



Hassan Shire is the executive director of DefendDefenders (the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project) and Chairperson of the Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network. Under his leadership, DefendDefenders provides emergency protection and wellbeing support, advocacy, awareness raising, capacity building, and technological support to human rights defenders. Hassan Shire has received numerous awards from the international community including the U.S. State Department's 2011 Human Rights Defender Award, the Leadership Award of the Pan African Human Rights Defenders Network in 2015, and the Richard C. Holbrooke Leadership Award by Refugees International in 2017. He is extremely empathetic and exhibits deep concern for the holistic protection and wellbeing of HRDS, having experienced tough times as a human rights defender himself including exclusion and isolation when he had to flee to exile in Canada.

Hassan is an artist who uses his musical skill for psychosocial therapy, and human rights advocacy. It was his idea to explore artistic therapy in meeting the mental and emotional needs of HRDs, which idea has ever-since evolved into the Wellbeing and Resourcing Resilience intervention for HRDs under the Protection and Security Management program of DefendDefenders.