

The Horn of Africa Relief and Development Agency of Australia Inc

Annual Report 2013-14

HARDA, a not-for-profit organisation, was incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act NSW in November 2003. Our mission is to support refugees and humanitarian entrants from the countries of the Horn of Africa; to work with them through their community leaders to act as a strong and effective advocate; and to form partnerships to promote and seek funding for sustainable aid projects in Africa.

HARDA has been classified as a public benevolent institution and has deductible gift recipient status from the Australian Tax Office. It is hosted by the Edmund Rice Centre (ERC) at Homebush West NSW. ERC provides office accommodation, a computer network, phone, fax and consumables free of charge. Their support is invaluable.

HARDA is administered and managed entirely by a part time volunteer workforce.

This report covers the period July 2013 – June 2014.

Membership

HARDA is a secular organisation with membership open to all persons eighteen years of age and over who support HARDA's aims and objectives, irrespective of nationality, race or religion.

The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee's responsibilities include setting HARDA's strategic direction, establishing goals for members and the volunteer workforce; monitoring the achievement of those goals, ensuring that the Agency meets its legal and ethical responsibilities and that the members of the Committee and volunteers meet the highest standards of conduct.

Our aim is that individual members of the Committee should act as our conduit to the communities from the Horn of Africa countries. At 30th June 2014 members of the committee were:

- **Degeufe Hailu**, President. After completing his secondary schooling in Ethiopia, Degeufe was awarded a scholarship by the Greek Government and graduated in dentistry from the University of Salonika. He practised as a dentist for a short time in Greece then, unable to return safely to war torn Ethiopia, he migrated to Australia where he was a founding member of the Ethiopian Community Association in New South Wales. Unable to fund the expensive re-training required to qualify for dental registration in Australia, he now works as a multi-lingual interpreter.
- **Faduma Geddi (Vice President)** Faduma Geddi was born in Somalia and received her school education in Helsinki, Finland. She came to Sydney to live with her Aunt when she finished school and was recruited to HARDA by the late Hassan Omar soon after her arrival. Over the past four years Faduma has worked extensively with young people from African communities with a focus on health, education and participation. She was the Youth Settlement Officer with the St. George Migrant Resource Centre, working with young people from refugee and humanitarian backgrounds and assisting them to settle into Australia.

Faduma is the Chair of the African Youth Agency of Australia, a member of HARDA's

Executive Committee and a member of the NSW Police Commissioner's Multicultural Advisory Council.

- **Michael Muhlbauer**, Secretary, worked for many years for large organisations in both the commercial and government sectors. Prior to retirement he acted as a Project Leader for a number of large financial and risk management projects.
- **Emmanuel Kondok**, (Member), is President of the Southern Hope Community Organisation Inc. He was forced to flee his home in the Twic County, Southern Sudan, at the age of twelve. He spent three months walking to safety in Ethiopia where he remained until there was a change of government in 1992 and Sudanese refugees were forced out of the country. He fled again, this time to the Kakuma refugee camp. After a thirteen year wait he was granted refugee status by the UNHCR and came to Australia in 2005 with his wife and three children. He completed an Advanced Diploma in Human Resource and Management in 2011 and is currently studying for a degree in Applied Business Management.
- **Achom Dimo** (Member) from South Sudan is the President of Relief-HANDS (the Relief Hope Agency Development Service Inc)
- **Peter Ida Leke** (Member) from South Sudan works as an optical fitter with Essilor Australia Pty Ltd. He is currently doing part time undergraduate study at ACU in Arts/Economics. On Sundays he helps at the St Bakhita Centre to conduct liturgy and sacramental programmes.
- **Agey Abdikarin** (Member) from the Somali community is a Somali community counsellor and a member of Australian Counselling Association (ACA). He works as volunteer supporting families and young people with problems.
- **Deng Adut** (Member) arrived as a refugee in 1998. After working at a local service station to learn English, Deng enrolled at TAFE and completed his Advanced Diploma in Accounting before deciding in 2005 to study a Bachelor of Laws at university. The first person in his family to graduate with a law degree, Deng now works as a lawyer; ensuring Sudanese people have the legal advice they need before entering the court system.

Leave of Absence

- Fiona Carr (Member) spent over 25 years working in the finance industry in money management, marketing, and research and relationship management, with 14 of those years at AMP Capital. She also ran a wage audit business for a number of years, having started her career in PWC.
Fiona and her family have taken a long break after her husband Paul took retirement. She has continued to provide valuable advice even while on holidays and is expected back towards the end of 2014.

Retirement

- John Cornwall, Executive Officer, was the South Australian Minister of Health from 1982 to 1988, CEO of the Australian Veterinary Association 1989-1992, Director of the Australian Youth Foundation 1992-1995 and Managing Consultant of Delta Society Australia from 1996. He retired in 2007 and joined HARDA as a volunteer.
After seven good years of hard work and dedication to put HARDA on the right footing, John has decided to retire and move to Emeritus status with HARDA. He officially retired from HARDA at the AGM in November 2013. HARDA wishes him and his wife Patrice the very best in their retirement. I must mention that John has continued to support the

Executive and the Secretariat with regular attendance at their meetings, providing guidance and direction. Thank you, John.

Vale

- HARDA suffered a major loss with the sudden death of Paul Bisson on 5th February 2014. Paul had been the Treasurer in the past five years, bringing 30 years' experience as a chartered accountant. He worked as Finance Director and Chief Financial Officer for Hawker Pacific Pty Ltd for many years, having started his career with Price Waterhouse & Co. in the UK and then in Malawi. Paul was a gentleman, in the true sense of the word, and dedicated his services to HARDA and many other church and charity organisations. He gradually increased his commitment to HARDA and was preparing to travel to Kenya to visit some of WARDAs projects, when fate took its turn. HARDA will remember Paul for his selfless service and humbleness to all he touched.

The HARDA Secretariat (Volunteers)

- **Sajjad Versi** who was born and grew up in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, took over the role of Chief Operating Officer (previously known as the Executive Officer) on John's retirement. He migrated to Australia in 1983. He is a professional Electrical Engineer and Project Management consultant with forty years' experience nationally and internationally. Socially, he was a member of Round Table (Dar es Salaam), Lions Club (Five Dock), and Apex (St George). He was involved with Children's workplace charity and other social programs in Australia.
- **Michael Muhlbauer** is now in his fourth year as HARDA's Secretary.
- **Linda Ning** is currently acting as HARDA's Treasurer. Linda has Masters Degree in Commerce from the University of Sydney, is a Certified Practising Accountant (CPA). She works as a Finance Officer at the Sydney Local Health District. She also manages the accounts of an affiliated Research organisation and NGO payments.
- **Cindy Larson** worked in the finance industry, most recently in Marketing and as a Futures Trader at Brandywine Asset Management in the US and prior to that on the Futures desk and in the Economics Division of Macquarie Bank in Sydney. She has a BA (Hons) in English Literature from Sydney University. Cindy has been an active volunteer for many years and has served as: Union County Chairperson for the Fresh Air Fund (NYC, USA); Friend of NJ SEEDS (NJ, USA); Volunteer Coordinator for Worldwide Orphans Foundation (NJ/NYC); as well as class parent and year coordinator at her children's schools. She is currently a volunteer at the St Bakhita Centre as well as HARDA.
- **Fiona Carr** (Policy & Projects) liaises with the Chief Operating Officer and coordinates project development.
- **Carmel Clark** (Community Relations) is a key member of the Secretariat and HARDA's longest serving volunteer. She has extensive social welfare and community service experience.
- **Judy Flaherty** (Accounts) was tremendously helpful in maintaining HARDA's accounts in the period following Paul Bisson's death and prior to Linda Ning taking on that responsibility. She has offered her ongoing assistance as a volunteer on a needs basis.
- **Faduma Geddi** (who was recently granted permanent Australian residency status) is busy building networks with young African Australians at grass roots level.

- **Vinitha Koshy's** background is in marketing and public relations. She has been working as a HARDA volunteer for the last two years and had been involved in organising and coordination of the Swim and Survive Program. She also managed the social media pages for HARDA. Vinitha is now moving up her career path and has made herself available on needs basis.
- **Amy Iheakanwa** is a recent science graduate of Nigerian descent currently undertaking her Master's degree in International Public Health in Sydney University with a focus on women's health. Amy has many academic commitments but she has also made herself available on a needs basis.
- **Melinda Woodhouse** is in her final semester of a Bachelor of Social Science degree at the University of New South Wales, majoring in Development Studies. Her special area of interest is South Sudan, and she is currently learning Dinka. She aims to use her research skills to contribute to program and policy development within the sphere of international development. After she finalised the report on South Sudanese Australians Perceptions of Mental Health, which will also assist her Honours thesis, she has taken up further academic commitments. She is also available on a needs basis.
- **John Cornwall**, 'Volunteer Emeritus', joined HARDA in December 2007 and was appointed as the Executive Director on a pro bono basis. He retired in November 2014 but still undertakes some policy and project work for the Agency from time to time when requested.
- **Abrar Ahmad**, currently studying for a Masters of Development Studies (UNSW), completed a Bachelor of Social Science degree at the University of Western Sydney, majoring in peace and development studies. He is also available on a needs basis.
- **Dr Mahmud Sheikh** is a Senior Lecturer in International Health, Tropical and Infectious diseases at SPHCM, UNSW. He graduated from the University of Sydney with double Master in Health Sciences and International Public health and a doctorate in public health. Dr Sheikh has established himself as a young leader in research and intervention to improve the health of immigrants and refugees. His research focuses on immigrants and refugees health within CRE specific projects and has extensive links and networks with key refugee and migrant groups in Australia. His other research interest include, infectious diseases research (such as TB, Malaria, Vaccine Preventable diseases among other), International Health Development, Infectious Diseases Outbreak Investigation and Humanitarian Emergencies, Public Health Anthropology, Human Rights and Public Health, Tropical Diseases Surveillance and Control among other. He has had several peer reviewed publications and also reviews for several international health journals.
- **Georgina Clark** travelled to Northern Kenya in 2012 where she spent six months in Garissa (March through August) working as a HARDA volunteer with the Waso Resource & Development Agency, a local NGO. She worked as the Senior Advisor- Grants and Social Development to plan, design, implement, monitor and evaluate projects and to develop the organisation's capacity to work with communities in providing socially, economically and financially sustainable development projects. She has now taken up a posting in the Solomon Islands as Development Research Officer. The assignment will end in December of 2014. We look forward to having her again making her valuable contribution to HARDA, particularly on projects running with WARDA in Northern Kenya.

New Land, New Life

'New Land, New Life', a thirty minute documentary commissioned by HARDA, was launched by the Minister of Immigration and Citizenship, Brendan O'Connor, at the Riverside Theatres, Parramatta, on 20th February 2013. It tells the remarkable success

stories of five refugees from the Horn of Africa - Deng Adut, Anna Dimo, Girma Dabi, Agey Abdikarin and Idil Abdullahi. The film was produced and directed by Michael Power of Afterglow Productions and funded by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship under the Diversity & Social Inclusion Program.

Michael is now working for HARDA in a voluntary capacity to adapt the film as an Online Education resource.

Swim & Survive

HARDA's Swim, Survive and Socialise Project is a comprehensive swimming and water safety program for children between the ages of 7-12 years from the Horn of Africa and other CALD refugee or migrant backgrounds. The majority of resettled people from the Horn of Africa and other CALD communities have little or no awareness of the dangers in water based activities and the possible tragic results. Simply surviving from day to day was their prime focus in the environments from which they have come.

The Royal Life Saving Society of Australia research shows that children are most likely to miss out on swimming lessons if they come from lower socio-economic and disadvantaged areas, indigenous communities and some multi-cultural backgrounds or if they live in rural and remote locations. In recent years there have been numerous media reports of drowning involving children and young people from African communities and per capita they are significantly over-represented in drowning deaths. At HARDA we know from our African Australian members that many parents and children have little or no knowledge about personal survival and water safety skills so essential at Australia's beaches, rivers and swimming pools.

This project to date has provided approximately 220 children with the opportunity to learn water safety and survival techniques as well as how to swim, while participating in an activity which is enjoyable, healthy and part of the Australian way of life. It was conducted at the Aquatic Safety and Training Academy (ASTA) at suburban Seven Hills during the summer school holidays (January). We ran 45 minute sessions each week day over two weeks. ASTA was specifically chosen because their Swim and Water Safety program (an initiative developed by Royal Life Saving Australia) encompassed water safety, rather than just swimming lessons, taught by fully trained instructors at a purpose built swimming complex at Seven Hills in suburban Sydney. A further programme of about one week was run for adult African women.

HARDA wishes to record special thanks to the many people who contributed to making the Swim, Survive and Socialise Project successful. Particular thanks are due to the project sponsor **Lidcombe Catholic Club Dooleys** who have provided grants of \$19,000 over the two years of the project to date. HARDA has applied for a further grant of \$9,350 to run the programme in early 2015.

Jobs for African Migrants Project - meeting special needs

Background: In June 2013 HARDA forged an important coalition with African Professionals of Australia (APA) and African Women Australia (AWAU) to develop a project that would connect African migrants from refugee backgrounds on a one-to-one with African mentors from APA who are successfully employed in the Australian workforce. In addition the project would provide group training sessions to assist unemployed African migrants overcome barriers to employment (some of which are ethno-specific) and provide them with the skills required for a sustainable and long term place in the work force. And acknowledging that over 70% of jobs are not formally advertised but obtained through networking, the project would conduct networking skills training and provide networking opportunities.

Training workshops and seminars would be run using the expertise of AWAU, APA and HARDA. Through partnerships with business we would also seek opportunities for participants to gain work experience and temporary work placements. The coalition plans to work with job search agencies in the Local Government Areas of Western and South Western Sydney

The program would be open to men and women in two age brackets, eighteen to thirty and 'over thirty'. However, anecdotal evidence from the communities and our own experience suggests that the need for support is greatest among African migrant men in the "mature" age bracket. It will remain a high priority for HARDA.

The Pilot Project: HARDA has received a seeding grant of \$7,500 from the Clark Family Foundation, through Perpetual Trustees, to fund the first stage of the project. This has been supplemented by the transfer of an additional \$6,000, the 'funds remaining' from a Scanlon Foundation grant for an innovative five day visit to the Narooma High School on the NSW South Coast by students from African refugee families, selected from an Intensive English Learning unit in Western Sydney

HARDA's Annual Cultural Night

HARDA's traditional Cultural Night was again postponed due to insufficient sponsorship. This was due mainly to a change of policy by Club Grants which has excluded events of a cultural nature from its guidelines. However, at their September 2013 meeting members of the Executive Committee reaffirmed their strong support for continuing this important community event. It will be on the agenda for consideration at HARDA's next strategic planning meeting.

Hostels in Ethiopia

Last year HARDA received a grant of \$22,472 from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for the supply of a solar power system, water filtration units, beds and mattresses for three hostels in Ethiopia - two for girls in Tertelle and Yabello and one for boys in Tertelle. The funding was sourced by Lorraine Towers of Sydney University, and the project was run in partnership with GPDI, an Ethiopian NGO. The project is in progress.

IT Ethiopia

Girma Dabi has identified a school in his home village which he wants to provide with IT infrastructure. He has offered to pay for a container of used computers to be shipped from Australia to Ethiopia. Michael Powers are assisting with sourcing the computers, doing the mix and match of various types/ operating systems, and finally shipping them. This is turning out to be a difficult and complex task.

Mama Hani's Home for Disabled Children.

As reported last year, HARDA was investigating the feasibility of an on-site greenhouse at Mama Hani's home for disabled children in Garissa, North Eastern Kenya, to provide fresh vegetables and fruit for the children and possibly as an income source in the future. Investigations were done also for putting in place some much needed sanitation facilities for the centre at the same time. Unfortunately, because of the resource problems faced by our partners WARDA in Kenya, the project has not moved as quickly.

Girls Centre of Excellence

The Girls Centre of Excellence, located in North East Kenya, is the home for young Kenyan orphan girls and other girls from the region in need of accommodation. This large and ambitious project was instigated by Dr Mohamud Sheikh and is being managed by WARDA (the Waso Relief & Development Agency), one of our partners on the ground in Kenya, It has been funded through HARDA by the very generous donations of Global Aid Foundation and a group of philanthropic Muslims. The building of the complex, which includes dormitories, a hall, washrooms, storage, etc. has been completed and the benefits are flowing to the young orphan girls in the community. Further funds, \$102,400 have been forwarded to the Centre this year, bringing the total to over \$322,000. The contributions have come mainly from Global Aid Foundation.

The 250 girls living in the Center who have lost one or both parents now have opportunity to fit in with the local school to receive formal education. The supporters have also undertaken to meet the recurrent costs of the Centre.

Proposed Mentoring and Role Model Pilot Project in North East Kenya

This pilot program has been designed to empower disadvantaged young girls in North East Kenya by helping them understand and realise their potential. Subject to project funding being available, the project will be conducted in the Girls High School in Habaswein, an isolated township in the Wajir Province with a very disadvantaged rural community.

The project aims to:

- broaden the career horizons of the girls through a series of seminars/lectures on the internet featuring successful African women as role models;
- Help the girls achieve their aspirations and potential through a mentoring program.

In order to implement this program HARDA formed a partnership with Girl Child Network (GCN) in Kenya. GCN's mission is to advocate, promote and protect the rights of the girl child through advocacy, networking and capacity building of stakeholders. Once again, due to lack of local resources, this project has been shelved.

Wedweil School

During the year HARDA supported the proposal from the Dinka Literary Association of NSW to rebuild the war-damaged primary school at Wedweil, Northern Bahr-el-Gazal, and South Sudan. However our efforts to find and a viable NGO in the region with whom we could form a working relationship were unsuccessful and the project has been shelved.

Harmony through Creativity Project

HARDA received \$12,500 from the NSW Community Relations Commission to participate in the Commission's Community Engagement Project-Youth Component. The overall purpose

of the project was to increase the level of positive engagement and interaction between young people of multi-faith backgrounds. It was designed with the view to increase young people's capacity to appreciate the benefits of living in a harmonious society and becoming less vulnerable to divisive influences.

HARDA had 3 objectives in mind when designing this project.

1. Provide an opportunity for young people of various culture and linguistic diverse communities including the number of African Australians to meet in a structured setting and develop the sense of harmony through participation in a number of activities.
2. Increase participation of young people who may be isolated or disengaged.
3. To promote harmony through sports.

To deliver this project, HARDA sought a partnership with Football United. Football United sponsored by the University of NSW promotes social inclusion and engages with hundreds of young people on weekly basis, including many refugees and migrants.

The key event of the project was a three day camp. It was held at the YMCA, Yarramundi, and Springwood from the 29 November 2013 to the 1 December 2013. The group of 38 young people of both genders and representing various linguistic and multi faith communities, under the supervision of a number of professional facilitators, took part in a number of team building workshops and various sport activities.

The aim of the programme was to impress on the attendees the social engagement and a positive self can contribute to a more cohesive and tolerant society.

Future Directions

I would like to raise the issue of future directions of HARDA.

Harda has had highs and lows since its inception. I feel that right at this point in time, HARDA is at a difficult and uncertain time. This is not surprising as Harda in a short period of time lost three of its 'pillars' when John Cornwall retired, Fiona Carr went away for a long time and Paul Bisson passed away. Future projects are thin on the ground, the Secretariat needs more direction from the Executive Committee and engagement with the communities is limited. There may be more reasons for the current state of affairs.

I understand the reality that refugees from the Horn of Africa have now been in Australia for some years so their needs are changing, the at-large communities now have several groups that have opted to do their own thing. This is a positive step; however, they tend to be under resourced and their reach is limited.

I believe HARDA is still relevant to the communities it is meant to represent but must reevaluate its role and redefine its strategies.

Strategic alliances, partnerships and thanks

HARDA values its relationship with and the support it has received from many individuals, organisations and agencies in 2012 -2013

- The volunteers who staff HARDA's Secretariat
- The Christian Brothers' Edmund Rice Centre and the Director Phil Glendenning
- The Department for Immigration and Border Protection
- Muslim Aid Australia

- Global Aid Foundation, Mr Shabbir Kharodia
- Perpetual Trustees
- The Clark Foundation
- St Bakhita Centre
- Julie Owens MHR, Federal Member for Parramatta
- Barbara Perry MP, State Member for Auburn and New South Wales Shadow Minister for Family & Community Services
- The Auburn City Council, especially Adama Kamara and Saada Abdikarim
- Auburn Diversity Services Inc
- Bunnings, Lidcombe
- STARTTS (The Service To Assist the Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors)
- The Centre for Volunteering NSW
- The Federal Attorneys General
- Football United
- The Refugee Council of Australia
- The Settlement Council of Australia
- The Community Relations Commission (NSW)
- The Granville Multicultural Community Centre
- Dooleys Catholic Club
- Auburn/Granville RSL Club
- The Aquatic Safety and Training Academy (ASTA) at Seven hills, particularly Nicola Howes
- Michael Power, Afterglow Productions
- Colleen Moloney and Ayoob Bhayat

Degeufe Hailu
President

Sajjad Versi
Chief Operating Officer

Date: