



**HORN OF  
AFRICA**  
PEOPLE'S AID NI

# HORN OF AFRICA PEOPLE'S AID NI

## Annual Report 2022 — 2023

### Chair Remarks,

As I reflect on the accomplishments and dedicated efforts of the past year, I am compelled to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Horn of Africa People's Aid Northern Ireland (HAPANI) volunteers, including our esteemed voluntary board members. Your unwavering commitment and selfless contributions towards the objectives of our organisation have been truly commendable. Serving as the Chair of Horn of Africa People's Aid Northern Ireland from 2022 to 2023 has been an immense privilege, and I extend my sincerest thanks to all involved.

Our journey has been marked by the tireless endeavours of our devoted staff and volunteers, who have stood as pillars in advocating for and addressing the needs of individuals from the Horn of Africa residing in Northern Ireland and beyond. Despite the intricate nature of specific cases that rightly belong within the purview of statutory agencies, our collective efforts have positively impacted numerous individuals. Through our initiatives, we have facilitated access to education and housing and provided essential financial aid to those experiencing poverty within our community.

As we chart our course forward, our current strategic plan for HAPANI spans the next five years, bearing the hallmark of enhanced advocacy initiatives geared towards catalysing substantive change. Our primary goal remains steadfast: to exert sustained pressure on public authorities, compelling them to be more responsive to the distinct requirements of the beneficiaries of our services.

In this pursuit, we aim to address immediate needs and instigate systemic change that will benefit future generations. The next phase of our journey involves collaborative partnerships, innovative programmes, and unwavering dedication towards achieving our mission of providing holistic support and championing the rights of individuals from the Horn of Africa community.

As we embark on this continued endeavour, I invite you to join hands with us, contributing your expertise, support, and enthusiasm towards our collective vision. Let us carve a future where compassion, empowerment, and inclusivity reign.

With sincere appreciation,

#### **Acknowledgements**

Our work was made possible with support from many public and private partners. We are truly grateful for all the support, including financial and in-kind.

**Belfast City Council**

**BBC Children in Need**

**National Lottery Community Fund**

**Community Foundation for Northern Ireland**

**Vodafone Charities Connected**

**Co-operation Ireland**

**Souter Charitable**

**[www.neighbourly.com](http://www.neighbourly.com)**

## **About HAPANI**

Horn of Africa People's Aid Northern Ireland (HAPANI) is a registered charity and a non-governmental organisation which supports individuals living in Northern Ireland from the Horn of Africa: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and the Republic of Sudan and South Sudan. HAPANI is open and accessible to all and does not discriminate against ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, or social origin.

HAPANI was formed in 2011 by individuals from HOA communities in Northern Ireland, with the support of committed residents. Registered as a company limited by guarantee, it has charitable status. HAPANI operates honestly, openly, and transparently and will partner with individuals and organisations that do the same.

HOA refugees in Northern Ireland face problems with access to service providers due to language and knowledge barriers. There are problems with housing, particularly in the private rented sector. There are challenges in securing employment, even when refugee status is granted. There are health issues, including those stemming from trauma in the region, ranging from mental ill-health to FGM. For some, the asylum process can cause trauma, given the immense uncertainties and the risks of destitution and deportation. And there are difficulties with family reunification, with further issues regarding children's entry into school.

### **Core objectives**

To develop independent initiatives that foster autonomy and participation among Horn of Africa individuals.

To raise awareness within public services so that they can respond flexibly to the needs of individuals from the Horn of Africa and beyond.

- To challenge intolerance towards individuals from African communities in Northern Ireland. - To develop mutual support between Horn of Africa individuals, refugees, asylum seekers, dependants, and members of the "host" community.

- To raise funds and resources for education, agriculture, and health-related projects in the Horn of Africa countries.

### **Areas of work**

HAPANI offer a wide range of programmes and activities for the benefit of the HOA and wider BAME residents living within Northern Ireland. All are specifically designed to support and enhance the lives of our deprived community. Through its activities, HAPANI aims to provide its participants with the tools necessary to live healthier and happier lives. Our activities include:

- Homework clubs
- Employment scheme for men and women
- Destitution Project
- Housing programme
- Advocacy
- Sports
- Computer suite
- Volunteer co-ordination
- Drop-in service
- Signposting
- Outreach activities
- Youth leadership
- tackling digital poverty Project
- Retreat Housing: Community-Led Housing Project
- Youth Social Action
- One Child, One Device

- Destitute/Drop-in Service
- Homework Club
  
- Scholarship
- Language Classes, Cultural activities and training
- Youth Leadership
- Workshops

We are Highlighting here some of our above projects.

### **Destitution Project: Making a Difference Amidst Adversity**

In the financial year spanning from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023, Horn of Africa People's Aid Northern Ireland (HAPANI) witnessed unwavering support from dedicated funders and supporters. This steadfast backing enabled us to impact the lives of impoverished people in our community significantly.

This year's pivotal highlight was the successful distribution of £130,245 in cash donations through our Destitution Project. This vital support directly reached 440 households and individuals, offering immediate relief during extreme need. These funds alleviated hardships, providing stability to the most vulnerable members of our community.

Our heartfelt gratitude extends to our esteemed funders whose generous contributions made this achievement possible. Their compassion and dedication to our cause empowered us to raise support and reinforced our commitment to advocating for those in dire circumstances.

We sincerely appreciate our funders' unwavering belief and trust, allowing us to execute projects effectively and reach those urgently requiring assistance. Their dedication resonates with our mission, and we are honoured to have their partnership in bettering society.

Additionally, sincere thanks go to our supporters, volunteers, and community members. Your contributions, be it time, effort, or resources, amplified the impact of our initiatives, fostering hope within our community.

As we conclude this financial year, HAPANI remains steadfast in its core values. Despite challenges, with continued support from stakeholders and the community, we are resolute in forging ahead to create a more compassionate and inclusive society for all.

Thank you for being an integral part of our impactful journey.

### **Digital Poverty Tackling: Bridging the Gap with One Child, One Device**

In the pursuit of combating digital poverty among young people from the Horn of Africa communities in Northern Ireland and beyond, HAPANI is proud to have successfully implemented the One Child One Device programme. This crucial initiative aimed to address the pressing issue of digital exclusion, particularly among the youth, and has yielded significant positive outcomes.

Over the period from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023, our programme facilitated the distribution of 1,101 six-month SIM cards to users of our services. These SIM cards, provided as part of the project, have been instrumental in bridging the connectivity gap for young individuals and households, enabling them to access essential resources and tools required for their academic pursuits.

The invaluable support from the Vodafone Charities Connected campaign has been pivotal in making this endeavour possible. Their partnership and contribution have played a crucial role in providing devices and connections to children and young people, empowering them to engage effectively in remote learning and work.

Through this initiative, we have directly impacted the lives of those most in need within our community. By addressing the digital divide, we ensured households facing economic challenges did not miss out on educational and other essential opportunities due to limited internet access. This support aimed to equip them to reach their full potential and keep various pathways open for future success.

So far, the successes represent the beginning of our One Child, One Device programme. HAPANI remains committed to supporting our young people and eradicating digital poverty. This initiative is not a temporary fix but a long-term commitment to creating lasting benefits for our community and future generations.

The project's profound impact on the lives of our youth has been a source of immense pride for us. Moving forward, we are dedicated to continuing our efforts to ensure that digital inclusion remains a cornerstone of our community's growth and progress.

### **Summary: People and Communities Project Impact**

The People and Communities project, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, has been instrumental in empowering HAPANI to address the pressing needs of our local community.

Emphasising inclusivity and equality, all our activities are meticulously designed to cater to the challenges faced by individuals, particularly refugees, asylum seekers, and those from diverse cultural backgrounds (BAME communities).

Central to our approach is the involvement of volunteers and staff who bring firsthand experiences related to the issues we seek to tackle. Through comprehensive consultation methods like feedback forms, focus groups, and informal conversations, we ensure community input in shaping every initiative. This collective effort aims to facilitate equal access to services, breaking language and cultural barriers.

The involvement of a business development manager has been pivotal in identifying and planning new activities. Continuous community consultation remains integral, ensuring alignment with evolving needs. Rigorous evaluation of our programs aids in understanding their impact, informing future initiatives, and enhancing our effectiveness while fostering a sense of community empowerment.

This initiative has yielded significant benefits for both HAPANI and the community. We've seen substantial organisational growth by offering support and equal access to services, particularly to marginalised groups. Employing a managerial role has enhanced our operational efficiency and structure, leading to better coordination of activities and volunteers.

Throughout the past year, we've experienced a surge in demand for our diverse services, from educational support like homework clubs and language classes to advocacy work, cultural events, and innovative projects like the digital poverty initiative. Our housing project and other community-focused programs have positively impacted hundreds of individuals.

Transitioning from a volunteer-led model to incorporating paid staff has been transformative. Despite initial challenges, this change has significantly improved planning and management capacities, leading to more effective operations. Looking ahead, we anticipate and are prepared to address future challenges, building upon the foundation laid in this successful year.

In conclusion, the past year has been a testament to our dedication, adaptability, and responsiveness to community needs. HAPANI remains committed to expanding services, adapting to challenges, and consistently serving the diverse needs of our community in the forthcoming year.

### **Addressing Critical Challenges Faced by Refugees and Asylum Seekers: A Collaborative Effort**

The joint endeavour between HAPANI and AKIDWA, supported graciously by The All-Island Fund and The Community Foundations, has brought to light the pressing difficulties refugees and asylum seekers encounter in Northern Ireland. Engaging with over 150 individuals, our collective initiative has revealed profound case studies that vividly illustrate the daily, formidable obstacles confronting these resilient communities.

These case studies serve as poignant reflections, shedding light on the systemic issues profoundly impacting refugees and asylum seekers. For instance, Case Study 1 outlines Nawal's struggle as a qualified special needs teacher, unable to secure employment due to location constraints and a lack of nearby childcare facilities. Similarly, Case Study 2 illuminates Noah's predicament—a law degree holder compelled to work as a taxi driver due to extended stays in Direct Provision Centres, depriving his family of fundamental rights.

The emotional toll is palpable in Case Studies 3 and 4, where Ditta and Lara navigate distressing circumstances that affect their well-being and that of their children, emphasising the urgent need for heightened support and empowerment.

Case Study 5 casts a light on the educational deprivation faced by asylum-seeking children, highlighting the disruptive impact of relocation and inadequate access to proper schooling, further exacerbated during the lockdown. Furthermore, Case Study 6 reveals the barriers limiting the educational paths of migrant children, especially in STEM subjects, stifling their potential.

Case Study 7 underscores the challenges in accessing healthcare for disabled individuals due to language barriers and administrative hurdles, intensifying their vulnerability. Additionally, Case Study 8 exposes the inadequate living conditions within Direct Provision Centres, leading to privacy breaches and mental health strains among residents.

Tragically, Case Study 9 portrays the harsh reality of long-term asylum seekers grappling with rejection and poverty, underscoring the dire need for enhanced support and resources.

These compelling case studies strongly advocate for immediate policy reforms and systemic changes to alleviate the multifaceted challenges faced by refugees and asylum seekers in Northern Ireland. We advocate for:

Enhanced accessibility to employment opportunities by addressing location barriers and childcare constraints for qualified individuals.

Dignified living conditions, privacy, and comprehensive mental health support for residents.

Tailored educational programs that cater to the diverse needs of asylum-seeking children, ensuring uninterrupted access to quality schooling.

Improved healthcare access by eliminating language barriers and administrative obstacles for disabled and vulnerable populations.

Strengthened support systems and resources specifically designed to address the needs and vulnerabilities of long-term asylum seekers.

Together, HAPANI, AKIDWA, and The All-Island Fund at The Community Foundations champion these pivotal changes, striving to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for refugees and asylum seekers in Northern Ireland.

Our collective efforts have culminated in the publication of the 'Toolkit - Becoming Culturally Competent', aimed at guiding service providers and individuals working with vulnerable migrants.

This toolkit underscores the importance of cultural competence, self-awareness, cultural knowledge, language proficiency, and support systems as indispensable pillars for effective service delivery and community integration.

It is imperative to heed these calls for change and unite in creating a more compassionate, inclusive, and equitable society for refugees and asylum seekers in Northern Ireland.

### **Building Futures, Empowering Communities:**

### **1) Retreat Housing: A Beacon of Hope for Newcomers**

HAPANI proudly introduced Retreat Housing in the fiscal year, a pioneering community-driven venture designed as a sustainable social enterprise. Retreat Housing, the social enterprise branch of Horn of Africa People's Aid Northern Ireland (HAPANI), targets housing and homelessness issues among refugees and asylum seekers in Northern Ireland. To address hurdles such as private rentals, language barriers with landlords, and accessing public housing, Retreat Housing emerged as a Community Interest Company under HAPANI's ownership. Its primary goal is to ensure every individual has a home and feels a sense of belonging by providing affordable housing and community-driven support. HAPANI's Comprehensive Housing Advocacy and Support: Assisting 379 Cases in Referrals, Financial Support, and Different Sector's Advocacy (01 April 2022 - 31 March 2023). Additionally, Retreat Housing aims to create job opportunities and training programs to help newcomers integrate into the job market. Support from CFNI, Co-operation Ireland, and the Oak Foundation has backed the initiative. HAPANI has identified potential assets for repurposing to tackle homelessness, concentrating on two properties for Phase I (2023-2024) and planning five more for Phase II (2025-2027). Retreat Housing is committed to bridging the housing gap for refugees and asylum seekers, enabling their smoother integration into Northern Irish society.

### **2) Youth Social Action: Nurturing Future Leaders:**

Our vibrant youth took the helm with the inception of the Youth Social Action project, demonstrating exemplary leadership, initiative, and dedication. This initiative continues to flourish, offering diverse activities aimed at mentoring, cultivating leadership skills, fostering camaraderie through sporting events, and spearheading various social action endeavours.

Empowering the younger generation lies at the heart of HAPANI's mission. Through the Youth Social Action project, we nurture leadership qualities, encourage teamwork, and instil a sense of social responsibility among our youth. This dynamic initiative fosters personal growth and cultivates a spirit of giving back to the community.

This project's ongoing success highlights our youth cohort's incredible potential. It is a testament to their passion for effecting positive change and our unwavering dedication to building a brighter future for themselves and our communities.

Reflecting on the past year's achievements, these initiatives underscore HAPANI's unwavering commitment to creating sustainable solutions, fostering community-driven change, and empowering individuals to thrive. We look forward to continuing this journey of transformation and impact in the years to come.

### **HAPANI Drop-In Services: Supporting Our Community's Needs**

HAPANI operates a vital drop-in service from our central office in Belfast, effectively managed by our committed volunteers. This pivotal platform is a guiding beacon, directing members towards appropriate services while identifying prevalent issues and emerging trends within our community. This year, our drop-in volunteers achieved a significant milestone by extending support to 582 families and individuals seeking assistance from our services. This success underscores the efficacy of our drop-in service, showcasing its pivotal role in meeting the diverse needs of our community. Our drop-in service serves as an essential avenue through which HAPANI provides immediate assistance and gathers critical insights into recurring challenges faced by individuals and families. These insights form the basis for tailored support initiatives and effectively resolving systemic issues.

HAPANI takes immense pride in the dedicated efforts of our drop-in services. As we move forward, our unwavering commitment remains focused on these services' continual enhancement and

expansion. We aim to ensure that our community receives the support and guidance necessary for their well-being and continued progress.

### **Football Activities Enriching Community Engagement**

Our organisation has actively engaged diverse age groups through football-centric initiatives to foster community integration, physical and mental well-being, and sheer enjoyment. Here's a glimpse of our impactful activities:

**Engaging Older Community Members:** At Shaftesbury Community Centre, we've conducted bi-weekly football sessions catering to individuals aged 18 and above. These sessions aim to alleviate isolation, combat boredom, and promote holistic health. Witnessing the enthusiastic participation of over 45 individuals has been indeed heartening.

**Empowering Younger Generation:** Weekly football sessions held at Ozone Ormeau Park have been dedicated to youngsters aged 8 to 16. These sessions focus on fun, fitness, and community interaction. Approximately 50 young participants have actively engaged and thrived within this environment, fostering personal growth and a love for the game.

**Participation in Tournaments:** Our under-18s have showcased exceptional prowess in the Kick Off tournaments, reaching the semifinals for two consecutive years. Anticipation runs high as our senior players passionately represent us in the Northern Ireland Confederation Cup, demonstrating remarkable dedication and sportsmanship.

**Community-Centric Events:** Our commitment to fostering inclusivity and cultural exchange culminated in organising impactful events. The Eid Festival at Shaftesbury Community Centre and the Cultural Day at Malone Hotel were resounding successes, drawing over 150 attendees each. These vibrant celebrations showcased diverse cultures through dance, culinary delights, and expressive performances, fostering a rich tapestry of community connection and celebration. These football-oriented endeavours have nurtured sporting skills and served as powerful platforms to bridge communities, celebrate diversity, and promote well-being among participants. We remain dedicated to continuing these impactful initiatives, uniting communities through the universal language of football.

As well as presenting an overview of the annual activities delivered by Horn of Africa People's Aid Northern Ireland (HAPANI), this document is also used to fulfil HAPANI's NI Charity Commission requirements. As such, the following information is included within this report to suffice this purpose:

1. Name of Charity as it appears on the Register.

Horn of Africa People's Aid Northern Ireland (HAPANI)

2. NI Charity Commission Number: NIC101637

3. The Purpose of Your Charity

For the relief of poverty, the advancement of education and for the benefit of African people primarily from the Horn of Africa but not exclusively, including asylum seekers and refugees and their dependants living in Northern Ireland and for the relief of children living in the Horn of Africa ("the beneficiaries") and in particular:

- (a) To provide practical assistance, promote social inclusion, promote racial harmony and assist the beneficiaries in integrating into society in Northern Ireland.

- (b) To provide education programmes, including English language lessons and assistance with homework for the beneficiaries in Northern Ireland.
  - (c) To relieve poverty by developing and maintaining programmes of sponsorship to support the education and development of children living in the Horn of Africa.
  - (d) To advance any other exclusively charitable purpose as the directors may, from time to time, decide in accordance with the law of charity.
4. The names of all Charity Trustees on the date the report was approved and all individuals who served as Charity Trustees during the year. HAPANI Charity Trustees include:
- 1. Suleiman Abdulahi
  - 2. Mohamed Ahmed
  - 3. Hassan Mohamed
  - 4. Foosiyah Nuuh

The following Trustees approved this report on 29 December 2023.

- 1. Mohamed Edle Ahmed
- 2. Hassan Abdi Mohamed
- 3. Foosiyah Nuuh
  
- 4. Sahra Hussein Amin

5. The financial year the trustee report relates to:

This report reflects the year April 2022 to March 2023

6. A summary of the Charity's main activities to further its purposes for the public benefit and the main achievements/targets achieved in the year.

This is detailed in the report above.

7. A statement that the Trustees have had regard to the Commission's Public Benefit requirement.

All HAPANI Trustees have reviewed the Commission's Public Benefit requirements (The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's statutory guidance on the public benefit requirement, July 2016) and are comfortable with Hapana's ability and capacity to meet these requirements. This includes HAPANI's purpose within one of the 12 descriptions of purposes listed in the Charities Act HAPANI's purposes are designed for public benefit.


8. A review of the financial position at the end of the year, e.g. Brief Synopsis of the Charity's financial position

The financial statements show the results for the year in detail. The Board is pleased with HAPANI's financial performance. 2022- 2023 has involved significant expenditure on funded projects. The Board is happy that costs are well contained within budget and have secured funding for the near future.

9. Details of any fund held by the Charity that was materially in deficit at the end of the year and steps taken by the Charity Trustees to eliminate the deficit.

None.

One or more of the Charity Trustees must sign and date the trustee report.

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| Charity Trustee Name: Mohamed Edle Ahmed   |
| Position: Chair  |
| Signed:  |
| Date: 29/12/2023   |