

## **FOCAS ANNUAL REPORT 2020**

January 01, 2020 -December 31,2020

### **Executive Summary**

The year 2020 was incredibly unique in affecting everyone's activities all over the world. Most of our plan for community engagement and organizational expansion were totally impacted and ultimately cancelled. On the other hand, it opened a new door of opportunity to help our community through the Canadian Emergency Fund for COVID-19. This fund helped us reach vulnerable community members in three cities. We reached more than 1500 people from various communities such as Oromo, Syrians, Lebanese, Somali, Sudanese, Eritreans, Ethiopians in the last seven months.

The pandemic also gave us the opportunity to move most of our services online. Our core project, Children Empowerment through Education program also benefited from the grant as we were able to provide them with a chrome book each. New ideas for community engagement through seminars, workshops and trainings also benefited from this program.

### **FOCAS FAMILY DAY EVENT**

This takes place every year around mid-February during Alberta Family day holiday. FOCAS has been celebrating Family day since its inception. On these days, newcomers join in to learn how the Oromo and other newcomers' family thrive in Canada. Potluck and other Oromo cultural foods and traditional costumes are displayed. It is the holiday that families come together and enjoy their lives in Canada. Several educational, cultural and entertainment programs are presented. New members are registered and fundraisings are held. The 2020 event was different as we had Oromo Cultural dancers.



## **WOMENS CONFERENCE**

The Womens conference is an occasion when newcomers and immigrant women join other Canadian women particularly those who were born and raised in Canada for many generations. The objective of this event is to share cultural and traditional experiences with a special focus to family handling including child rearing and home management. More than 60 women from different cultures and backgrounds met and shared their experience. Cultural food and snacks were provided.



## **MEET YOUR ROLE MODEL**

As is known, immigration to developed countries has good and bad aspects for internationally educated individuals. Most of the doctors, engineers, teachers, and other scholars are not recognized in their fields or as professionals with a lot of talent to contribute to the communities they are resettled in. As a result, sometimes it is very hard for a taxi driver doctor to convince his daughter about the importance of education. We have a lot of stories to tell

regarding this role model issue. To mitigate this problem, we have a program to invite prominent immigrant individuals who have succeeded in their lives in the western world. For 2020, our guests were Minister Ahmed Hussein; Professor Hamza Abdulrazak and PhD student Biftu Yusuf as a role models for immigrant children and parents.



**VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION**

As a not-for-profit organization, FOCAS depends immensely on volunteers. Particularly our school children empowerment program which is entirely run with only volunteers. Our programs currently have more than 15 permanent volunteer workers. It is critically important

to appreciate our volunteers and we have in March our volunteer appreciation day. We barely escaped the lockdown in 2020. Parents of our students brought home made food and drinks.



### COVID-19

The saying goes “when one door closes, another door opens for you”. COVID-19 lockdown seemed to shut down all our opportunities when the Canadian government intervened and put

in place the Emergency Support Fund. FOCAS was one of the first recipients of a substantial government grant. Through this grant we swiftly reached more than 1500 most vulnerable children and seniors. Many communities in Edmonton, Calgary and Brooks have been supported for the last seven months. The Oromo, Syrians, Somali, Lebanese, Sudanese, Eritreans, Ethiopians are a few of the communities who received this assistance. More than 90 volunteers, 17 casual workers and 4 full-time and part-time workers were involved. We also received donations of handmade masks and office supplies.



## **COVID-19 AWARENESS TRAINING**

Another major activity we did in 2020 was extensive COVID-19 awareness education seminars. We held more than 15 sessions on the zoom platform. More than 2250 people attended these education sessions. Many health professionals from all over the world and community activists participated in the events.



## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

In November we held our annual general meeting. With the COVID restrictions still in place we had a successful experience on the Zoom platform. New board members were elected and

outgoing board members were thanked for their work. The meeting was well attended and the effort and time of all our board members was acknowledged.

Our current board consists of the following people:

Sala Issa

Umer Taha

Biftu Yousuf

Carlos Viaalard

Moahmed Abazinab

Nujuma Moahmed

Gamachu Taha

2020 was an interesting and demanding year. We have grown as an organization and followed the many opportunities that came about because of COVID-19. We anticipate more to come in 2021.