matemáticas en la Universidad del Sur de Maine (USM). Actualmente está cursando una maestría en Estadística Aplicada en la USM y trabaja en el departamento de finanzas de Unum. "Las festividades más importantes en mi cultura son Navidad y Año Nuevo", dijo Ndayikunda. "La población de Burundi es mayoritariamente católica, por lo que la Navidad es una festividad basada en la fe donde toda la familia va a la iglesia, incluso las personas que normalmente no lo hacen en otras épocas del año. Los familiares a menudo viajan a diferentes ciudades y pueblos para reunirse y celebrar. A menudo, muchas otras celebraciones basadas en la fe tienen lugar junto con la Navidad, como bautizos y comuniones. Tenemos árboles de Navidad y algunas familias intercambian regalos, dependiendo de su capacidad financiera, pero estas cosas no son tan comunes como en los Estados Unidos. Sin embargo, una tradición que es muy común es comprar ropa nueva, particularmente para los niños."

Ndayikunda explicó que comer carne es un lujo para la mayoría de las personas. En los días normales, los burundeses normalmente comen comidas hechas con frijoles, arroz y harina. Pero para la temporada navideña, incluso las familias más pobres logran tener algún tipo de carne en la mesa navideña. La carne suele acompañar al pilau, un plato de arroz aromático, y al sombe, un plato elaborado con hojas de yuca hervidas y machacadas.

"Recuerdo que el día de Navidad todos nos despertábamos muy temprano en la mañana, nos preparábamos poniéndonos toda la ropa nueva que recibimos para Navidad, y toda la familia iba a la iglesia. Luego, íbamos a casa y comenzábamos a prepararnos para el almuerzo. El almuerzo de Navidad fue muy especial. Todos ayudaríamos a prepararlo juntos: algunos ayudaríamos a mamá a cocinar, otros a limpiar. Y nuestras familias extendidas - nuestras tías, tíos, primos - todos vendrían a celebrar. Lo que más recuerdo es toda la energía alegre que siempre estuvo presente".

Ghomri Rostampour de Irán

Ghomri Rostampour se mudó de Irán a los Estados Unidos con su familia en 1999. Después de obtener una licenciatura de la Universidad del Sur de Maine en Tecnología Informática, trabajó en el departamento de TI de una escuela pública durante 16 años en Portland. Actualmente, está cursando una maestría en Relaciones Internacionales de Harvard.

"En mi cultura, a principios del otoño tenemos una gran celebración de la temporada de cosecha llamada Mehregan", dijo Rostampour. Mehregan es un antiguo festival persa con

Laga sii waday bogga 23

dhammaanteen aad ayaan ugu faraxsanayn sannadaha cusub sababtoo ah waxaan helnaa hadiyado waxaan aadi doonaa dabaaldeg caruurta ee sannadaha cusub ee xarumaha dhaqanka.)" Ahmadov ayaa muujiyay. "Halkaas waxay ku muujin lahaayeen carruurta leh dadka u labisan sida jilayaasha sheekooyinka sheeko-xariirada sida Aabaha Frost iyo Snow Maiden.

Waxaan si gaar ah u xusuusta in aan mar walba munaasabada ka heli jirny tangerines iyo liin taas oo ahayd mid gaar ah sababtoo ah way adkeyd in laga helo USSR. Had iyo jeer waxa jiray dareen bulsho - ma aha qoyskaaga oo keliya, laakiin saxaabada iyo deriskaaga ayaa dhammaantood wada kulmi doona. Waxaan leenahay qoys aad u badan maadaama hooyaday ay lahayd todoba caruur ah oo walaalo ah oo dhamaantood iyo qoysaskooduba waxay isugu iman jireen dabaaldeg.

Waxaan xasuustaa inaan dhammaanteen ku faraxsanayn inaan ugu dambayntii furno dhammaan kaydinta sida compotes, pickles, iyo saxmamada aan diyaarinay xilliga xaaga." Markii ay timaado, waxaan bixi doonaa subaxda Janaayo 1-deeda si aan ula dagaalanno kubbadda barafka oo aan u dhisno dad baraf ah. Hadda waxaan ku noolnahay Maine 18 sano oo baraf aad u badan. Haddana, mar kasta oo uu baraf da'o, waxaan weli dareemayaa farxadda ruuxa sannadka cusub."

Belyse Ndagukunda oo u dhalatay Burundi

Amjambo Africa Board Xubin ka ah Belyse Ndayikunda waxa ay ku dhalatay kuna kortay Burundi ka hor inta aanay u wareegin Portland, Maine 2012. Dugsiga sare waxa ay kaga baxday Maine, ka dibna waxa ay shahaadada koowaad ee jaamacadda ka qaadatay Jaamacada Koonfurta Maine ee Xisaabta. (USM). Waxay hadda ku sii wadataa shaadada mastarka ee Tirakoobka Codsiyada ee USM waxayna ka shaqeeya waaxda maaliyadda ee Unum.

Ubaxyada ugu muhiimsan ee dhaqanka ga waa Christmas-ka iyo sanadka cusub, "ayuu yiri Ndayikunda. "Dadka Burundi waxay u badan yihiin Catholic, sidaa darteed Christmas-ka waa fasax ku saleysan caqiidada halkaas oo qoyska oo dhan ay aadaan kaniisad, xitaa dadka aan caadi ahayn xilliyada kale ee sanadka. Qaraabada aaya inta badan u safra magaalooyinka iyo tuulooyinka kala duwan si ay isugu soo baxaan oo ay u damaashaad tagaan.

Inta badan dabaaldeg kale oo badan oo ku salaysan caqiidada ayaa ka raaca kirismaska, sida baabtiisyada iyo wadaga. Waxaan leenahay geedo kirismaska ah qoysaska qaarna waxay isweydaarsadaan hadiyado - waxay kuxirantahay awoodooda dhaqaale - laakiin waxyaalahani maaha kuwo caanka ah Maraykanka. Sikastaba ha ahaatee caado aad u caan ah ayaa iibisa dhar cusub, gaar ahaan caruurta."

Ndayikunda waxa uu sharaxay in cunista hilibka ay dadka intooda badan raaxo u tahay. Maalmaha caadiga ah, dadka Burundi waxay caadiyan cunaan cuntooyinka laga sameeyay digirta, bariiska, iyo daqiiqda . Laakiin xilliga fasaxa, xitaa qoysaska ugu saboolsan waxay maareeyaan in ay haystaan nooc ka mid ah hilibka miiska Christmas-ka. Hilibka waxaa la socda sida caadiga ah pilau, saxan bariis ah oo caraf udgoon, iyo sombe, saxan laga sameeyay caleemo cassava ah oo la karkariyey. Waxaan xusuustaa maalinta Kirismaska, dhammaanteen waxaan toosin jirnay aroortii hore, waxaan isku diyaarinta jirnay in aan xidho dhamaan dharkii cusbaa ee looga soo qaaday kirismaska, qoyska oo dhamina waxa ay aadi jireen kaniisad. Ka dib, waxaan aadi jirnay guriga oo waxaan bilaabi jirnay diyaarinta qadada. Qadada Christmas-ka

Ku sii soconaya bogga 27**Iiendelea kutoka ukurasa 23**

" Nchini Azerbaijani hakukuwa na theluji sana lakini kila wakati tulitaraajia theluji kwa



Ghomri Rostampour, Ekhlas Ahmed, and Talran Ahmadov.

Mwaka Mpya. Ilipofika, tungetoka asubuhi ya Januari 1 ili kupigana na mpira wa theluji na kujenga watu wa theluji. Sasa tumekuwa tukiishi Maine kwa miaka 18 na theluji inanyesha sana. Na bado, kila wakati theluji inapoanguka, bado nahisi furaha ya roho ya Mwaka Mpya.

Belyse Ndayikunda kutoka Burundi

Belyse Ndayikunda ni mwanamemba wa Bodi ya Amjambo Africa aliyezaliwa na kukulia Burundi kabla ya kuhamia Portland, Maine mwaka wa 2012. Alihitimu shule ya upili huko Maine, kisha akaendelea kupata shahada ya kwanza katika Hisabati kutoka Chuo Kikuu cha Southern Maine (USM). Kwa sasa anafuata shahada ya uzamili katika Takwimu Zilizotumika huko USM na anafanya kazi katika idara ya fedha ya Unum. "Sikukuu muhimu zaidi katika utamaduni wangu ni Krismasi na Mwaka Mpya," Ndayikunda alisema. "Wakazi wa Burundi wengi wao ni Wakatoliki, kwa hivyo Krismasi ni sikukuu ya kidini ambapo familia nzima huenda kanisani, hata watu ambao kwa kawaida hawaendi nyakati zingine za mwaka. Jamaa mara nyingi husafiri katika miji na vijiji tofauti kuku-sanyika na kusherehekea. Mara nyingi sherehe nyingine nyingi za kidini hufanyika pamoja na Krismasi, kama vile ubatizo na ushirika. Tuna miti ya Krismasi na baadhi ya familia hubadilishana zawadi-kulingana na uwezo wao wa kifedha - lakini mambo haya si ya kawaida kama ilivyo Marekani. Hata hivyo, utamaduni ambao umeenea sana ni kununua nguo mpya, hasa za watoto."

Kwa watu wengi nchini Burundi kula nyama ni anasa kama alivyoongea Ndayikunda . Katika siku za kawaida, watu wa Burundi kwa kawaida hula milo iliyotengenezwa kwa maharagwe, wali, na unga. Lakini kwa msimu wa likizo, hata familia maskini zaidi zinaweza kuwa na aina fulani ya nyama kwenye meza ya Krismasi. Kwa kawaida nyama hiyo huandamana na pilau, sahani ya wali yenye harufu nzuri, na sombe, sahani iliyotengenezwa kwa majani ya muhogo yaliyochemshwa na kusaga.

"Ninakumbuka siku ya Krismasi sote tulikuwa tunaamka asubuhi sana, na tulikuwa tukijitayarisha kwa kuvaa nguo zote mpya tulizopokea kwa ajili ya Krismasi, na familia nzima ingeenda kanisani. Baadaye, tungeenda nyumbani na kuanza kujiandaa kwa chakula cha mchana. Chakula cha mchana cha Krismasi kilikuwa maalum sana. Sote tungesaidia kuitayarisha pamoja - baadhi yetu tungekuwa tukimsaidia mama kupika, wengine tungesafisha. Na familia zetu kubwa - shangazi, wajomba, binamu zetu - wote wangekuja kusherehekea. Nina-chokumbuka zaidi ni nguvu zote za furaha ambazo zilikuwepo kila wakati.

Ghomri Rostampour kutoka Iran

Mnamo mwaka wa 1999, Ghomri Rostam-

Inaendelea kwenye ukurasa 27**ibikurikira ipaji 23**

bya Asiya, amwe mu moko yayo nka Shah Plov ikunze kugaburwa ku minsi mikuru ni umwihariko w'abanya Azerbaijan. Ibindi biryo bigaragara kumeza mu bihe by'ibiruhuko ni imigati izwi nka Pakhlava na Shekerbura.

Ahmadov aribuka ati "mu bwana bwanjye muri leta zunze ubumwe z'Abasoviyete, twese twabaga twishimiye umwaka mushya kuko twahabwaga impano ndetse tukajya mu birori by'abana by'umwaka mushya mu gice cyahariwe imyidagaduro."

Habaga hari imikino y'abana hari n'abantu bambaye nk'abamenyekanye mu migani yak era nka Father Frost (ni nka santa claus bensi bamenyereye) ndetse na Snow Maiden. Ku bwanjye ndibuka ko baduhaga amacunga yo mu bwoko bwa tangerines muri uyu muni mukururu, bikaba bidasanzwe kuko bitorohaga kuhabona uru rubuto muri USSR. Twabaga twiyumva nk'abantu bari hamwe, Atari umuryango wacu gusa, kuko habaga hari n'inshuti n'abaturanyi. Twari du-fite umuryango munini kuko mama afite abavandimwe barindwi, bese hamwe n'imiryango yabo bakaba barazaga tukifantanya. Ndibuka uburyo twese twabaga twishimiye ubwo twabaga tugiye gufungura ibyo kurya bitandukanye nk'imbuto zateguwe neza mu mpeshyi."

Agira ati "Ntabwo urubura rwakundaga kugwa muri Azerbaijan gusa akenshi ku mwaka mushya twabaga twizeye ko ruri bugwe. Iyo byabaga, tariki ya 1 z'ukwa mbere twabyukaga tujya guterana udupira twakoraga mu rubura no gukora ibikinisho by'abantu bakoze mu rubura. Ubu tumaze imyaka 18 muri Maine aho urubura rugwa cyane. Gusa ntibimbuza ko uko urubura ruguye nibuka ibyishimo nagiraga kuri bonane nkiri umwana".

Belyse Ndayikunda ukomoka I Burundi

Belyse Ndayikunda uri mu nama nnyanama ya Amjambo Africa, yavukiye anakurira I Burundi mbere yo kwimukira muri Portland, Maine mu 2012. Yarangirije amashuri ye yisumbuye muri Maine, maze akomeza kwiga imibare muri University of Southern Maine (USM) aho yakuye impamyabumenyi y'ikiciro cya kabiri cya Kaminuza mu mibare. Kuri ubu ari kwiga ikiciro cya gatatu cya Kaminuza mu Applied Statistic muri iyi kaminuza ya USM, ari nako akora gashami gashinzwe ubukungu mu kigo unum. Agira ati "iminsi mikuru ibi ikomeye mu muco wacu ni Noheli na bonane".

Arasobanura ati "abatuye u Burundi benshi ni Abagatolika. Bivuze ko Noheli ahanini yizihizwa mu by'umwaka abantu bose bagize umuryango bajya mu misa, harimo n'abadasanzwe bajyayo mu bindi bihe by'umwaka. Akenshi abantu bafata ingendo bakajya mu mijyi itandukanye n'ibyaro kugirango bahure n'ababo ubundi bakizihirwa. Akenshi, indi mihango y'idini itandukanye nka za batisimu no guhazwa ikorwa kuri Noheli. Haba hari ibiti bya Noheli, imiryango imwe n'imwe ikanahana impano bitewe n'uburyo bifite, gusa ibyo ntabwo bibaho cyane nk'uko bimeze muri Amerika. Cyakora ikintu gikorwa cyane ni ukugura imyenda mishya cyane cyane kuyigurira abana".

Ndayikunda asobanura ko kurya inyama byabaga ari ukwishimisha ku bantu benshi. Ku minsi isanzwe, Abarundi barya indyo igizwe n'ibishyimbo, umuceri n'ubugali. Gusa mu gihe cy'iminsi mikuru, imiryango yose na yayindi ikennye cyane iragerageza ikabona inyama ku ifunguro bari bufate kuri Noheli. Ikindi baherekereshaga inyama twavuga nk'ipilau, isombe n'ibindi.

komereza ku ipaji 27**Continuación de la página 23**

fantil nos centros culturais", refletiu Ahmadov. "Lá teriam mostrado para crianças com pessoas vestidas como personagens de contos de fadas como o Padre Frost e a Donzela da Neve. Lembro-me particularmente que sempre tivemos tangerinas e laranjas neste evento que foi muito especial porque eram difíceis de encontrar na URSS. Havia sempre um sentimento de comunidade - não só a sua família, mas os seus amigos e vizinhos se juntavam. Tínhamos uma família enorme, pois a minha mãe tinha sete irmãos e todos eles e as suas famílias juntavam-se para celebrar. Lembro-me que estávamos todos entusiasmados por finalmente abrir todas as conservas, como compotas, pickles e compotas que tínhamos preparado durante o verão."

"Não nevou muito no Azerbaijão, mas sempre esperávamos neve para o Ano Novo. Quando chegasse, saíamos na manhã de 1 de janeiro para brigar bolas de neve e construir bonecos de neve. Vivemos no Maine há 18 anos e neva muito. E, no entanto, cada vez que neva, ainda sinto a alegria do espírito de Ano Novo.

Belyse Ndayikunda do Burundi

Belyse Ndayikunda, membro do Conselho de Administração da Amjambo Africa, nasceu e cresceu no Burundi antes de se mudar para Portland, no Maine, em 2012. Formou-se no Maine, depois licenciou-se em Matemática pela Universidade do Sul do Maine (USM). Ela está atualmente a fazer um mestrado em Estatísticas Aplicadas na USM e a trabalhar no Departamento de Finanças da Unum. "As férias mais importantes da minha cultura são o Natal e o Ano Novo", disse Ndayikunda. "A população do Burundi é maioritariamente católica, por isso o Natal é um feriado baseado na fé onde toda a família vai à igreja, mesmo as pessoas que normalmente não o fazem noutras alturas do ano. Os parentes viajam frequentemente para diferentes cidades e aldeias para se reunirem e celebrarem. Muitas outras celebrações baseadas na fé ocorrem ao lado do Natal, como batismos e comunhões. Temos árvores de Natal, e algumas famílias trocam presentes - dependendo das suas capacidades financeiras - mas estas coisas não são tão comuns como nos EUA. No entanto, uma tradição que é muito comum é comprar roupa nova, particularmente para as crianças."

Ndayikunda explicou que comer carne é um luxo para a maioria das pessoas. Em dias comuns, os burundios normalmente comem refeições feitas de feijão, arroz e farinha. Mas para a época festiva, até as famílias mais pobres conseguem ter algum tipo de carne na mesa de Natal. Acompanhando a carne são geralmente pilau, um prato de arroz aromático, e sombe, um prato feito de folhas de mandioca cozidas e batidas.

"Lembro-me que no dia de Natal todos nós acordamos muito cedo, e íamos preparar-nos vestindo todas as roupas novas que recebemos no Natal, e toda a família ia à igreja. Depois, íamos para casa e preparávamos-nos para o almoço. O almoço de Natal foi muito especial. Todos nós ajudaríamos a prepará-lo juntos - alguns de nós estaríamos ajudando a mãe a cozinhar, outros estaríamos a limpar. E as nossas famílias alargadas, as nossas tias, tios, primos, viriam todos celebrar. O que mais me lembro é de toda a energia alegre que estava sempre presente."

Ghomri Rostampour do Irão

Ghomri Rostampour mudou-se do Irão para os Estados Unidos com a sua família em 1999. Depois de se licenciar pela Univer-

Continúa en la página 27

she is pursuing a master's degree in international relations from Harvard University.

"In my culture, in the beginning of fall we have a big celebration of the harvest season called Mehregan," Rostampour said. Mehregan is an ancient Persian festival with roots in the Zoroastrian religion dating back to the 4th century BCE. The celebration honors Mithra, the ancient divinity of light and creation in Indo-Iranian mythology. Mithra symbolizes friendship, kindness, and love. The holiday falls on the 196th day of the calendar year, which is also the autumnal equinox. "In families that have big harvests, the head of the family invites all the relatives into their yurt to share all the fruits, vegetables, and nuts that they've harvested. For three days, everyone cooks, eats, dances, laughs, and celebrates." The celebration also often involves reading of historic epic poetry accompanied by music played on traditional instruments like the oud and tar. Festivities continue into the night with bonfires, fireworks, and dancing.

"Near the end of the year, we have a special celebration of the longest night of the year called Yalda." Yalda falls on the winter solstice, and also has roots in Zoroastrianism. People gathered together because the evil forces of Ahriman, the evil spirit in Zoroastrianism, were believed to be the strongest during this long night. "We set the table, which must have pomegranates, nuts, and watermelons. If you didn't have these things, you didn't celebrate. All our friends and family get together, and Grandmother gathers all the grandchildren and tells many fairy tales. There's also music and poetry. We have a sort of firepit in the middle of the house - there's no real fire, but there's charcoal under the table with a rug on it - and the family members sit at the table and warm their feet. Traditional foods on Yalda are usually pilaf, turkey, rabbit, and keshkek, a ceremonial meat dish with wheat or barley stew. I remember that on the day before Yalda my dad would buy us new clothes that we would wear during the celebration. I was always very excited for older family members to visit us because they would always give the children money."



Suite de la page 24

pendant 16 ans à Portland. Elle poursuit actuellement un master en Relations Internationales à Harvard.

"Dans ma culture, au début de l'automne, nous avons une grande célébration de la saison des récoltes appelée Mehregan", a déclaré M. Rostampour. Mehregan est un ancien festival perse dont les racines dans la religion zoroastrienne remontent au 4e siècle avant Jésus-Christ. Cette fête rend hommage à Mithra, l'ancienne divinité de la lumière et de la création dans la mythologie indo-iranienne. Mithra symbolise l'amitié, la bonté et l'amour. La fête tombe le 196e jour de l'année civile, qui est aussi l'équinoxe d'automne. "Dans les familles qui ont de grosses récoltes, le chef de famille invite tous les proches dans sa yourte pour partager tous les fruits, légumes et noix qu'il a récoltés. Pendant trois jours, tout le monde cuisine, mange, danse, rit et fait la fête." La célébration comprend aussi souvent la lecture de poèmes tirés d'épopées historiques, accompagnée de musique jouée sur des instruments traditionnels comme le Oud et le Tar. Les festivités se poursuivent dans la nuit avec des feux de joie, des feux d'artifice et des danses."

Vers la fin de l'année, nous avons une célébration spéciale de la nuit la plus longue de l'année, appelée "Yalda". Yalda tombe le jour du solstice d'hiver, et a également des racines dans le zoroastrisme. Les gens se rassemblaient parce que les forces maléfiques d'Ahriman, l'esprit maléfique du zoroastrisme, étaient censées être les plus fortes pendant cette longue nuit. "Nous mettons la table, qui devait contenir des grenades, des noix et des pastèques. Si vous n'aviez pas ces choses, alors vous ne faisiez pas la fête. Tous nos amis et notre famille se réunissent et la grand-mère rassemble tous les petits-enfants et leur raconte de nombreux contes de fées. Il y a aussi de la musique et de la poésie. Nous avons une sorte de foyer au milieu de la maison - il n'y a pas de vrai feu mais du charbon de bois sous la table avec un tapis dessus - et les membres de la famille s'assoient à la table et se réchauffent les pieds. Les plats traditionnels de Yalda sont généralement le pilaf, la dinde, le lapin et le keshkek, un plat de viande cérémoniel accompagné d'un ragoût de blé ou d'orge. Je me souviens que la veille de Yalda, mon père nous achetait de nouveaux vêtements que nous porterions pendant la fête. J'étais toujours très excitée lorsque les membres plus âgés de la famille nous rendaient visite, car ils donnaient toujours de l'argent aux enfants."

Continuado a partir de página 24

raíces en la religión zoroástrica que se remonta al siglo IV a.C. La celebración rinde homenaje a Mitra, la antigua divinidad de la luz y la creación en la mitología indoiraní. Mitra simboliza la amistad, la bondad y el amor. La festividad cae en el día 196 del año calendario, que también es el equinoccio de otoño. "En las familias que tienen grandes cosechas, el jefe de familia invita a todos los familiares a su yurtta para compartir todas las frutas, verduras y nueces que han cosechado. Durante tres días, todo el mundo cocina, come, baila, ríe y celebra". La celebración también suele incluir la lectura de poesía de epopeyas históricas acompañadas de música tocada con instrumentos tradicionales como el Oud y el Tar. Las festividades continúan hasta la noche con hogueras, fuegos artificiales y bailes".

Cerca del final del año tenemos una celebración especial de la noche más larga del año llamada "Yalda". Yalda cae en el solsticio de invierno y también tiene raíces en el zoroastrismo. La gente se reunía porque se creía que las fuerzas malignas de Ahriman, el espíritu maligno del zoroastrismo, eran las más fuertes durante esta larga noche. "Pusimos la mesa, que debe tener granadas, nueces y sandías. Si no tenías estas cosas, no celebrabas. Todos nuestros amigos y familiares se reúnen y la abuela reúne a todos los nietos y les cuenta muchos cuentos de hadas. También hay música y poesía. Tenemos una especie de hoguera en el medio de la casa, no hay fuego real, pero hay carbón debajo de la mesa con una alfombra encima, y los miembros de la familia se sientan a la mesa y se calientan los pies. Los alimentos tradicionales en Yalda suelen ser pilaf, pavo, conejo y keshkek, un plato de carne ceremonial con estofado de trigo o cebada. Recuerdo que el día antes de Yalda mi papá nos compraba ropa nueva, que usaríamos durante la celebración. Siempre estaba muy emocionado de que los miembros mayores de la familia nos visitaran, porque siempre les daban dinero a los niños".



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Laga sii waday bogga 25

ayaa ahayd mid gaar ah. Dhammaanteen waxaan gacan ka geysan donna si wadajir ah u diyaarinta - qaar naga mid ah ayaa ka caawin doona hooyada cunto karinta, kuwa kale ayaa nadiifinta doona. Reerahayada waaweyn - abtiyaashayo, abtiyaashayo, ilmaa deeradayada - dhamaan way iman ahaayeen in loo dabbaaldego. Waxa aan aadka u xasusto waa uun dhammaan tamarta farxadda leh ee had iyo jeer jirtay."

Ghomri Rostampour oo u dhashay Iran

Ghomri Rostampour waxay ka soo guurtay Iran waxayna u guurtay Mareykanka iyada iyo qoyska 1999. Kadib markii ay shahaadada koowaad ee jaamacadda ka qaadatay Jaamacadda Southern Maine ee Teknolojiya Kombuyuutarka, waxay 16 sano ka shaqaynaysay waaxda IT-ga ee dugsiiga dadweynaha ee Portland. Hadda, waxay ku sii socotaa shahaadada mastarka ee Xiriirka Caalamiga ah Harvard.

Dhaqankeyga, bilowga dayrta waxaan leenahay dabaaldega weyn ee xilliga goosashada ee loo yaqaan Mehregan," Rostampour ayaa yiri. Mehregan waa xaflad qadiimi ah oo Faaris ah oo xidido ku leh diinta Zoroastrian ilaa qarnigii 4aad ee BC. Dabaaldega ayaa sharfay Mithra, ilaahnimadii hore ee iftiinka iyo abuurista khuraafaadka Indo-Iran. Mithra waxay astaan u tahay saaxiibtinimada, naxariista, iyo jacaylka. Fasaxdu waxay ku beegan tahay maalinta 196-aad ee sanadka kalandarka, oo sidoo kale ah xilliga dayrta. "Qoysaska in

Waxay helaan dalagyo badan, madaxa qoysku wuxuu ku martiqaadaa dhammaan qaraabada yurt si ay u wadaagaan dhammaan miraha, khudaarta, iyo lawska ee ay goosteen. Saddex maalmood, qof kasta wax buu kariyayaa, wax cunaya, wuu dheelayaa, wuu qosli doonaa, wuna damaashaadayaa." Dabaaldega ayaa sidoo kale inta badan ku lug leh akhrinta gabayada ee sheekooyinka taariikhda ah ee ay la socdaan muusigga lagu ciyaaro qalabka dhaqanka sida Cuud iyo Daamurka. Damaashaadka waxay ku sii socdaan ilaa habeenkii iyagoo wata dab-qabadyo, rashka, iyo qoob kaciyarka."

Dhammaadkii sanadka waxaan leenahay dabaaldega gaar ah oo ku saabsan habeenkii ugu dheeraa sanadka ee Yalda." Yalda waxay ku dhacdaa xilliga jiilaalka, waxayna sidoo kale xidid ku leedahay Zoroastrianism. Dadku way isu soo ururan sababtoo ah xoogaga sharka ah ee Ahriman, ruuxa sharka leh ee Zoroastrianism, ayaa la rumaysan yahay inay yihiin kuwa ugu xooga badan habeenka dheer. Miiska ayaan u dhignaay, kaas oo ay ku jiraan rummaan, laws, iyo qaraha. Haddii aadan haysan waxyaabaha, ma aadan dabaaldega. Dhammaan asxaabta iyo qoyska yadu way isu yimaadaan oo ayeeyo ayaa soo ururisay dhammaan carruurta ayeeyo u tahay oo ka sheekaynaysaa sheeko-faneed badan.

Waxa kale oo jira muusik iyo gabayo. Waxa aanu guriga dhexdiisa ku haynaa nooc dabadamis ah - ma jiro dab dhab ah, laakiin waxa miiska hoostiisa yaal dhuxul oo roogaga saaran - xubnaha qoyskuna waxa ay fadhiistaan miiska oo ay cagaha ku diiriyaan. Cuntooyinka dhaqameed ee Yalda badanaa waa pilaf, turki, bakayle, iyo keshkek, saxan hilib xafladeed oo leh sarreen ama fuud shaciir ah. Waxaan xusuusta in maalinta ka horeysa Yalda aabahay uu noo soo iibin lahaa dhar cusub, oo aan xiran doono inta lagu jiro dabaaldega. Had iyo jeer aad ayaan ugu xiisayn jiray in xubnaha qoyska ee waaweyn ay nagu soo booqdaan, sababtoo ah had iyo jeer waxay siin jireen carruurta lacag."



Iiendelea kutoka ukurasa 25

pour pamoja na jamaa yake alihama kutoka Iran hadi Marekani. Baada ya kupata shahada ya kwanza kutoka Chuo Kikuu cha Southern Maine katika Teknolojia ya Kompyuta, alifanya kazi katika idara ya IT ya shule ya umma kwa miaka 16 huko Portland. Hivi sasa, anafuata shahada ya uzamili katika Mahusiano ya Kimataifa kutoka Harvard.

"Kulingana na utamaduni wangu, mwanzoni mwa vuli tuna sherehe kubwa ya msimu wa mavuno inayoitwa Mehregan," Rostampour alisema. Mehregan ni sikukuu ya kale ya Kiajemi yenye mizizi katika dini ya Zoroastria iliyoanzia karne ya 4 KK. Sherehe hiyo inamtukuza Mithra, mungu wa kale wa mwanga na uumbaji katika mythology ya Indo-Irani. Mithra anaashiria urafiki, fadhili, na upendo. Likizo huanguka siku ya 196 ya mwaka wa kalenda, ambayo pia ni usawa wa vuli. "Katika familia ambazo zina mavuno mengi, mkuu wa familia huwaalika watu wa ukoo wote ndani ya nyumba yao ili kushiriki matunda, mboga, na njugu zote ambazo wamevuna. Kwa siku tatu, kila mtu anapika, anakula, anacheza dansi, anacheka na kusherehekea." Sherehe pia mara nyingi huhusisha usomaji wa mashairi wa epics za kihistoria zinazoambatana na muziki unaochezwa kwenye ala za kitamaduni kama vile Oud na Tar. Sherehe huendelea hadi usiku kwa mioto ya moto, fataki, na dansi."

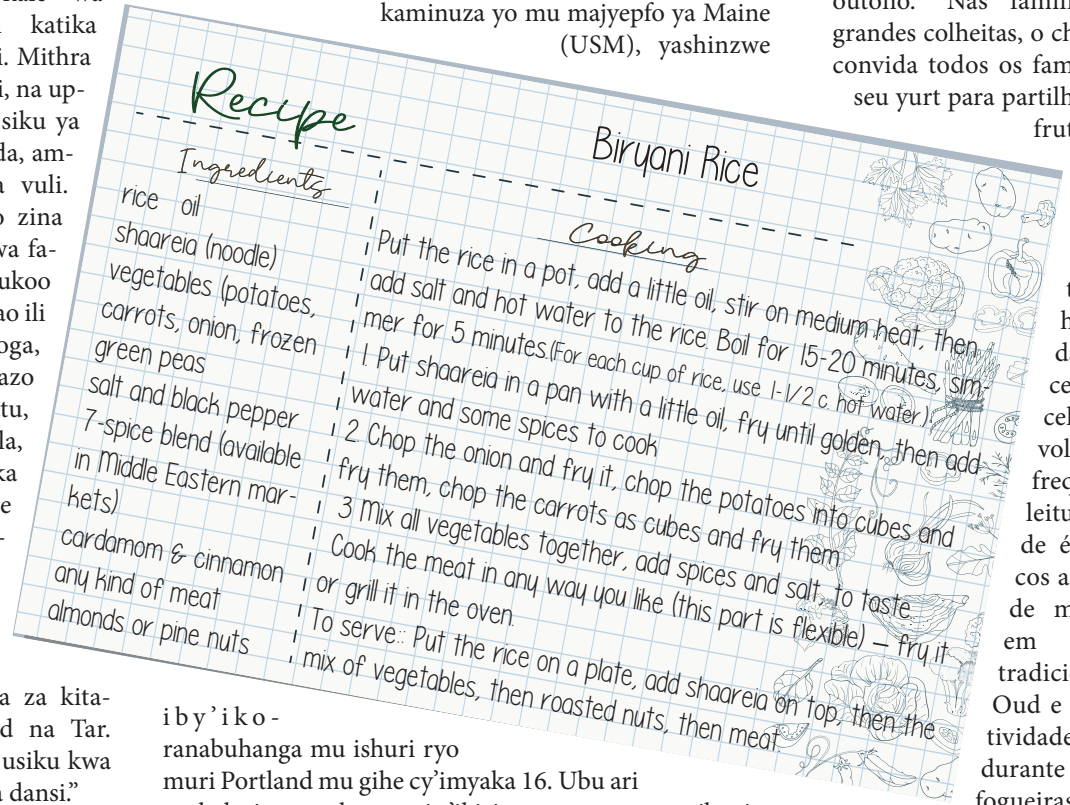
Kila tulipokaribia kufikia mwisho wa mwaka tulikuwa na sherehe maalum ya usiku mrefu zaidi wa mwaka unaoitwa Yalda. Yalda huanguka kwenye solstice ya baridi, na pia ina mizizi katika Zoroastrianism. Watu walikusanyika pamoja kwa sababu nguvu za uovu za Ahriman, roho mbaya katika Uzoroastria, ziliaminika kuwa zenye nguvu zaidi wakati wa usiku huu mrefu. "Tuliweka meza, ambayo lazima iwe na makomamanga, njugu, na matikiti maji. Ikiwa hukuwa na vitu hivi, haukusherehekea. Marafiki na bibi hukusanya wajukuu wote na kusimulia hadithi nyingi za hadithi. Pia kuna muziki na mashairi. Tuna aina ya mahali pa moto katikati ya nyumba - hakuna moto halisi lakini kuna makaa chini ya meza yenye zulia - na wanafamilia huketi mezani na kupasha moto miguu yao. Vyakula vya kitamaduni kwenye Yalda kwa kawaida ni pilau, bata mzinga, sungura, na keshkek, sahani ya nyama ya sherehe na kitoweo cha ngano au shayiri. Nakumbuka kwamba siku moja kabla ya Yalda baba yangu angetunulia nguo mpya, ambazo tungevaa wakati wa sherehe. Siku zote nilifurahi sana washiriki wa familia wakubwa kututembelea, kwa sababu sikuzote wangewapa watoto pesa."

ibikurikira ipaji 25

"ndibuka kuri Noheli twese twabyukaga kare, maze tukitegura tukambara imyenda mishya twabaga twaguriwe kubera uwo mumsi maze umuryango wose ukajya mu misa. Nyuma yaho, twajyaga murugo maze tukitegura gufata amafunguro. Ifunguro ryo kuri Noheli ryabaga ridasanzwe. Twese twarafatanyaga mu kuritegura, bamwe muri twe bakaba ari gufasha mama guteka, abandi bakaba bari gukora amasuku. Imiryango yacu migari igizwe na ba marume na ba masenge n'abandi bose bakaba tukifatanya. Icyo nibuka cyane ni uwo mwuka w'ibyishimo n'ibirori wabaga iteka uhari".

Ghomri Rostampour wo muri Iran

Ghomri Rostampour yavuye muri Iran yimukira muri Amerika hamwe n'umuryango we mu 1999. Nyuma yo kubona impamyabumenyi y'ikicro cya kabiri cya kaminuza mu iKoranabuhanga rya mudasobwa yakuye muri kaminuza yo mu majyepfo ya Maine (USM), yashinzwe



iby'ikoranabuhanga mu ishuri ryo muri Portland mu gihe cy'imyaka 16. Ubu ari gushaka impamabumenyi y'ikicro cya gatatu mu mibanire mpuzamahanga ari kwiga muri Kaminuza ya Harvard. Agira ati "Mu muco wacu, mu ntangiriro z'urugaryi tugira umunsi mukuru munini wo kwishimira umusaruro uzwi nka Mehregan." Mehregan ni umunsi mpuzamahanga w'Abanyaperse ba kera ukomoka mu gace ka Zoroastrian watangiye ahagana mu kinyejana cyane 4 mbere y'ivuka rya Yesu. Uyu mumsi wabaga wizihiza Mithra, imana yabo yitirirwa kuba iy'umucyo n'iremwa mu mico y'abanyahinde n'abanya-Iran bo hambere. Mithra, yari ikimenyetso cy'ubucuti, ubugwaneza n'urukundo. Uyu mumsi wizihizwaga ku mumsi w'196 ku ngengaminsi y'umwaka, agira ati "mu miryango yabaga ifite umusaruro munini, umukuru w'umuryango yatimiraga abavandimwe bose bagahurira mu nzu iwe bagasangira imbuto, bagaseka bakizihirwa". Uyu mumsi mukuru kandi wabaga ugizwe n'ubusizi no kuvuga imivugo yo hambere iherekejwe n'imiziki yacurangwaga hifashishwa ibikoresho gakondo nka Oud (cyenda kumera nka guitar) na Tar (cyenda kumera nk'inanga ya kinyarwanda). Iminsi mikuru yarakomezaga no mu bihe by'ijoro hagacanwa umuriro, hakaraswa ibishashi by'imiriro mukirere ndetse abantu bakabyina.

Ahagana ku mpera z'umwaka, twagiraga umunsi wihariye wo kwizihiza ijoro rinini cyane ry'umwaka ryitwaga Yalda. Ati "Yalda yabaga kuri winter solstice, ikagira inkomoko mu idini Zoroastrianism. Abantu barahuraga kubera ko imbaraga za shitani bitaga Ahriman mu iri dini, bizeraga ko zabaga zifite imbaraga nyinshi muri iryo joro. Ati "twateraga ameza agomba kuba ariho pome, ubunyobwa, ndetse na watermelons. Iyo utabaga ufite ibi bintu ntabwo wawizihizaga. Inshuti zacu zose n'imiryango zarahuraga ba nyirakuru bagahura n'abuzukuru babo bakabacira imigani. Habaga kandi hari indirimbo n'ibisigo. Twabaga dufite ahantu twacanye umuriro hagati mu nzu, ntabwo wabaga ari umuriro nyawo, ahubwo yabaga ari amakara mumsi y'ameza tukarenzaho umwenda maze abagize umuryango bakicara ku meza bagashyushya amaguru yabo. Ibiryo twaryaga kuri uwo mumsi ni ibyitwa Pilaf, igishuhe, urukwavu na Keshkek. Data yatuguriraga imyanda mishya twagombaga kwambara ku mumsi mukuru. Iteka nabaga nishimye cyane kuko twabaga turi busurwe, kandi abashyitsi bahaga abana amafaranga.

Continuación de la página 25

sidade do Sul do Maine em Tecnologia informática, trabalhou num departamento de IT de escola pública durante 16 anos em Portland. Atualmente, está a tirar um mestrado em Relações Internacionais em Harvard.

"Na minha cultura, no início do outono temos uma grande celebração da época das colheitas chamada Mehregan", disse Rostampour. Mehregan é um antigo festival persa com raízes na religião zoroastriana que remonta ao século IV a.C. A celebração homenageia Mithra, a antiga divindade da luz e da criação na mitologia indo-iraniana. Mithra simboliza amizade, bondade e amor. O feriado acontece no 196º dia do ano civil, que é também o equinócio de outono. "Nas famílias que têm grandes colheitas, o chefe da família convida todos os familiares para o seu yurt para partilharem todas as frutas, legumes e frutos secos que colheram. Durante três dias, todos cozinham, comem, dançam, riem e celebram." A celebração envolve também frequentemente a leitura de poesia de épicos históricos acompanhados de música tocada em instrumentos tradicionais como o Oud e o Tar. As festividades continuam durante a noite com fogueiras, fogos de artifício e dança."

Perto do final do ano, temos uma celebração especial da noite mais longa do ano chamada Yalda." Yalda cai no solstício de inverno, e também tem raízes no Zoroastrismo. As pessoas reuniram-se porque as forças malignas de Ahriman, o espírito maligno do Zoroastrismo, acreditavam ser as mais fortes durante esta longa noite. "Colocamos a mesa, que deve ter romãs, nozes e melancias. Se não tinham estas coisas, não celebraste. Todos os nossos amigos e família se reúnem e a avó reúne todos os netos e conta muitos contos de fadas. Há também música e poesia. Temos uma espécie de fogueira no meio da casa - não há fogo real, mas há carvão debaixo da mesa com um tapete - e os membros da família sentam-se à mesa e aquecem os pés. Os alimentos tradicionais em Yalda são geralmente pilaf, peru, coelho e keshkek, um prato cerimonial de carne com trigo ou guisado de cevada. Lembro-me que na véspera da Yalda o meu pai comprava-nos roupas novas, que usávamos durante a celebração. Sempre fiquei muito entusiasmado por os familiares mais velhos nos visitarem, porque eles sempre davam dinheiro às crianças."



Community Health

Workers | By Amy Harris

Imagine you have fled your home country and are new to Maine. You dream of a better life for your family. However, you do not speak English. If your immigration status allows you to work, you also need help finding a job, feeding your family, and staying healthy during a pandemic. Every day, mail arrives in your mailbox. You are scared of bad news the mail might deliver – and you can't read it anyway. You don't understand how or where to get a COVID-19 shot, whether it is safe to be vaccinated, and whether you should vaccinate your children. Where do you turn for help?

When possible, you find someone who speaks your language, who once stood in the same place you now stand, and who is a member of your community – a Community Health Worker.

For fortunate immigrants in Maine, a community health worker (CHW) is able to meet the needs of some Mainers in ways that traditional healthcare systems and service agencies often can not. According to Sarah Lewis of Maine Access Immigrant Network (MAIN), this is because CHWs are members of the communities they serve, and because they believe in service to others.

What is a community health worker?

The definition of a community health worker varies from state to state and agency to agency. Sometimes known as community outreach workers, CHWs (or CHOWs) have a unique and intimate understanding of the communities they serve. They bridge gaps and barriers to healthcare by working within the context of peoples' cultural beliefs, behaviors, and needs.

Because of the trusting relationships they are able to build, CHWs connect clients and communities with health and social services. The National Association of Community Health Workers (NACHW) reports that nine U.S.-based studies of CHW-supported mental health interventions have improved outcomes for clients, especially for underserved populations. The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, the national nonprofit representing public health agencies, indicates that people often have hugely different healthcare experiences because of their race/ethnicity, income, geographic location, sexual preference, or other characteristics. As a result, many communities are disproportionately burdened by chronic illnesses and other health concerns. CHWs help their communities access appropriate healthcare and reduce rates of chronic disease. The National Association of Community Health Workers (NACHW) reports that CHWs build individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency.

Sana Osman and Asha Ali, both CHWs with the Portland-based MAIN, said they are very pleased with their positions as community health workers and love being a part of a team where “everyone helps everyone.” They see their current work as extensions of earlier work, when they served as interpreters: Osman worked as an Arabic interpreter; Ali is from Somalia. Both said they particularly like being able to advocate for clients navigating the healthcare system, now that they are CHWs. When they worked as interpreters, they were legally and ethically constrained to limit themselves to word-for-word translation. Osman described the MAIN team as a “mini-United Na-



Sana Osman and Asha Ali with Governor Janet Mills

tions family,” and both women get a great deal of satisfaction from assisting those who need help.

Helping manage chronic conditions

CHWs improve prevention and screening for serious diseases that can shorten people's lives. They also help people survive longer and receive better care if living with chronic illnesses. Public health research proves the positive impact of CHWs in the prevention and treatment of heart disease, diabetes, mental health conditions, substance use disorder, cancer, and maternal and child health (postpartum care and breastfeeding support).

CHWs help more people contact the mainstream health care system and receive early screening and diagnosis, through health education, improving health literacy, and increasing access.

Nélida Berke, the City of Portland's Minority Health Program Coordinator, has worked with community health workers for 16 years. Under her watch, Portland's Public Health Division of the Health and Human Services Department has partnered with Maine Medical Partners' Portland Family Medicine practice, hiring seven CHWs who connected with community members overdue for colorectal cancer screenings. Through education, outreach, and assis-



Asha Ali

tance scheduling appointments, these CHWs increased screening rates by 27-35%, Berke said. Successes like these make state and federal health agencies eager to include CHWs on more clinical teams.

“Health care providers in Maine may consider partnering with CHWs to deliver health education, screening, outreach, patient navigation, and team-based care to patients with chronic conditions,” said Ben Hummel of the Maine Community Health Worker Initiative of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Responding to public health emergencies

The pandemic illuminated major gaps in our country's and state's public health systems. As federal and state governments, health agencies, and health care providers have scrambled to keep those most at risk safe and healthy recently and during the early days of the pandemic, CHWs responded immediately to the public health crisis and began assisting people in need. According to Berke, Lewis of MAIN, and Faitima Saidi of Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition, CHWs throughout Maine provide desperately needed COVID-19 services to community members in ways that other agencies do. These include culturally competent education about the virus, masking, social distancing, and the importance of staying home from work if feeling sick. This education happened long before other agencies reached out to New Mainer clients because CHWs were on the ground from the earliest days, distributing personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies, and culturally appropriate food to families or individuals

having to quarantine or isolate. If crowded housing made isolating impossible, resourceful CHWs found alternative housing for their clients.

CHWs played critical, logistical roles helping New Mainers access healthcare. They took care of scheduling medical appointments and arranging transportation to those locations. They also provided language-specific phone support, especially when pandemic precautions prohibited the presence of support people at appointments or in emergency rooms. Today, Maine CHWs are working to educate communities about the importance of COVID-19 booster shots and about vaccinating children ages 5-12, who are now eligible.

Who are Maine's CHWs?

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that there are no more than 300 CHWs in Maine. With 7,300, New York state has the highest reported number of CHWs in the U.S.

CHWs work for state and city agencies, nonprofit organizations, community organizations, private businesses, health systems, and hospitals. In Maine, most CHWs work for the Portland's Minority Health Program (14), (MAIN) (9 CHWs), Maine Mobile Health Program (7 year-round, plus seasonal staff), the New Mainers Public Health Initiative (NMPHI) (10), and Maine General Medical Center (9), according to Ben Hummel, Maine's Community Health Worker Initiative Project Coordinator. These numbers fluctuate frequently due to employer staffing models, new funding opportunities, and general turnover. Maine Mobile Health Program seasonally cares for more than 1,500 farm workers during blueberry, apple, and broccoli harvests, and during Christmas tree and wreath seasons, as well as tree-planting. CHWs provide transportation, interpretation, and care coordination services for farm workers.

Community health workers address social determinants of health

Hummel said CHWs have a “unique ability to address the root causes of health inequities,” which is key to addressing social determinants of health. Public health researchers have found that the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, play, work, and age determine nearly 80-90% of overall health outcomes. That means only 10% of health is impacted by going to the doctor, taking medication, or eating a healthy diet. Research about CHW healthcare over the past 50 years demonstrates that CHWs provide a good return on investment for public health dollars spent. Particularly important for Maine, where many

“Public health research proves the positive impact of CHWs in the prevention and treatment of heart disease, diabetes, mental health conditions, substance use disorder, cancer, and maternal and child health (postpartum care and breastfeeding support).”

people live in rural areas, CHWs also succeed at improving access to people geographically isolated from healthcare centers. The number of CHWs in Maine are not sufficient to address the social determinants of poor health among Maine's residents.

How to become a CHW

During the ongoing pandemic, many government and private funders recognized the value of CHWs as cost effective solutions for many public health problems due to the high level of service they provide. As a result, employers in Maine are advertising for CHW positions. Anyone interested in learning about becoming a CHW could contact the organizations listed above. New job opportunities and greater professional recognition mean a bright future for prospective CHWs in Maine.

Living at the intersection of identities

| By Rupal Ramesh Shah

Sumi Das is from the Cooch Behar district of West Bengal, in India. They* started Moitrisanjog Society in 2009, a nonprofit organization devoted to affirming the rights of marginalized people, such as trans people, effeminate men, and hijras, “a complex intersectional identity based on aspects of a person that extend beyond the categories of gender and sexuality,” according to Gayatri Reddy, author of *With Respect to Sex: Negotiating Hijra Identity in South India*.



“It is difficult to define my identity. When I was a young boy, I felt like a girl. These days they identify me as transgender. Identity labels put us into categories that restrict us at times and serve political purposes at other times. Even then, people like me are not recognized in this country nor given appropriate legal rights,” said Das in Hindi, one of the many languages spoken in India.

The identity labels that society expects us to abide by are something with which I am also familiar. I often find myself struggling to identify as a Tanzanian, an Indian, or an Amer-

ican. In talking with Das, I understand that the question of identity is too complex to be explained in a single conversation, and that the issues they face are similar to the ones LGBTQ+ people in the U.S. face.

Before starting Moitrisanjog Society, Das had no idea what a nonprofit was, nor did they have much money to run the organization. When I asked for the reasons they started Moitrisanjog Society, Das said, “A place for everyone to open their hearts, feel at home, and live in a community.” Since its inception, the organization has supported close to 250 people that identify as transgender and hijra. According to Das, anyone who is looking for a family is welcome in their group. “When I was young, I felt alone. I thought there was no one in the world like me,” Das said. It is because of that feeling that they started the organization – to address loneliness among people who feel differently about their gender and the bodies they grow up in.

In addition to serving as a shelter for those in need, the Moitrisanjog Society also provides courses centered on achieving financial security and learning the art of cosmetology. At the end of the courses, they give participants certificates to acknowledge their completion. People who are a part of the transgender and hijra community work in different professions. Some utilize the skills from the courses. Others provide entertainment, as dancers, during weddings and large festivals.

“We must do everything for ourselves, because the law doesn’t recognize us or provide any means of livelihood for us.” In 1860, when the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was enacted, section 377 criminalized sexual activities considered to be against the order of nature. It is that law that has discriminated the transgender and hijra community in India for

years. “We don’t have bathrooms. At hospitals, they do not welcome us in the wards designated for women or men.”

Navigating a system in which a specific group is not even recognized to exist is challenging. It was not until 2014 that transgender people and hijras gained official recognition as a third gender – which is inherently discriminatory, as this places them behind first and second genders. In 2018, section 377 of the IPC was decriminalized, allowing for consensual sex among adults, irrespective of their gender. According to Das, these are big achievements, but this is just a start. Much more needs to be done in terms of gaining recognition in the mainstream community.

The healthcare challenges faced by the transgender and hijra community have become far more evident during this pandemic. “We were already stigmatized before the pandemic. During the pandemic, we must continue to advocate for our rights even more, especially in terms of healthcare,” Das said. This strong and compassionate activist is nothing but positive when it comes to dealing with adversity, and perhaps that is the quality that is going to get them through this pandemic.

My conversation with Das leaves me to wonder about the rest of the people in this world who are at the intersection of identities and at the crossroads of communities. Will COVID-19 teach us to open our communities and world to everyone, especially those who are different from us? Will COVID-19 cultivate in us empathy for those who are further marginalized due to the disease? During this pandemic, I hope we will think about those who are outside our circles and communities and ways we can support them.

They is a gender-neutral, third-person pronoun.

The holidays in Congo Brazzaville

By Roseline Souebele

December has come to Congo Brazzaville despite the pandemic, and for the two thousand and twenty-first time, Christians will be celebrating the life of Jesus Christ. People will still attend morning church services, and possibly also celebrate with close neighbors at home or on the street corner later on, because there is a lockdown that starts every weekday at 11:00 p.m., and at 8:00 p.m. on weekends. A state of emergency prevents large gatherings, and mandates the wearing of masks.

But people will still enjoy their colorful outfits, and bright hair extensions, during the day – even though their makeup might be covered by masks – and the celebration will be beautiful. Students get two weeks of vacation, which they can spend either with immediate family, or with uncles or aunts or other relatives. Between weddings, birthdays, christenings, Christmas, and end-of-year celebrations, the markets, streets, hair salons, and bars are packed. An appointment at the hairdresser’s in advance saves a long wait and provides a guarantee of being served.

Everybody is happy in December. It is the holiday month. Well, almost everyone – because the month of December is also full of pressure on fathers to provide a new outfit not only for each child, but also for his beloved wife. This can be very suffocating, depending on the level of income. And apart from the new clothes, there is the daily menu, which must include chicken.

It has been more than a year since the pandemic struck the country. According to the U.S. Embassy in the Republic of Congo, as of November 15, there were 18,717 confirmed cases, 15,712 recoveries, 2,644 active cases, and 339 confirmed deaths. Less than 3% of the population has been vaccinated. Civil servants are required to present proof of vaccination. As of November 1, a proof of vaccination is required for all movements between large cities. Law enforcement units may fine or arrest people who are found noncompliant.

I think the government should be paying as much attention to other, more pressing needs, as it pays to COVID-19, given the low rate of infection in the country. For example, providing access to clean drinking water and electricity for all, and especially to improving the sewage system, in order to eradicate malaria – a killer long before the arrival of the COVID. The government’s attention to COVID-related mandates appears more like a show than anything else.

Merry Christmas to you all,
Roseline



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Continued from page 15

tent cities sprang up; people went hungry.

Some asylum seekers approached the border during the pandemic, hoping against hope that they could somehow get across, but very few were successful. In the first nine months of 2021, 389 asylum seekers were apprehended between ports of entry in Quebec. Members of the border network did what they could to provide shelter, food, and transportation to these refugees, but their resources were limited, and the condition of the refugees was desperate. Some of those with exceptions to the Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA), an agreement between the U.S. and Canada that went into effect in 2004, were allowed to cross at ports of entry. However, according to Alex Vernon, Director of the Immigration Law Clinic at Mercy School of Law, sometimes the Canada Border Services Agency made mistakes, and people incorrectly received an exclusion order (which can be challenged with the proper documentation).

Then on November 21, Canada announced that refugee claimants who enter Canada at irregular entry points, in between official land ports of entry – such as the internationally known Roxham Road crossing – will no longer be directed back to the U.S. for the first time since the pandemic started. Word of this announcement spread rapidly, and asylum seekers have begun heading to the border again, hoping to be allowed into Canada for the first time since March 2020. They are showing up at official land crossings, as well as irregular crossings, and many are unfamiliar with Canadian immigration rules.

The Safe Third Country Agreement recognizes a family member as the following:
 spouse • legal guardian • child • father or mother • sister or brother • grandfather or grandmother • grandchild • uncle or aunt • nephew or niece • common-law partner • same-sex spouse
Documentation is required.

Under the STCA, if someone crosses into Canada from the U.S. at an official border crossing and asks for asylum, they will be sent back to the U.S., unless they fall under one of four exceptions. The four exceptions are family member exceptions; unaccompanied minors exception; document holder exceptions; and public interest exceptions. If someone is sent back to the U.S. because they are found not to have an exception, they are under an exclusion order and can never again make another refugee claim in Canada. Sometimes, those who are sent back end up in detention, or deportation proceedings.

For those who cross the border at an irregular crossing such as Roxham Road, by Canadian law the STCA does not apply. These people should be able to enter Canada and make a claim for refugee status. Therefore, traversing the border at an irregular crossing could well be the best way for many people to cross the border. And people who get excluded according to STCA can later try to cross irregularly into Canada. They will be eligible only for a pre-removal risk assessment at that point, which is a less robust process, but if successful they will have refugee or protected person status. Then they will be able to apply for permanent residency. If unsuccessful, they will eventually be sent back to their home country.

“In many cases, just showing up at a port of entry is the worst choice,” said Vernon, at Mercy School of Law. Dennler agreed. “The stakes are high. There can be dire consequences, sometimes ending in detention and deportation.”

The STCA is central to the question of whether someone can safely make a claim at an official land port of entry in Canada. The agreement states that refugees must apply for asylum in the first safe country they reach. That is the U.S. for those arriving from either South America or Central America. Unfortunately, many people misunderstand the family member exception to the STCA, and end up being refused entry to Canada. These people interpret the exception to mean that if someone has any family member in Canada, the claimant can get into the country and file for asylum. But, in fact, only some categories of relatives count, according to the agreement. Cousins, for example, do not. Neither do godparents. Neither do brothers- or sisters-in-law. Furthermore, the exact immigration status of the family member matters, along with other considerations.

Ahmed H. condemned the STCA. “It isn’t the fault of refugees if they don’t have relatives in Canada, to be able to cross the borders legally according to the exceptions of the Safe Third Country Agreement ... it is neither fair nor equal ... why are those refugees preferred over those who don’t have relatives in Canada?”

Many Canadians agree with Ahmed H. They believe that the STCA contravenes Canada’s international human rights obligations, and have been working through the federal courts to get the agreement suspended. The crux of their ar-

gument is that the U.S. is not a safe country for asylum seekers, and that sending refugee claimants back to the U.S. violates their human rights. The Canadian Council for Refugees website recounts the experience of one asylum seeker who was sent back to the U.S. because she did not meet an exception to the STCA. Her experience illustrates why many think that the U.S. should not be considered a safe country.

Morgan (not her real name) came to the Canadian border in 2015 to make a refugee claim. To her dismay, Canadian officers did not ask her about why she had fled her home country (where she faces threats to her life for speaking out against political corruption). She was instead asked whether she had any family in Canada, to which she answered no. She was then sent back to the United States, exhausted, confused and frightened. ... She spent 10 days in solitary confinement in Clinton County [N.Y.] ... Finally, after 51 days, she was released... After her release, she continued her efforts to gain asylum... In August 2017, following the example of thousands of others, she crossed the border at Roxham Road. She is now in Canada, but the impact of the Safe Third Country Agreement continues to prevent her from moving forward. She cannot make a refugee claim, as the law allows a person to make just one claim in their lifetime. A moratorium on removals to her country of origin protects her from deportation, but she remains in a legal vacuum, without official status.

Now that the border has opened again, members of the grassroots coalition are steeling themselves to help the thousands of people heading to tiny Plattsburgh, NY – a small city of just under 20,000. But the coalition’s resources are thin – most member organizations rely on donations, grants, and volunteer labor. Members cautioned that while they try hard to help those who arrive at the border and are unable to cross for one reason or another, they are limited in what they can do.

Diane Wardell, a volunteer with Plattsburgh Cares, stressed that the area is very rural; local hotels are often full (and members of the network cannot afford to support families in them for more than a few days, anyway); shelters are also full (and the closest shelters are Vive in Buffalo or Freedom House in Detroit). Only a small amount of humanitarian relief in the form of taxi and bus money, some food, and warm clothing is available from volunteers. “But we do try to do what we can to get people to their next safe place in

their long migration journey,” Wardell said.

Since 2021, Bridges Not Borders has been an important source of online information for people seeking to cross irregularly into Canada at Roxham Road. The traffic on their website has risen sharply since the pandemic. They also re-



ceive many emails from desperate people who have been directed back under the pandemic order, or who were excluded under the STCA.

“In many cases there was little I could do but provide a sympathetic response,” said Wendy Ayotte, a member of the coordinating committee of Bridges Not Borders. “The most rewarding times have been when I was able to identify that someone who had been directed back could in fact qualify for an exception to the STCA, or was exempt under the terms of the border closure (e.g. stateless persons). Some of these folks then got help from Vive Shelter’s legal team, to prepare for the STCA interview. I’ve now heard from several people who were able to enter Canada successfully at a port of entry. Now that people crossing at Roxham will no longer be directed back to the U.S., it’s a huge relief,” she said.

Allies agree that the rules and regulations connected with crossing the U.S.-Canada border are confusing, and stress that careful research is a good idea before deciding on a plan for crossing.

For more information in English, French and Spanish:
<http://www.bridgesnotborders.ca/info-1.html>

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN MAINE

During Maine’s “Expo Summer” of 2019, Mufalo Chitam, Executive Director of the Maine Immigrants’ Rights Coalition (MIRC), in company with other immigrant leaders, was at the hub of efforts that helped approximately 500 asylum seekers who arrived in Portland over the space of a few months, seeking refuge.

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“How could Maine not see all these young families as an opportunity? Let’s invest in people who desperately want to work. These are people who are putting down roots here.”

– Martha Stein, Executive Director of Hope Acts

Over the past year, Chitam and other immigrant leaders have been working hard again to help over 500 more asylum seekers who have arrived in Portland since the pandemic began. Most were originally from Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as Haiti. Their journeys were perilous, and many spent time in detention in the U.S. before making it to Maine.

This time, because of COVID-19, the scenario is different from pre-pandemic 2019. There is no single exposition building where hundreds of people are housed together. Instead, individuals and families are scattered across Portland, South Portland, and other communities in budget motels, paid for by the City of Portland. “It’s like lots of mini Expos,” Chitam said. “And it’s very makeshift, very splintered.”

As the number of arrivals has grown, and the availability of housing has shrunk, so has concern.

The situation is dire, with hunger, inadequate clothing, boredom (the newcomers are not allowed to work), and ill health plaguing the new arrivals. Nonprofit service

providers are struggling to meet basic needs, but their resources are grossly inadequate. The scattered nature of the housing makes efforts to help even more exhausting. “The motels were supposed to have been short-term,” Chitam said, but because of the housing shortage, many of the asylum seekers have been living in the motels for many months, some a full year.

Service providers are concerned that the health of the arrivals may be deteriorating. They spoke of people losing weight, and of children without shoes. “I don’t have food for my baby,” one mother told Chitam. The motels have no cooking facilities, other than microwaves, so most families eat mostly cold food.

“It’s shocking,” said Martha Stein, Executive Director of Hope Acts, whose services are focused on asylum seekers.

Providers who are regularly at the motels as part of service work, including vaccination, include Presente Maine, Angolan Community, Maine Access Immigrant Network, MIRC, Maine Association for New Americans, Gateway Community Services, and ProsperityME.

“It’s important to get people into places where wraparound services can be provided,” Chitam said. With winter rapidly approaching, the need is more urgent everyday.

ADOPT A FAMILY

MIRC is spearheading an effort to provide winter clothes, boots, gloves, socks, blankets, and gift cards for asylum seekers in the homeless shelters at motels, as well as for those new Afghan arrivals who need help. MIRC is looking for businesses, churches, nonprofits, companies, and individuals to adopt a family for the holiday season.

To participate, contact:
fsaidi@maineimmigrantrights.org



All are welcome

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