

**2024-2025**

**Mehari Centre Annual Report**



Mehari Centre is a charity designed to provide essential services to Newcomers and the Eritrean community in Ottawa.



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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respectfully acknowledge that Ottawa is built on the unceded, unsundered Territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation, whose presence here dates to time immemorial. We honor all First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples for their valuable past and present contributions to this land.

## A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

This past year has been a pivotal one for the Mehari Centre. What began as a vision to create a culturally grounded, welcoming space for Eritreans in Ottawa has taken firm root. We are growing into an organization that not only serves immediate needs but also builds long-term capacity for community resilience and belonging.

Our journey is guided by the values of Wefera (mutual aid), Justice, Healing, Eldership, Solidarity, and Harmony. These values are not only reflected in the programs we deliver, but also in the way we govern, collaborate, and engage with our community.

The Centre's progress has been made possible through the trust of our community, the dedication of our Board, staff, and volunteers, and the strong partnerships we continue to nurture across Ottawa. Together, we are ensuring that the Eritrean community has both a voice and a home in the broader civic landscape.

As we look ahead, our priority is to strengthen this foundation, deepen our partnerships, and ensure sustainability. The Mehari Centre is more than an organization—it is a movement to affirm identity, support well-being, and foster solidarity.

I am deeply proud of what we have accomplished together, and I am confident that the Mehari Centre will continue to be a beacon of strength and unity for years to come.

Sara Gebre-Giorgis  
Board Chair



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

It is with pride and gratitude that I share this year's report on the progress of the Mehari Centre. Since 2022, we have been working to uplift the Eritrean and African newcomer community in Ottawa through culturally and linguistically anchored services.

In 2024–25, our focus was on strengthening our foundation while expanding programs and partnerships. We achieved charitable status, secured dedicated space for our women's and children's circles, launched programs with part-time staff, and completed our needs assessment and demographic research. We also led a mental health campaign at the Merhaba Festival in collaboration with Ottawa Public Health, the Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition, and Britannia Woods Community House. With the support of L'Arche Ottawa staff and many volunteers, we mobilized community engagement while building staff and volunteer capacity through training.

These milestones were made possible through strong partnerships with TAIBU Community Health Centre, Nepean Rideau Osgood Community Resource Centre, Ottawa Community Foundation, Somerset West Community Health Centre, and the City of Ottawa. I am especially grateful to Liben Gebremikael for his continuous mentorship, as well as our advisors, volunteers, and Board members, whose dedication ensures our success.

Together, we continue to build a safe and welcoming space for Eritreans in Ottawa—grounded in the values of Wefera (mutual aid), Justice, Healing, Eldership, Solidarity, and Harmony.

Looking ahead, we are committed to growing our impact, addressing barriers, and fostering a stronger, healthier community. The Mehari Centre is becoming a beacon of support and solidarity for Eritreans and newcomers in Ottawa, and I look forward to the journey ahead.

Yodit Girmay  
Executive Director



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The past year has been transformative for the Mehari Centre. Building on the foundation established in our early years, we expanded our reach within the Eritrean, East African, and newcomer communities while strengthening organizational capacity. Our programs delivered vital supports, including settlement services, legal information, youth engagement, cultural initiatives, and community wellness programming.

This year was also a turning point in governance and sustainability. We obtained charitable status, strengthened internal policies, and expanded our advisory and volunteer networks. Strategic partnerships with faith groups, health and settlement providers, and local institutions enabled us to meet the diverse needs of our community in culturally grounded and accessible ways.

Our needs assessment study validated our preliminary findings on service needs, helped align programs with community priorities, and informed our three-year strategic plan.

Financially, the Mehari Centre managed \$68,730.59 in revenue for 2024–25, including deferred income from the previous year, donations, and support from key partners such as the Ottawa Community Foundation, the City of Ottawa, and Ottawa Coalition To End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW). Expenses of \$26,328.71 were directed toward program delivery, staffing, and community engagement, ensuring resources reached those who needed them most. We closed the year with a net balance of \$45,908.29, positioning the Centre for continued stability and growth in 2025–26. In-kind contributions, estimated at over \$100,000 in space, volunteer time, and partner support, further amplified our impact.

Looking ahead, the Mehari Centre will continue to prioritize outreach, community-driven programming, and the development of infrastructure to support Eritrean and newcomer communities in Ottawa over the long term. This year reaffirmed both the demand for our services and the collective strength of our community.



## HISTORY AND MISSION

Founded in 2022, the Mehari Centre is dedicated to addressing the unique needs of Eritrean, African, and newcomer communities in Ottawa. Our mission is to promote and improve wellbeing through culturally and linguistically grounded programs and services that respond directly to community-identified priorities. The Centre provides a safe and welcoming environment where community members are affirmed, equipped with resources, and offered space to heal, connect, and thrive.

## BACKGROUND OF THE MEHARI CENTRE

The Mehari Centre was established to fill critical service gaps facing Eritrean newcomers in Ottawa, where culturally and linguistically appropriate supports have been limited. As the number of Eritreans resettling in Canada continues to grow, with more than 60,000 arriving as permanent residents in the past decade, the demand for tailored services remains urgent. While newcomers bring resilience and strength, they continue to face systemic barriers in housing, employment, access to healthcare, and navigating Canadian laws and systems.

In 2024–25, the Mehari Centre advanced from its early foundation to become a recognized community hub. With charitable status, strengthened governance, and expanded partnerships with faith groups, health and settlement providers, and local institutions, the organization is now positioned to deliver services in a more sustainable and impactful way.





## VISION

A holistic, healthy, flourishing and harmonious Eritrean Community in Ottawa



## MISSION

Mehari Centre's mission is to promote and improve the wellbeing of the Eritrean community in Ottawa through culturally and linguistically anchored programs and services that are grounded in evidence and community. Mehari Centre provides a safe and welcoming environment where Eritreans will be affirmed, equipped with needed information and resources, provided with space to heal and to connect with each other and the greater community.

## CORE VALUES

- ✚ **Wefera (ወፈራ)** – Mutual aid and communal efforts in times of crisis.
- ✚ **Justice (ፍትህ)** – Addressing social disparities and helping facilitate equitable integration into Canadian society.
- ✚ **Gender Equality (ማዕርነት)** – Empowering women and promoting their leadership.
- ✚ **Healing (ፈውሲ)** – Creating an environment of healing and restoration.
- ✚ **Eldership (ሸማግለ / ሸምግልና)** – Resolving differences and promoting wellness by tapping into the wisdom possessed by elders and those who are held in high esteem by the community.
- ✚ **Solidarity (ምትእብባር)** – Collaborating with partners to address systemic barriers.
- ✚ **Harmony (ሰነት)** – Celebrating diversity while working towards a united goal.

## THREE PILLARS OF OUR WORK

We operate under three pillars: **Settlement Services**, **Health Services**, and **Community-Based Research**. Research fills the lack of data on Eritreans in Ottawa, grounding Mehari Centre's activities in both evidence and community-based knowledge. Our community-based research approach aligns with the "For us, By us" ethos that is embraced in many racialized and underserved communities.



## OUR APPROACH

The Mehari Centre delivers culturally and linguistically grounded programs and services that respond to the needs of Eritrean, African, and newcomer communities in Ottawa. Our work combines direct services with community-based research and advocacy, ensuring that our programs reflect lived experiences and community priorities.

### Programs and Services

- Financial & Employment Support: tax clinics, job search assistance, and financial literacy resources.
- Housing & Tenant Rights: guidance on finding safe housing and understanding legal rights.
- Mental Wellness & Health Promotion: workshops and resources for emotional wellbeing.
- Cultural Adaptation: support for navigating cultural differences and Canadian laws.
- Education and Youth Support: school readiness programs and family support.
- Rights and Responsibilities: legal education on citizenship and workplace rights.
- Community Engagement: orientation sessions and connections to local services.
- Children's Program: weekly interactive activities for children under 10 that support social and emotional development and school readiness.
- Women's Programming: safe spaces for women to connect, share, reflect, and empower each other.
- One-on-One Support: personalized support for individuals and families facing isolation, family struggles, or other challenges.

### Community-Based Research and Advocacy

- Conducting ongoing needs assessments and demographic research.
- Engaging newcomer youth, parents, and faith leaders in focus groups.
- Partnering with organizations to address issues like gender-based violence.
- Sharing insights with service providers to strengthen belonging, access, and empowerment.



## 2024-2025 ACHIEVEMENTS AND INITIATIVES

### Governance and Structure

- Secured official charitable status.
- Improved board governance practices through consistent meetings, strengthened financial oversight, and expanded organizational knowledge of governance and compliance.

### Programs & Community Support

- Women's Program: officially launched on International Women's Day 2025, creating a safe space for women to connect, share, and empower each other.
- Children's Program: Weekly activities supporting school readiness and social-emotional development.
- Ongoing Programs: bi-weekly newcomer drop-ins and family programs continued to provide consistent support to the community.
- One-on-One Support: Confidential guidance and referrals for individuals facing isolation, family challenges, or service barriers.
- Volunteer Income Tax Clinic: Helped 30+ community members file returns and hosted financial literacy workshops.
- Community Workshops: 12 workshops delivered on topics including employment, housing, legal rights, parenting, nutrition, financial literacy, civic engagement, and newcomer integration.
- Youth Engagement: piloted ad hoc activities with newcomer youth, exploring mentorship and connection opportunities for future programming.
- Led a mental health campaign at the Merhaba Festival in collaboration with Ottawa Public Health, the Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition, and Britannia Woods Community House, mobilizing volunteers and building staff capacity.

### Workshops Delivered (2024–25)

1. Understanding the Canadian Financial System
2. Civic Engagement and Voting Rights (Ontario election)
3. Navigating the Education System
4. Job Search Strategies
5. Canadian Laws, Customs, and Traditions
6. Employment Rights



7. Private Sponsorship Overview
8. Pathways to Successful Integration
9. Parenting and Raising Children in Canada
10. Gender-Based Violence Awareness
11. Nutrition for Women
12. Budgeting and Basic Financial Literacy



## Community-Based Research & Advocacy

- Published the Eritrean Needs Assessment Report, based on 24 surveys and two focus groups, validating priority service gaps.
- Top issues identified: language barriers, access to services, unemployment/underemployment, poverty and inadequate housing, mental health challenges, social isolation, and concerns over youth education and cultural preservation.
- Shared insights with policymakers and agencies including TAIBU, OCTEVAW, NROCRC, Somerset West CHC, Ottawa U Law, and Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition.
- Continued advocacy for culturally relevant services and newcomer supports.

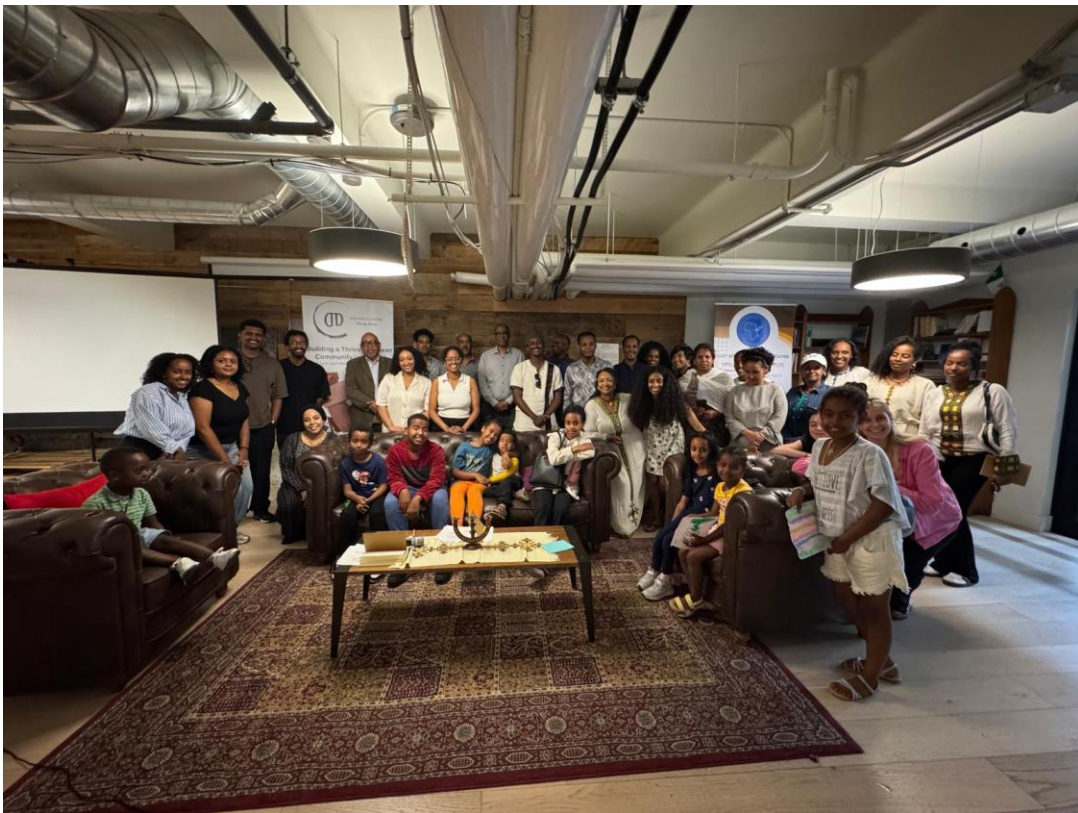
## Capacity Building & Partnerships

- Secured funding for the Women's and Children's Program: \$15,000 from the Ottawa Community Foundation and \$30,000 from the City of Ottawa (Emerging Needs funding stream).
- Partnered with key organizations to enhance community capacity-building efforts.
- Secured in-kind program space at Somerset West CHC (two rooms with kitchen).
- Trained 11 volunteers through internal sessions and external workshops covering immigrant mental health, GBV support, peer support, children's program delivery, and self-care.
- Strengthened partnerships with OCTEVAW, Somerset West Community Health Centre, and the City of Ottawa.



## Ongoing Initiatives & Future Plans

- Continuous volunteer recruitment, training, and onboarding.
- Ongoing weekly Women and Children programs.
- Ongoing bi-weekly drop-ins and family programs.
- Active case management and crisis intervention support.
- Outreach through faith groups and community associations to reach hard-to-access Eritrean newcomers.
- Resource development: translating information into Tigrigna, developing culturally relevant workshops, and piloting digital outreach via Instagram.
- Upcoming initiatives: creating a weekly drop-in for young men (Harmony - ስኒት), piloting and developing holistic mental health and wellness resources.
- Develop communications plan for hard launch & outreach.
- Recruit additional board members to fill identified gaps.
- Pilot one youth-focused initiative and one seniors' engagement activity.
- Establish referral partnerships for mental health and GBV support.





## COMMUNITY RESPONSE & IMPACT STORIES

The community's response to the Mehari Centre's activities has been overwhelmingly positive. Feedback continues to affirm the Centre's unique role:

- ❖ "These are angels from the sky, the care they give." (Two participants of the Women's Program)
- ❖ "Saturday afternoons are the highlight of our week." (Children attending the Children's Program)
- ❖ "When I walked into the room, I felt like I belonged. The atmosphere, the snacks, the music; it was so different from other service places. This was truly welcoming." (Sponsor who brought a relative for orientation and job search services)

Many respondents expressed their gratitude for the welcoming environment that the Mehari Centre has provided. They appreciated having a space where they can be understood, served in their own language, and connect with others facing similar challenges. Some have attended our events simply for the opportunity to meet other Eritreans and freely engage with agenda items and unplanned topics as they arise.





## NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY

### Objective

The Mehari Centre conducted this assessment to identify the most pressing challenges and service gaps faced by newcomer Eritreans in Ottawa. The study aims to inform Mehari's future programs and provide evidence to guide settlement agencies, service providers, and policymakers.

### Methodology

A mixed-methods approach was used:

- Focus Groups: Two sessions (23 participants) held in summer 2024, exploring settlement experiences, barriers, and community priorities.
- Surveys: 24 responses gathered online and in person.
- Accessibility: All materials translated into Tigrigna; sessions conducted in participants' preferred language.

While the study reflects important trends, limitations include a small, self-selected sample and literacy barriers, underscoring the need for larger-scale research.

### Key Findings

- Language Barriers & Access to Services: The most urgent challenge identified. Limited English skills, reliance on sponsors and relatives, and the absence of translators hinder service navigation. Many participants depend on Tigrigna-language social media, which reduces English learning and integration opportunities.
- Employment & Poverty: High unemployment and underemployment persist, with poverty a recurring theme across groups.
- Housing: Inadequate and costly housing is a critical challenge.
- Mental Health & Isolation: Mental health concerns and loneliness were repeatedly highlighted, especially for youth and seniors, with little culturally relevant support available.
- Settlement Knowledge: Low awareness of available services and cultural inaccessibility of agencies limit trust and uptake.
- Community Cohesion: Political divisions and lack of unity weaken the community. Participants stressed the urgent need for a central hub/community centre to provide reliable information, programming, and a space for cultural preservation.



## Top Issues Identified

1. Language barriers, access to services, and lack of information
2. Unemployment/underemployment
3. Poverty and inadequate housing
4. Mental health challenges and social isolation
5. Concerns over youth education and cultural preservation

## Conclusion

The assessment confirms that Eritrean newcomers in Ottawa face interconnected challenges, with language and information gaps as the primary barrier that compounds unemployment, housing, and mental health struggles. A dedicated Eritrean community hub, alongside culturally anchored programs, would significantly reduce isolation, ease the burden on sponsors, and foster greater integration, resilience, and unity.





## CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

- **High Demand for Individualized Settlement Supports:**
  - The organization continues to face overwhelming demand for personalized, one-on-one case management and settlement support. Many newcomers require home visits due to isolation, depression, or severe trauma-related mental health issues, underscoring the urgent need for expanded resources and capacity.
- **Unemployment and Job Support Needs:**
  - A significant challenge remains supporting community members in finding employment.
- **Housing Support:**
  - Affordable and adequate housing continues to be a pressing issue. Addressing this challenge requires strategic collaboration with stakeholders and innovative solutions for temporary and long-term housing.
- **Education & Language Barriers:**
  - Limited space in adult high schools and ESL classes constrains newcomers' opportunities for learning and integration.
- **Sustainable Funding:**
  - The Centre relies heavily on volunteers, grants, and donations, which can be inconsistent. Future operational funding sources may include federal, provincial, and municipal support, partnerships with local businesses, and social enterprise opportunities.
- **Maintaining a Positive Organizational Reputation:**
  - Balancing service demand with available capacity is critical. Transparent communication about limits on service delivery is essential to maintain trust and reputation within the community.
- **Community Engagement & Data Collection:**
  - Engaging community members through surveys is less effective than interviews or focus groups. Adapting data collection methods to community preferences ensures more accurate and meaningful insights.



## STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY (2025-2028)

In June 2025, the Mehari Centre’s Board of Directors, staff, and leadership gathered for a strategic planning retreat to chart the next phase of our growth. Guided by the 2024 Community Needs Assessment and frontline insights, the retreat identified five priorities to shape our work over the next three years:

1. **Hard Launch & Outreach:** Strengthening visibility through social media, storytelling, donor engagement, and active participation in community and policy spaces.
2. **Board Expansion & Governance:** Building leadership continuity through succession planning, new committees, training, and accountability practices.
3. **Program & Service Expansion:** Enhancing women’s, children’s, and drop-in programs while introducing new initiatives for youth, seniors, and research, and broadening linguistic inclusivity.
4. **Mental Health:** Expanding culturally safe supports, partnering with CHCs and hospitals, and integrating stigma-reducing conversations across programs.
5. **Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** Addressing rising GBV cases through education, awareness workshops, and wraparound supports in partnership with service providers.

The plan is supported by three new board committees (Policy, Board Expansion, Fundraising) and includes measurable indicators of success, such as growth in outreach, stronger governance, new programs, and formalized partnerships.

This living document will be reviewed annually to ensure the Centre remains responsive to the evolving needs of Eritrean newcomers and the broader Ottawa community.





## 2024-2025 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

### Revenue:

**Total cash revenue: \$ \$ 69,730.59**

- City of Ottawa: \$30,000.00
- Ottawa Community Foundation: \$15,000.00
- Sponsorship and Monetary Donations: \$2,163.59
- Deferred from Previous Fiscal Year: \$22,643.00
- No funding was received from provincial, or federal sources.

### Expenses:

**Total expenses: \$26,328.71**

- Major expenses included:
  - Salaries and Fees: \$4,396.41
  - Equipment and supplies: \$4,527.31
  - Fees and Contracts + Honorarium: \$4,600.00
  - Administration (10% to trustee, including insurance): \$4,500.00
  - Snacks, workshops, and client support.

### Net Income / Deferred Revenue:

- **The reported *net cash income* of \$45,908.29 does not represent a surplus.**
- Of this amount:
  - \$40,356.29 is restricted and has been deferred to the next fiscal year, to be used for ongoing programs and commitments.
  - \$5,552 is unrestricted and earmarked for *direct mothers' support*.
- These funds were received late in the fiscal year and will be applied to 2025–2026 programming, in alignment with nonprofit accounting practices.

### In-Kind Donations:

- **Total in-kind contributions: \$100,000**
  - Salary for part-time team members: \$75,000
  - Office equipment, meeting space, and training: \$16,000
  - Contributions including facilitation of workshops, outreach, and support for board governance.



# INCOME STATEMENT / BALANCE SHEET

**April 2024 to March 2025**

<b>REVENUE</b>	
Municipal Funding	30,000.00
Ottawa Community Foundation	\$ 15,000.00
Sponsorship and Monetary Donations	\$ 2,163.59
Admin Cost - Canada Helps Fees	(\$76.00)
Deferred from Previous Fiscal Year	\$22,643.00
<b>TOTAL CASH REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 69,730.59</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Salaries and Benefits	\$4,396.41
Fees and Contracts + Honararium	\$3,000.00
Bylaws amendment - Service Ontario	\$130.00
Equipment and supplies: laptops, tablets, etc.	\$4,527.31
Equipment and Material for Children's Program	\$761.53
Telephone bills	\$1,300.00
Crisis Support Meals and Supplies	\$600.00
Snacks: workshops, drop-ins, trainings, children's program, women's circle	\$4,343.46
Banners, Bags, swags, toys, Merhaba festival activities	\$263.59
Trustee administration & insurance	\$4,500.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$22,822.30</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$45,908.29</b>
<b>Restricted / Deferred Revenue</b>	<b>\$40,356.29</b>
<b>Unrestricted (Mothers' Support)</b>	<b>\$5,552.00</b>

<b>IN-KIND DONATIONS</b>	
Salary for 5 PTE (part-time employees) for workshop preparation and facilitation, including pamphlet creation, research, needs assessment, proposal development, partnership coordination, and meetings.	\$ 75,000
Meeting and workshop space	\$ 16,000
Office equipment: smart board, kitchen appliances for workshops, etc.	\$ 9,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 100,000</b>



# MEET THE BOARD



## Sara Gebregiorgis

Board Chair

Sara Gebre-Giorgis, Chair of the Mehari Centre Board, has over 18 years of experience in the social services sector, specializing in supporting individuals with disabilities. She is deeply committed to newcomer settlement, community engagement, and advancing inclusive services for Eritrean families in Ottawa.



## Sabrina Teklab

Vice-Chair

Sabrina Teklab, Vice Chair of the Mehari Centre Board, is a youth specialist with extensive experience in community development, education, law enforcement, and the non-profit sector. A graduate of the London School of Economics and currently a law student at Osgoode Hall, she is dedicated to advancing equity, newcomer inclusion, and youth empowerment.



## Yosief Kidane

Secretary

Yosief Kidane, Secretary of the Mehari Centre Board, has over 7 years of experience in community development, including supporting newcomer families as a case worker and child and youth worker at Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre. A long-time community volunteer with a BA in International Development and an MA in Political Science, he currently works as a counsellor with the Government of Canada.



## Hanna Adhanom

Board Member

Hanna Adhanom, a registered nurse at Queensway Carleton Hospital, brings a diverse professional background in healthcare and banking, with a strong commitment to supporting newcomer communities. Fluent in English, Tigrigna, and Amharic, she has volunteered extensively as an interpreter and settlement support worker, and is passionate about empowering women and fostering independence.



## Alem Berhane

Board Member

Alem Berhane, a Program Officer at Health Canada, is a public servant and musician with a strong passion for community service. Born in Montreal and raised across Canada, Kenya, and Botswana, he has volunteered with numerous organizations and actively supports local musicians through community networks.



# MEET THE TEAM

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## Yodit Girmay

Executive Director

Yodit Girmay is the Executive Director of Mehari Centre. She leads the organization's fundraising, bookkeeping, and program development, while spearheading outreach and building strong partnerships across sectors. Yodit works closely with the Board of Directors to guide strategic direction and ensure that Mehari Centre remains a trusted, community-rooted hub for Eritrean and newcomer communities in Ottawa.



## Leelti Gebremedhin

Women's Program Coordinator

Leelti holds a Bachelor of Social Work (Honours) from Carleton University and a Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration from the University of Asmara. She brings over a decade of experience in education and community support, with a passion for women's programming, wrap-around services, and gender-based violence prevention. Fluent in English, Tigrigna, and Amharic, Leelti coordinates weekly women's sessions, facilitates the Healing Circle, and develops culturally responsive resources for newcomer women.



## Rida Abdulkadir

Settlement Program Coordinator

Rida Abdulkadir has a background in nursing and over six years of experience in health and social services, he brings both professional expertise and lived refugee experience to his work. At Mehari Centre, Rida develops and facilitates workshops, coordinates bi-weekly drop-ins and the tax clinic, and supports the social media and tech team. Fluent in Tigrigna and Amharic, he is dedicated to helping newcomers navigate services and build community.



## Ewan Abraha

Program Support Worker

Ewan Abraha facilitates and supports the Women's Circle and community outreach initiatives. With a background in nursing, public health, and recreation, she brings over six years of experience in client care, outreach, and program coordination. Fluent in Tigrigna, Amharic, and English, Ewan is committed to creating inclusive, trauma-informed spaces for newcomer women and families.





# THE CHILDREN PROGRAM TEAM

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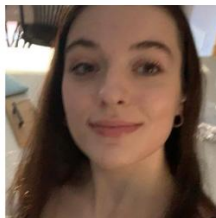
**Hawi Ketema**



**Leah Kidane**



**Lwam Zygta**



**Kayla Fillion**



**Mikyas Hailemeskel**



**Mesghana Tesfagaber**



**Nadja Delfose**



**Naemi Wassie**



**Yom Bekele**

**Corine Umutoniwase**



## THE SOCIAL MEDIA TEAM

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### Efreem Berhe

Website & Social Media Strategist

Efreem brings a resilient and entrepreneurial spirit shaped by his upbringing in rural Eritrea and lived experience as a refugee. Passionate about innovation, policy, and meaningful connections, he drives Mehari Centre's digital presence with creativity, insight, and a commitment to authentic engagement.



### Samuel Tesfaye

Photo, Video, and Graphics Specialist

Samuel brings creativity and technical expertise to Mehari Centre's visual storytelling. Skilled in digital design and media production, he produces engaging content that effectively communicates the Centre's mission and initiatives.



### Samar El Faki

Instagram Content Creator

Samar combines her passion for social justice and mental health advocacy with over a decade of experience in the social services field. A recent Carleton University graduate, she curates engaging content that highlights Mehari Centre's programs and community initiatives, connecting with diverse audiences in English and Arabic.



### Jacqueline Mah

Communications, Website, and Development Specialist

Jacqueline brings extensive experience in policy analysis, fundraising, and community engagement. With a strong background in research and advocacy, she supports Mehari Centre's digital presence, strategic communications, and partnership development to amplify our programs and impact.





## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

### Board of Directors:

The Mehari Centre is governed by a Board of Directors that follows a Policy Governance Model. The Board provides oversight of the Centre's mission, mandate, and strategic direction. Board members are responsible for setting priorities, safeguarding resources, and ensuring that the Centre's programs and services align with community needs.

### Membership Structure:

While membership is currently limited to the Board of Directors, our bylaws are designed to allow for future growth. As the organization evolves, we aim to expand membership to include individuals from the Eritrean communities across Ottawa.

### Key aspects of the membership structure include:

- **Eligibility:** Must be 18 or older, of Eritrean descent, and reside in Ontario. Members must also support the Centre's vision and values and complete a formal application.
- **Admission:** The Board reviews applications and grants membership based on the criteria outlined in the bylaws.
- **Rights & Privileges:** Members in good standing can attend meetings, vote on major organizational matters, and stand for election to leadership roles.
- **Good Standing:** Members maintain their rights by fulfilling financial and other obligations as set by the organization.

### Looking Ahead

This governance framework not only strengthens decision-making today but also lays the groundwork for wider participation tomorrow. By opening the door for broader membership in the future, the Mehari Centre is building a foundation for diverse representation, stronger accountability, and meaningful community voice in shaping our collective future.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NAMES	POSITIONS
Sara Gebre-Giorgis	Chair
Sabrina Teklab	Vice Chair
Yosief Kidane	Secretary
Hanna Adhanom	Director
Alem Berhane	Director
Yodit Girmay	Ex Officio

New board members will be elected at the 2025 AGM and will be included in the 2025–2026 Annual Report.



## PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

