

Mother Africa

Safer Healthy Homes Project

2022



The mission of Mother Africa is to support African refugee and immigrant women and their families to reach their highest potential. We are committed to leadership building, advocacy, and community action to reduce barriers to healthcare, education, safety, and economic independence while fostering a comfortable space to celebrate our cultures, our families, and our growth.

The Hazardous Waste Management Program (Haz Waste Program) offers education, assistance and incentives to businesses and residents of King County to reduce hazardous material exposure. Guided by our Racial Equity Strategic Plan, the Haz Waste Program partners work collaboratively with communities to ensure that our outreach and engagement is racially equitable and informed by community priorities.

FINAL YEAR OF A THREE-YEAR PROJECT

In this third and final year, we continued to teach families how to live in safer, healthier homes. We expanded our reach by teaching children in a summer camp, by sharing our approach with local governments and organizations at the Refugee Forum of King County and by hosting two events that tested products for lead.

We were also selected as a 2022 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Safer Choice Partner of the year award winner for our work teaching community members how to identify safer cleaning products.

Award Winner



Mother Africa and EPA staff at the 2022 Partner of the Year Award Ceremony

The Environmental Protection Agency honored Mother Africa by recognizing them as a **2022 Safer Choice Partner of the Year Award Winner**. This award recognizes work done in 2020 and 2021 in the Safer Healthy Homes Project, educating community members about how to recognize safer household cleaners by reading labels and looking for the EPA Safer Choice logo. Products with the EPA Safer Choice logo are third-party certified to be safer for people, pets and the planet.

The Mother Africa team traveled to Washington DC to receive their award during the 2022 Partner of the Year Award Ceremony. The team thanked the audience while speaking in their native languages (Arabic, French, Lingala, Kinyarwanda) to demonstrate that Mother Africa represents diverse communities and values inclusiveness. Conference attendees included product manufacturers, product formulators, third-party certifiers, non-governmental organizations and EPA and other agency staff.



During the two-day Safer Choice Summit, Mother Africa, Haz Waste Program and ECOS - Earth Friendly Products participated in a panel, "Advancing Environmental Justice through the Safer Choice and DfE Programs." It was a great experience to make our voices heard.



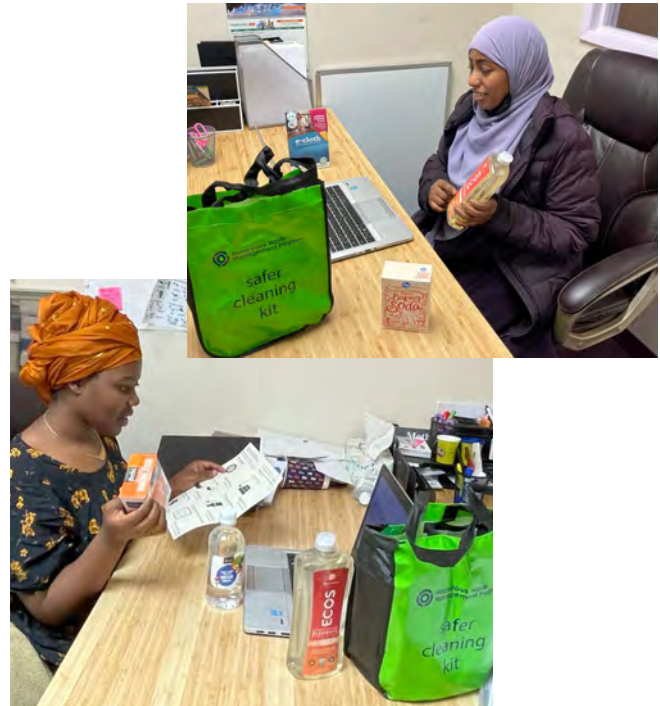
Educational Visits

Educational visits continued to be virtual because of continuing pandemic restrictions. Safer Healthy Homes (SHH) Promoters from Mother Africa recruited **20 Mai Mai** speakers, **28 Arabic** speakers and **32 French** speakers for a total of **80 participants** representing **388 family members**.

After conducting a pre-educational visit survey, SHH Promoters delivered a safer cleaning kit to each family.

In the first educational session, Promoters coached participants to use the Safer Cleaning Kit to make cleaners with baking soda and vinegar. Participants also learned to identify hazardous products by reading labels and looking for the EPA Safer Choice logo.

In the second session, participants learned that mold is hazardous and learned practices to prevent, reduce and clean mold. Participants learned about lead, where it might be inside their homes, possible health effects, ways to reduce lead exposure and how to get their children tested for lead.



SHH Promoters teaching in virtual educational session

An important part of the educational sessions was teaching participants how to identify hazardous products and practicing finding hazardous products in their own homes.

Finally, participants learned that pouring hazardous products down the sink or in a storm drain harms people and the environment. Therefore, proper disposal is an essential practice. SHH promoters taught the participants how to use the website to find a convenient disposal site. This is an example of Mother Africa teaching system navigation to immigrant and refugee communities.



PowerPoint images viewed on mobile phones guided the educational sessions.

Expanding Our Reach

REGIONAL PRESENTATION

The Mother Africa team was invited by the Refugee Forum of King County (RFKC) to share how we provided community outreach in several topics and multiple languages. We shared our experience co-creating culturally appropriate curriculum and conducting interactive educational sessions for the African and Middle Eastern communities.

RFKC is an organization providing information and networking opportunities for people serving refugees in the Puget Sound region.

- Language**
We speak the language of participants 
- Culture**
We come from the communities we serve 
- Connection**
We honor participant homelands 
- Engagement & Information**
We share stories and information visually 
- Interaction**
We encourage participants to practice and share safer cleaning recipes 



WASTEMOBILE POP-UP

We planned to bring a smaller version of the Wastemobile, a safe disposal service, to a convenient location for Mother Africa's community members. We called it the "Wastemobile Pop-up" which would have included educational content and live interpretation in Arabic, French and Mai Mai.

Unfortunately, siting and logistical challenges delayed progress, and the Pop-up did not occur. The time and effort put in by Mother Africa and Haz Waste Program provided lessons learned and a template to inform future attempts.

Expanding Our Reach (continued)

SUMMER CAMP

One of the Mother Africa summer camp themes was environmental awareness. We educated campers about how to identify hazardous products and safer alternatives and how to make safer cleaning recipes with baking soda and vinegar.

Campers loved the recipe to clean drains and were happy to share their experience with their moms and take home a Safer Cleaning Kit to their families.



PRODUCT TESTING

Mother Africa participated in an effort by Public Health - Seattle & King County to test products for lead.

We recruited families most likely to be impacted by lead exposure. The team held virtual briefing sessions to explain how to find one to three products that could be tested. We hosted two product testing events and created a system to identify families and products that allowed us to contact them with guidance if needed. We provided interpretation in Arabic, French and Mai Mai.

Most products tested were toys, spices, seasonings, cosmetics, cookware and metal dishware. The products that were brought in for testing were purchased overseas and in the USA.

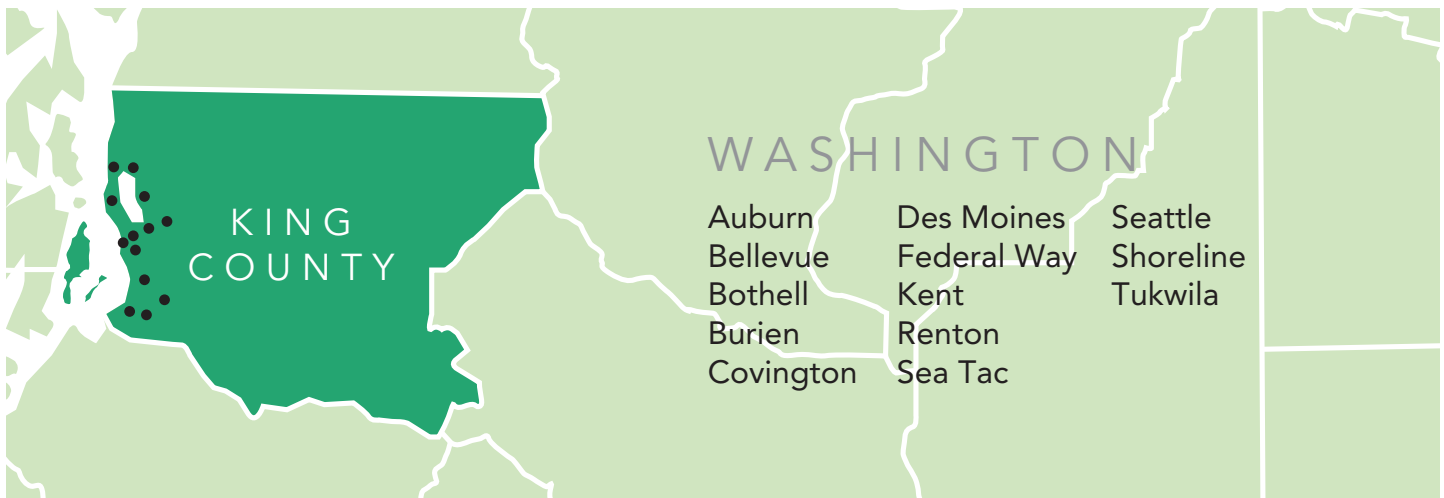


Safer Cleaning Participants

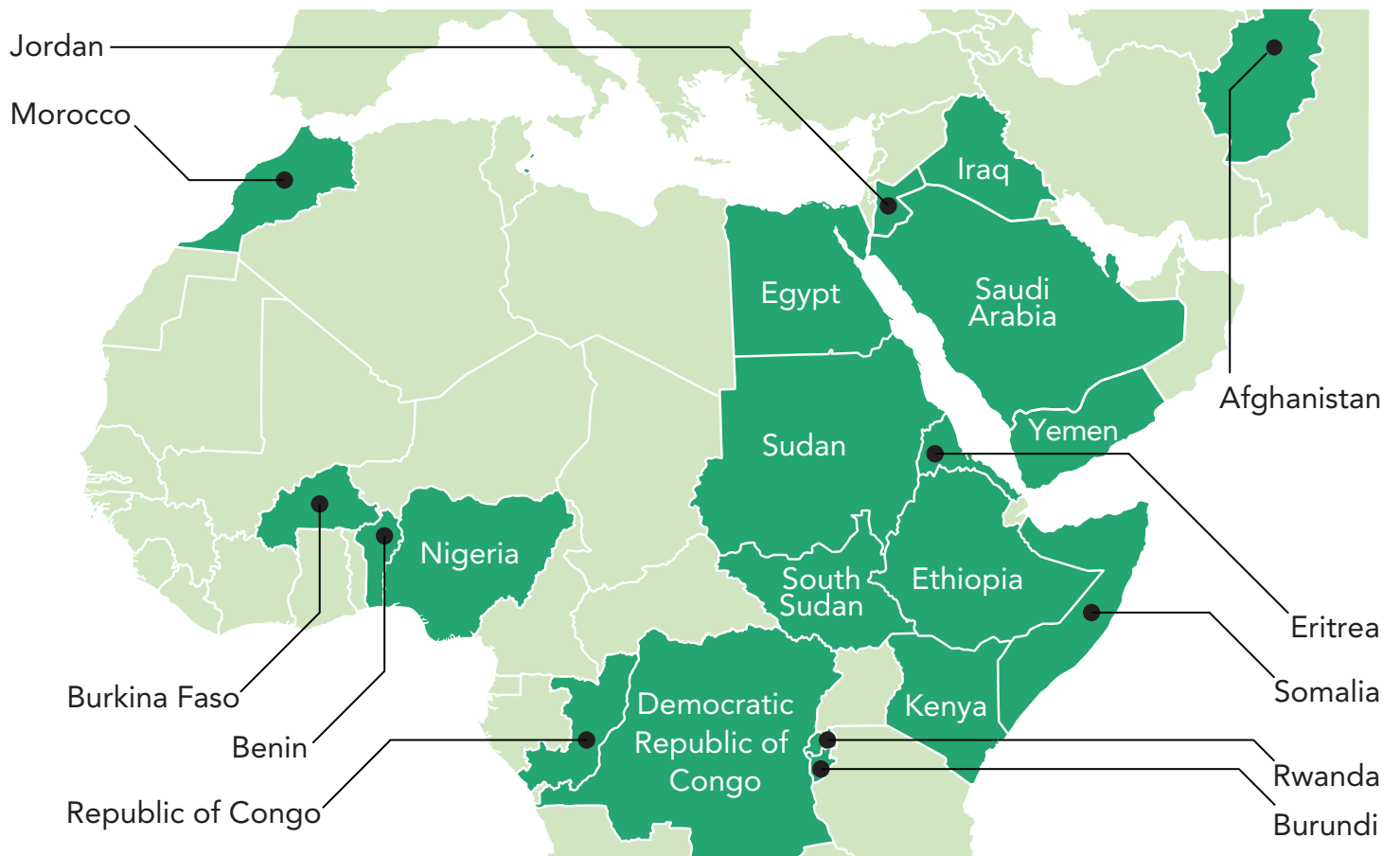
PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Participants in summer camp and the educational sessions represented 13 King County cities and 20 countries.

Participants' Location in King County



Participants' Country of Origin



Safer Cleaning Participants

WHAT PEOPLE LEARNED

For the Safer Cleaning educational visits, the SHH Promoters conducted a pre-survey with 80 participants and connected with 79 participants for a post-survey follow-up. This allowed us to record changes in participant awareness and behavior change.



BEFORE (80 respondents)	QUESTIONS	AFTER (79 respondents)
23%	Do you make cleaning products using a recipe?	89%
35%	Do you look for a safety sign or words on cleaning products?	99%
	What is that safety sign or word you look for?	
28%	DANGER	68%
0%	Safer Choice	34%
17%	WARNING	30%
0%	POISON	18%
3%	CAUTION	16%
	How do you get rid of hazardous products?	
3%	Take to a hazardous collection site	99%
73%	Put in the trash	5%
38%	Pour down the toilet	4%
10%	Put in storm drain	0%
	How do you prevent mold from growing?	
55%	Open windows	90%
0%	Cover cook pots while cooking	61%
8%	Fix water leaks	57%
8%	Clean with soap and water	54%
24%	Clean with bleach	5%
	Do you know how to protect yourself from lead exposure?	
17%	Wash your hands	91%
9%	Leave shoes outside	76%
0%	Eat a good diet	65%
1%	Damp dust and damp mop	14%
78%	I don't know	0%

THE BROADER REACH OF THE SAFER HEALTHY HOMES PROJECT

LOCAL

EDUCATIONAL VISITS		SUMMER CAMP	PRODUCT TESTING		
80	388	76	50	273	124
Participants	Family members	Children	Participants	Family members	Products Tested



REGIONAL

REFUGEE FORUM	
30	69
attendees	views on YouTube

NATIONAL

EPA ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PANEL	
80	101
attendees	views on Mother Africa YouTube Channel

THANK YOU!

The Hazardous Waste Management Program wants to thank the Mother Africa team for your hard work and dedication to the families served by the Safer Healthy Homes Project.

The project was led by Program Manager, Kholoud Naser Aldeen and Program Coordinator, Rasha Elshaarawi. The Health Promoters were Jeanne d'Arc Musabyimana, Sahar Alarasi, Ahado Abdi and Jumaa Suleiman.

Mother Africa would like to extend their appreciation to Julia Presar, the Hazardous Waste Project Manager.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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