



Prof. Redda Tekle Haimanot

Prof. Redda Tekle Haimanot was born in 1943 in the small town of Robi, 170 km south of Addis Ababa in the Arsi Zone of the Oromia Region State. On completing his elementary education in Robi and the adjoining town of Ticho, he moved to the Medhane Alem Secondary School in Addis Ababa. He graduated from the high school in 1959 and joined the former University College of Addis Ababa. In recognition of his scholastic achievements, at the end of second year of college the Ministry of Education encouraged him to take advantage of a WHO scholarship that was offered to two candidates to pursue medical education at the Hadassah Medical School of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel. He went through six years of medical training in the Hebrew language and graduated in 1967 with a MD degree.

Before returning home to Ethiopia he decided to work and gain experience at a medical center in Africa. He applied and got accepted to do his internship at the famous Mulago Teaching Hospital of the Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. He gained rich clinical experience at Mulago which, at the time, was considered to be one of the best center of excellence in tropical medicine.

On return to Addis Ababa in 1969 he served for a year at the old St. Paul Hospital in the Merkato area and then moved to Wonji in 1970 where he worked as Medical Officer and later as the Chief Medical Officer of the medical service of the Woji-Shoa Sugar Estate. The five years he spent at Wonji were very exciting and at the same time challenging. Professionally, he managed tropical diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis and also severe malnutrition in children manifested as kwashorkor and merasmus, as well as the common occupational diseases of the area, schistosomiasis and fluorosis. Politically, there were labor-related problems and conflicts to deal with every day. Much later he had to face the turmoil of the 1974 revolution which threatened the very safety and survival of senior Wonji staff that held managerial positions. He resigned and succeeded to relocate himself to safer grounds in Addis Ababa where he joined the Tikur Anbessa Hospital. After two years of service as Medical Officer at the University hospital, he won a scholarship to enroll in the Neurological Residency Program of the McGill University in Montreal, Canada in 1977. As part of the Residency program, he spent one year at the Hammersmith Postgraduate Medical School in London, England where he trained in neuropathology. He obtained his FRCPC (Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Canada in 1981 and subsequently became a Fellow of the American Academy of Neurology.

When he returned to Ethiopia from the UK, he was employed by the Addis Ababa University Medical School. Based in the Department of Internal Medicine, he rose through the academic ranks until he became Professor of Medicine in 1993. He also succeeded to establish the Neurology Unit within the Department of Internal Medicine. While at the university, he was engaged in many research projects with special emphasis on leprosy, epilepsy, fluorosis, neuroathyrimism (Guaya), and headache. These studies resulted in many peer reviewed publications as well as a PhD degree from the University of Umea, Sweden in 1997. He also became a Docent at Department of Neurology of Umea University, a respected academic position in the Sweden. The same year he received the Senior Researcher Award from the Ethiopian Public Health Association. In 1997 he retired from Addis Ababa University but continued his association with the medical school as Professor Emeritus. The decision for the early retirement was made in order to concentrate on the activities of a Non Governmental Organization that he founded in rural central Ethiopia in 1993, with his Swedish collaborators.

The NGO, **Grarbet Tehadiso Mahber**, formerly known as Garbet Ledekuman, was established to cater for persons with physical disabilities, epilepsy, hard of hearing and the visual impaired. Over the last sixteen years, the NGO has grown significantly. Presently, it operates in ten Woredas with a total population of 2 million in the Oromia and Southern Nations Nationalities Regional States. In recognition of the good community work implemented in the rural areas, Prof. Redda was awarded the WHO Quenum Prize for Public Health in Africa in 1997

Prof. Redda has been closely associated with the World Health Organization as a consultant in the Polio Eradication Initiative and the Task Force for Immunization in the African Region as well as the Campaign to reduce the Global Burden of Headache. He has also served as Vice-President and President of the Pan African Association of Neurological Sciences (1992-96). More recently, as President of the Launching Board of the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences, Prof. Redda has played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Academy in 2010.

Prof. Redda's has many hobbies which include bird watching, gardening, bee keeping and silkworm farming. He is married and has three children and two grandchildren.

SEED salutes Professor Redda Tekle Haimanot, Chief Executive Officer of Gararbet Tehadiso Mahber (GMT), under whose leadership the less fortunate Ethiopians in Butajira region are able to have access for vision-care, in recognition of his tireless efforts and promise through GMT to uplift victims of polio by providing rehabilitation and other health related services, in appreciation of his creating self-reliance & encouragement by giving medical/technical training for the disabled and the economically deprived in the region, in acknowledgement of his outstanding academic and scientific excellence, and for all of his distinctive and positive attributes.