



**The HORN  
HARDA NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2018**

**Message from the President**

It gives me pleasure to reach out to our readers, volunteers and members yet again using The HORN as a forum.

As we move from year to year, HARDA flagship programs keep adding up. Besides Swim & Survive and Outreach & Mentoring, HARDA now has African Migrant Employment and Connecting Communities programs added on.

The former, popularly known as AMEP, has helped at least 60% of the participating candidates find jobs. One of our key findings in running this program is that for migrants from the non-English-speaking background are unusually handicapped to find employment. So the thoughts are how about we focus on teaching/improving English for those candidates? It will be nice to get some feedback from our communities if there is interest. Please provide us your views by email at [harda@harda.org.au](mailto:harda@harda.org.au).

Connecting Communities is currently happening with kids Giving Back. The generosity and active participation of the Giving Back (GB) organisation is something to marvel. Also, the interest shown by the main stream Australian communities is increasing. We now look forward to our communities taking more interest. Playing and having fun together forms friendships and understanding on both sides. This is so important for the development and integration of migrants into their new environment. Please send your children to this programme whenever these are advertised by HARDA. Alternately, register with HARDA by email and we will get in contact with you.

I wish you and your family a enjoyable festive season and best wishes for the new year.

## **SAJJAD VERSI**

### **A Tribute to John Cornwall**

On the 26th of September 2018, Family members, volunteers at HARDA and members of the African Communities gathered at the Edmund Rice Centre to celebrate the life of John Cornwall who passed away on August 1, 2018.

From 2007 to 2014, John volunteered as either HARDA's President or as its Executive Director. John was a great advocate for African Refugees who have resettled in Australia and he was responsible for many initiatives that helped their integration in their new land. He was also an effective leader and appreciated by HARDA's team of volunteers and community leaders from the Horn of Africa. He also found time and energy to acquire funds to underpin projects to alleviate poverty in Africa.

### **HARDA Local Projects**

In the last twelve months HARDA has run a number of programs with local communities to fulfil its mission. HARDA also supported and participated in several initiatives overseas designed to alleviate some of the urgent need in East Africa. The delivery of these projects has been made possible through the work of a small group of volunteers and by the generosity of organisations and individual benefactors who have provided the funds by way of grants and donations. HARDA also acknowledges the ongoing support of the Edmund Rice Centre in providing free facilities to the volunteers.

### **Connecting Communities**

This is the third year HARDA has run its Connecting Communities Program in conjunction with Kids Giving Back. Connecting Communities is a successful program whereby children from the HARDA communities meet with children from other parts of Sydney and get to know each other whilst engaging in fun activities over three separate days. This year we started the program with a day of rock climbing in Villawood. The kids had a lot of fun belaying each other and supporting each other as they faced the challenges of the rock walls in the climbing centre. The second session was a day of soccer and kitemaking in Auburn. The highlight of the day was sharing food and hanging out as everyone sat down for lunch together. The program ended with a day at Coogee Beach. Once again, we were met by the team at Coogee SLSC, who taught the kids about water safety before taking them down to the surf. It was a fantastic end to another fantastic program.

### **AMEP**

The African Migrants Employment Program is a holistic program that assists jobseekers who are long-term unemployed migrants to Australia from the HARDA countries. Thanks to a generous grant from the Scanlon Foundation, we have set up weekly sessions where jobseekers receive help from volunteer mentors. We have assembled a great team of volunteers who provide us invaluable assistance. These include an intern who is a social work student, as well as professionals and retirees who bring with them a wealth of experience and insight.

To date we have had approximately 16 active jobseekers, of which 10 have found work and a number are still looking. We have also assisted several jobseekers on an ad-hoc basis, particularly when they have not been suitable candidates for the program. All but one of our candidates have been women and all are Sudanese refugees. The program has been challenging as there are many hurdles that need to be overcome on the path to employment.

### **Swim and Survive and Socialise Program**

A total of 86 boys and girls enrolled, aged between 6 and 15 years old, larger than any previous swim program done by HARDA. The main idea behind this program is to create a positive social environment for kids to learn vital skills. New sessions were added this year especially water safety education programs for parents and most of the parents attended. Dummies were used for demonstration purposes and every one had a go.

The children greatly benefited from this program by making new friends and socialising with their peers in the pool and on the bus trip, not forgetting the new level of confidence for those in the pool for the first time. This is a great program for children, teaching them to swim, be active, healthy and have fun during their holidays.

We would like to thank DOOLEYS Lidcombe Catholic Club and Sydney Motorway Corporation for their support of this project. Well done to the children and their parents for making it another successful program, and have fun during the holidays.

### **Swimming and Survive - Advanced Program**

24 young persons aged between 10-15 (11 girls and 13 boys) representing the South Sudanese and Somali Communities completed the program. The program was designed for those who had obtained the highest rankings at the sessions held by HARDA for several years during January holidays.

HARDA's ambition is to progress the better swimmers into becoming life savers and/or swimming instructors. This would greatly raise the capacity of the communities. The program produced excellent outcomes:

- 8 youth obtained their bronze medallions, an internationally recognized lifesaving qualification;
- 3 youths obtained their bronze star, a level prior to the Medallion;
- The other participants progressed well and we hope to see them undertaking the Medallion course next year.

Congratulations to all the swimmers for their excellent attitude and application, thank you to the parents for their great support and thanks to the Sydney Motor Corporation for the grant to enable the program.

**Just a reminder that our Swim, Survive and Socialise program is taking place from January 14 to January 25, 2019. This free swimming and safety program is for kids from 6-15. Get your form in fast as places are limited. Forms are available on our website or email us if you are interested.**

### **Outreach**

With funding from the Cumberland Stronger Community Fund, HARDA is running the African and CALD Youth Soccer Tournament and Community Festival until December 2018. The event celebrates the cultural diversity, social cohesion and community harmony. The tournament will have over 300 participants representing African communities in Sydney.

### **Support for Homeless**

In partnership with Brothers in Need, HARDA has donated 176 high quality sleeping bags and hygiene packs to homeless people in Martin Place and Parramatta Park. A donation of \$5000 from the Global Aid Foundation enabled this initiative.

## **HARDA Overseas Projects**

### **Operation to Eradicate preventable blindness in Africa**

Since 2009, HARDA has supported a long-term project that has been focusing on providing eye care free of charge, through eye care mission in the poor communities of the Horn of Africa.

In late 2017, HARDA purchased an ophthalmic surgical periscope for the use of cataract and other surgical operations in rural Africa. This is the second microscope that HARDA has purchased. The first device has been used more than 9000 times for examination, diagnosis and 4000 surgeries for cataract. It has also benefited 15,000 people suffering from trachoma, conjunctivitis and glaucoma. The partners in this project are HARDA, Global Aid Foundation, the Clark Foundation and WARDA.

### **Beds and Medical Equipment to Somalia**

The Australian Somali Community of NSW has worked very hard to bring some relief to their country of origin. It organised the shipment of 120 hospital beds and other medical equipment donated by Rotary Australia World Community Service (Donations In Kind – Eastern Region) to hospitals in Somalia. The freight cost was covered by money raised by community members.

### **Medical Equipment, Sewing Machine and Computers to Ethiopia**

HARDA volunteers, Girma Dabi, Michael Power, and Fiona have put together a container of re-usable medical equipment, sewing machines and 200 computers to be shipped to Ethiopia with funding from Global Aid Foundation. The container is due to arrive in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, in December where Girma will be on hand to distribute its contents to schools, hospitals and a new textile training centre.

### **Famine Relief**

WARDA distributed a total of 26.17 tonnes of relief food for the poor and hungry, which comprises rice (18.6 tonnes), sugar (1.5 tonnes), cooking oil (4.59 tonnes) and dates (1.48 tonnes), to a total population of 10,500 people who were identified as the most vulnerable members of communities in North East Kenya. The ration fed these households for two to three week depending on the size of each household.

A similar program, Urban Ethiopia Emergency Food project was run. Both projects were funded to the tune of \$66,000 by Global Aid Foundation.

### **Other Funding with WARDA**

With funding from a couple of donors, HARDA is also paying the university fees for a student to study medicine at Mt Kenya University.

### **Water Well – Ethiopia**

Providing wells in villages in Ethiopia has the following benefit:

- It eases the burden on women and the risk of harassment, especially for school-age girls, by shortening the long distance to search and fetch water;
- Increases the supply of water free from waterborne diseases;
- Reduces child mortality by providing clean water;

Global Aid Foundation teamed up with HARDA and Silte Aid Development Organisation (SADO) to implement the installation of twelve well. Only six wells eventuated due to various reasons.

### **South Sudan Educates Girls**

HARDA is supporting the effort of the South Sudan Educates Girls (SSEG) to provide schooling for girls in the Awil area of South Sudan.

With funds collected from volunteers and Ashirwad Foundation, HARDA paid for teachers and other staff for a year, supplied a mobile phone, a laptop and subsidized the travel cost for the management. Global Aid Foundation will fund the wells in the school compound once the feasibility study is concluded.

### **HARDA wishes to thank the following for their much appreciated and needed support:**

- All the volunteers, including the mentors on the Employment Program.
- Community members who supported HARDA's programs.
- The Edmund Rice Centre's Management and staff.
- Dooleys Lidcombe.
- Scanlon Foundation
- Cumberland Council
- Sydney Motor Corporation
- Global Aid Foundation
- Clark Family Foundation
- Kids Giving Back
- St Bakhita Centre
- Brothers In Need
- Aquatic Safety and Training Academy
- Rotary Australia World Community Service (Donations In Kind – Eastern Region)
- WARDA
- Ashirwad Foundation
- All the private donors who have supported HARDA and its projects.

