

The Horn of Africa Relief and Development Agency of Australia Inc

Annual Report 2012-2013

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.

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 2013 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.
- **Emmanuel Kondok**, Vice President, 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.

- **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.
- **Paul Bisson**, Treasurer, brings 30 years' experience as a chartered accountant to his role as HARDA's Treasurer. He worked as Finance Director and Chief Financial Officer for Hawker Pacific Pty Ltd for many years, having started his career in Price Waterhouse & Co. in the UK and then in Malawi.
- **Mohammed Omar**, Member, came to Australia from Somalia as an eight year old child. He has a BA and a Master's Degree in Education and is a high school teacher. He was the Cultural & Anti-Racism Officer with the University of Western Sydney Students' Association (2005-2006), the inaugural President of the Horn of Africa Youth Agency of Australia and HARDA's President 2011-2012.
- **Faduma Geddi** (Member) 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. Currently she is 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.
- **Fiona Carr** (Member) spent over 25 years working in the finance industry in money management, marketing, research and relationship management, with 14 of those years in AMP Capital. She also ran a wage audit business for a number of years, having started her career in PWC.
- **Achom Dimo** (Member) from South Sudan is the President of Relief-HANDS (the Relief Hope Agency Development Service Inc)
- **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.

Volunteers. The HARDA Secretariat

- **John Cornwall** joined HARDA in December 2007 and was appointed as the Executive Director on a pro bono basis. He served three years as President from 2008 to 2010.
- **Michael Muhlbauer** is currently HARDA's Secretary.
- **Paul Bisson** is currently HARDA's Treasurer.
- **Fiona Carr** (Policy & Projects) liaises with the Executive Officer and coordinates project development.
- **Carmel Clark** (Community Relations) is a key volunteer and HARDA's longest serving volunteer. She has extensive social welfare and community service experience.
- **Sajjad Versi** (Overseas Aid) was born and grew up in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. 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), Apex (St George). He was involved with Children's workplace charity and other social programs in Australia.

- **Faduma Geddi** is busy building networks with young African Australians and ensuring that HARDA's Executive Committee members are informed about the needs of young community members at a grassroots 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 has been involved in organising and coordination of Swim and Survive Program. She also manages the social media pages for HARDA.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Bijumon Thankachan** was a member of the team that organised the Swim and Survive Program. He also worked with affiliated South Sudanese community agencies during the year, assisting them in developing their grant submissions and their general administration.
- **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.

The African Youth Agency of Australia

In November 2012 Faduma Geddi was appointed as President of the Horn of Africa Youth Agency (which had been in recess during the year) and in consultation with her colleagues on the HAYAA committee recommended to HARDA's Executive Committee that the name of the standing committee be changed to the African Youth Agency of Australia. A Special General Meeting held on 6th April 6th 2013 passed the following resolution:

To delete the words "Horn of Africa Youth Agency of Australia" and its acronym HAYAA wherever they appear in HARDA's Constitution and replace them with the words 'African Youth Agency of Australia' and the acronym AYAA.

Reason for the change: The HAYAA Executive Committee wishes to ensure its ongoing viability by extending its reach to all young African Australians.

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.

The story explores the refugees' backgrounds, the challenges they faced on arrival, their daunting but sometimes humorous encounters with life in their new country and their pathways to successful integration into mainstream Australia without loss of their cultural heritage. It highlights their achievements in their fields of work, study and community and asks them how they were able to overcome the enormous obstacles they faced at various stages in their lives, making the journey as refugees from one of the poorest regions of the world to succeed in a country not universally regarded as welcoming towards refugees.

The subjects were filmed at work, at home, at university or TAFE college and at social events to observe how they deal with daily and long term situations.

More than five hundred copies of the documentary were distributed Australia-wide to government agencies such as the Australian Human Rights Commission, to schools, NGOs and community groups. It is also accessible through new media - on the HARDA website, linked to Facebook and viewable on Youtube or Vimeo.

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 provided approximately 130 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 school holidays (September, January and April). Three ten day programs were conducted, each comprised of 30 - 45 minute sessions each week day over two weeks over period 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.

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 sponsors the **Auburn/Granville RSL Club** (through Parramatta ClubGRANTS and the **Lidcombe Catholic Club Dooleys** (through Auburn ClubGRANTS).

The HARDA- Auburn Sports Club Youth Outreach Program Building Community Resilience

This program, funded by the Federal Attorney-General's Department and actively supported by the Australian Federal Police, was again one of most successful that HARDA conducted in 2012-2013. The project was run in partnership with the Auburn Sports Club.

Many of the young people who were recruited to join the program had been identified confidentially as being 'at risk' by members of the Somali and CALD communities, youth centres, school counsellors, law enforcement agencies and the juvenile justice network in the Western and South-Western suburbs of Sydney.

The definition of 'at risk' included young people who had become alienated from school, families, their own and wider communities and who were disengaged to the extent that they might be prone to intolerant or extremist views or ideologies.

Mentors were recruited from the Somali and broader community networks, trained and allocated to Somali and CALD youth on a one-on-one basis for periods varying from six to nine months. In November and December the twenty five participants also attended workshops and participated in discussions on topics which included identity and resilience. Workshops were conducted in a culturally sensitive environment with the paramount objective of demonstrating to Somali and CALD youth that they can be supported to gain pride and satisfaction from participation within the wider society.

The highlight of the program was the Melbourne trip. Twenty five Somali youths, accompanied by their mentors, travelled south in a chartered bus and were accommodated for seven days over the Christmas-New Year period at Urban Camp Melbourne. During the week the Sydney Stars Somali team competed in the grandly titled 'African Cup of Nations' (a local version of the real thing which is the premier football tournament in Africa) and made the quarter-finals.

During the period January to April further workshops were held on law enforcement (conducted by Amna Kara-Hassan from the Australian Federal Police), leadership and health Issues.

At the end of March, a three day Family Fun event and community soccer tournament were held in conjunction with Auburn Sports Club. Teams from interstate were involved, and over 300 people attended the activities, which included jumping castles, picnics and BBQs. Two footballers from Western Sydney Wanderers gave a talk on the experiences with a professional soccer club.

At the end of May, the federal Attorney- General, the Hon Mark Dreyfus, visited the Auburn Sports Club for a briefing on the project. The visit was successful, with positive feedback received from the Attorney-General's department.

Harmony through Diversity

Towards the end of the financial year HARDA received a grant of \$12,400 from the NSW Community Relations Commission to participate in the Youth Component of the Commission's Engagement Initiative. The aim of the project is to bring together a group of young people of different cultural and religious backgrounds and engage them in a range of varied activities and workshops to build their capacity to challenge divisive influences and promote tolerance among their own communities.

HARDA is collaborating with Football United in the delivery of this project. Football United is an organisation concerned with social development and therefore well suited to the

objectives of the project. It engages with hundreds of young people on a weekly basis, including a high proportion of refugees and other humanitarian entrants. The participants will be chosen from a delegation that will represent Australia at this year's Pacific Youth and Sports Conference in New Caledonia.

A camp for 40 young adults will be held from Friday 29th November to 1st December at the YMCA's Camp Yarramundi at Springwood. The group, accompanied by senior officials from Football United and members of HARDA Secretariat, will take part in a mixture of fun activities, team building exercises and sessions on important social issues.

The African Employment Project - meeting special needs

In June 2013 HARDA forged an important coalition with African Professionals of Australia (APA) and African Women Australia (AWAU) to develop a project that will connect African migrants from refugee backgrounds one-to-one with African mentors from APA who are successfully employed in the Australian workforce. In addition the project will 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 will conduct networking skills training and provide networking opportunities.

Training workshops and seminars will be run using the expertise of AWAU, APA and HARDA. Through partnerships with business we will 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 will 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. This is particularly true for men from the Horn of Africa who are often struggling to cope with their new environment, the transition from a strongly patriarchal background to a more egalitarian society and with English language skills (particularly written English) long after the initial five years of the Settlement Services Program.

A detailed and costed funding submission for the project was lodged with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations under the Migrant Communities Employment Fund immediately prior to the September 2013 Federal election and we await its fate under the new government. This is an important initiative, designed to meet the clearly defined special needs of our 'client groups', particularly men over forty who otherwise are condemned to a life on the margins of Australian society. It will remain a high priority for HARDA through 2013-2014 and beyond.

HARDA's Annual Cultural Night

HARDA's traditional Cultural Night was re-scheduled for the spring of 2013 but was 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 meeting members of the Executive Committee reaffirmed their strong support for continuing this important community event and formed a sub-committee to actively seek additional sponsorship funds and organise it for late summer or early autumn 2014.

Hostels in Ethiopia

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.

Mama Hani's Home for Disabled Children.

Mama Hani's home for disabled children in Garissa, North Eastern Kenya, has been running for many years. The home, established by Mama Hani and her late husband, accommodates anything from 60 to 120 children whose disabilities range from mild to severe and multiple disabilities, both physical and mental.

The home operates on a hand to month basis and is often short of food and basic needs. Although now in her late 70's Mami Hani still runs the centre although she has inadequate staff, very scarce resources and a constant battle with the traditional prejudices against the disabled. With food security a constant issue, HARDA is investigating the feasibility of an on-site greenhouse to provide fresh vegetables and fruit for the children and possibly as an income source in the future. There are efficiencies in putting in place some much needed sanitation facilities for the centre at the same time.

Girls Centre for Excellence

The Girls Centre for Excellence, located in North East Kenya, is 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 was commenced a couple of years ago and very pleasingly is nearing completion. It is anticipated that the first girls will be accommodated at the end of 2013, with the official opening in early 2014. It is designed for up to 150 girls who will live there and attend the local school.

Mentoring and Role Model Pilot Project in North East Kenya

This pilot program aims to empower disadvantaged young girls in North East Kenya by helping them understand and realise their potential. The target school is The program 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 has recently 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. We hope that this program will commence in 2014 and are currently sourcing computers, internet facilities and funding for the program.

Wedweil School

HARDA is pursuing the initiative taken by the Dinka Literary Association of NSW to rebuild the war-damaged primary school at Wedweil, Northern Bahr-el-Gazal, South Sudan. The key issue is to find a local NGO, with an established institution, to partner with HARDA for doing preliminary technical works to assess the scope and cost of the project. Our initiatives with the Wedweil Development Council, The Samaritan's Purse and, a local engineer recommended by the Director of Budget & Planning with the Government of South Sudan have borne no fruit so far. In fact, HARDA is out-of-pocket \$500 for the fees paid to the local engineer, who ultimately could not provide the necessary information. Currently, discussions are taking place with United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) to establish a partnership.

Migrah Water Project

The village of Migrah, situated 50km west of Asmara in Eritrea is suffering from an acute shortage of clean, potable water. For most of the year the community, mainly the women and girls, have to walk 13 km to the nearest hand dug well to fetch their water, the quality of which is poor and the quantum of which is rationed.

To alleviate this, the community proposes to construct a water supply system for use by all village members. To this end the villagers, together with the Eritrean community in Australia and worldwide, raised funds and, through the Migrah Water committee, commissioned a geological consulting company to conduct a water survey of the area and advise on a new water supply system. Their brief was to design a system where the user would travel no more than 500metres to fetch clean safe water from a sustainable and environmentally friendly pumping system with minimum running costs and able to be serviced by the community. This detailed report was completed earlier this year.

The proposed water supply system will substantially improve the quality of life of all the villagers. Apart from the obvious health benefits that an adequate supply of clean, pathogen free water brings, it will also free up the women and children of Migrah from the 8 or 9 hours a day spent in back breaking water cartage. This time can then be used in more productive ways, including education, income producing work and even allow some leisure time.

HARDA was approached by local members of the Eritrean community to provide support for this project. HARDA personnel were impressed by the commitment of the Migrah communities (in Eritrea, Australia and worldwide) who raised the substantial sum required for a report from an expert water supply consultant and by the high quality of the report. Considering the extensive benefits that the project will bring to the Migrah and the ongoing commitment of the communities, HARDA has undertaken to help them to secure funding and to implement this life changing community based water supply project.

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 Citizenship
- Muslim Aid Australia
- The AMP Foundation

- 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
- The Australian Federal Police
- Bunnings, Lidcombe
- The Hills-Holroyd-Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre
- STARTTS (The Service To Assist the Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors)
- The Centre for Volunteering NSW
- The Refugee Council of Australia
- The Settlement Council of Australia
- The Community Relations Commission (NSW)
- The Granville Multicultural Community Centre
- The Auburn Youth Centre
- The Department of Immigration & Citizenship
- The Federal Attorney General's Department
- Dooleys Catholic Club
- Auburn/Granville RSL Club
- The Aquatic Safety and Training Academy (ASTA) at Seven hills, particularly Nicola Howes
- Michael Power, Afterglow Productions

Degeufe Hailu
President

John Cornwall
Executive Officer

Date: