



Mahdi A. Taakilo is the president of the Somali Link Newspaper and also the Helping Africans in a New Direction organization. He has been instrumental in helping refugees resettle within central Ohio through his willingness to provide social service information to the Somali people. Mr. Taakilo understands the importance of articulating the problems of his people and has found ways to discuss and communicate about these very difficult issues because of stigma or common misconceptions associated with mental health and substance abuse. Mr. Taakilo is a critical link in the bridge connecting the information gap between western society and the Somali community.

In addition to his work with behavioral health issues and awareness, he has also worked with groups of Somali youth to help them understand the challenges of living in America. He has spent time hosting workshops for Somali youth to tell their stories as a way to express their opinions about the challenges they face.

Mr. Taakilo received MACC's "Enlightened Kaleidoscope" Award in 2008. He was actively involved in planning and organizing MACC's Annual Statewide Training conference 2009 "New Shores: Health Messages for Emerging Populations" Featuring Somali Culture and joined MACC Board in 2010.