



The Horn of Africa Migrants in Adelaide and Melbourne: An Emerging Diaspora

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The social networks of the Horn of Africa immigrants are diverse and complex. Based on ethnicity, language, tribe/clan, marriage and affiliation to particular ethnic political organization, their social network and pattern of interaction vary with age, culture and religious orientation. Those born in Australia or who arrived while still young do not have problem in their interactions nor do they intend to return to their parents' countries of origin. In contrast however, adult immigrants have limited interaction with other Australians due to language and cultural barriers. Many of them have a long-term plan to return to their country of origin when the political situations get improved over there. These immigrants also use their transnational networks to find a partner or family. As a result, many of them bring their partner under spouse visa not only from asylum and country of origin but also from USA, Canada and Europe where they have networks and ties. Therefore, their networks extend far beyond asylum or country of origin. In addition to their social networks, almost all of the Horn of Africa immigrants are committed to improve the life and income of their family in asylum and countries of origin. Nearly over 70 percent of these migrants send money to more than one country (to country of origin and country of asylum) and 96% of these immigrants (including those unemployed and retired) send money to their family and friends. Among these migrants, sending money to family and friends is an accepted norm and a family responsibility. Interestingly some of these migrants belong to "financial support network club" called "equb" where like minded individuals regularly contribute a fixed amount (some times up to AU\$2000) of money every month to give it to one of their member either to use it here or to send it overseas in event of buying house, car, start new business, travel overseas or special event like wedding. Even those who didn't send their own money encourage their relatives to send some culturally consumed herbs called "Chat" (in some countries "chat" is believed to be narcotic with some mild stimulating effect and is commonly used among some Ethiopians and Somalis immigrants to socialize and enjoy leisure time) and spices to sell and send them money.