

The Horn of Africa Relief and Development Agency of Australia Inc

Annual Report 2015-2016

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 2015 – July 2016.

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 2015 members of the committee were:

- **Dr Mohamud Sheikh** MIPH MHSc PhD, President.
- **Degeufe Hailu**, Vice President.
- **Linda Lin**, Treasurer.
- **Michael Muhlbauer**, Secretary.
- **Faduma Geddi** (Executive Member)
- **Mohammed Omar**, (Executive Member)
- **Ahmed Mohamed**- Appointed Executive Director at the 2015 Annual General meeting.

The HARDA Secretariat (Volunteers)

- **Michael Muhlbauer**
- **Fiona Carr**
- **Linda Ning**

- Carmel Clark
- Cindy Larson
- Sajjad Versi
- Faduma Geddi
- John Cornwall ('Volunteer Emeritus')
- Abrar Ahmad
- Georgina Clark
- Jordan Lau
- Tim Hand
- Mohammed Omar
- Lynette Betts
- Lori Cook
- Luigi De Luca
- Lucy Mitchell

Projects in 2015-2016

Swim & Survive

2016 saw HARDA run its 5th Swim, Survive and Socialize flagship program. This very successful initiative has seen increased demand for places each successive year. The January 2016 program was our largest yet with 65 boys and girls aged between 6 and 16 years old enrolled.

This program is a comprehensive swimming and water safety program for children from the Horn of Africa and other CALD refugee or migrant backgrounds. We know from our African Australian members that many parents and children who have resettled in Western Sydney have little or no knowledge about personal survival and water safety skills so essential to the safe enjoyment of water activities.

This project to date has provided approximately 300 children with the opportunity to learn these 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. The parents also have an opportunity to meet other persons from their community. We are making such good progress with some of the children who have attended a number of the programs that we are hoping in the next year or two to be able to incorporate a lifesaving program for them.

The program was conducted at the Aquatic Safety and Training Academy (ASTA) in Seven Hills from January 11-22, 2016. We ran 45 minutes' sessions each weekday over the two weeks. ASTA was again 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.

Parents and children all expressed their enjoyment of the program and their thanks the providers of the funds, Clubs NSW and in particular Dooleys Catholic Club. The budget for this year 's program was \$ 10,600.

HARDA would like to continue with this program, as many more children will be ready to take part in 2017 and subsequent years. We have therefore again applied for a grant through the Clubs Scheme and directly to the Dooleys Club that has been so supportive the last few years.

African and CALD Youth Mentoring Program

Mohammed Omar has again been successful in obtaining a grant to organise another outreach project that has proved successful over the years. This time, the funds (\$ 30,000) have come from the NSW State Government 's 2016 Youth Opportunities program.

The program is spread over 12 months and is a blend of sporting activities- in this case football- and mentoring workshops on issues such as Cyber Safety delivered by the Australian Federal Police, resume writing, public speaking, social etiquette and responsible behaviour. Some 60 youths- average ages about 16-17- will be involved over a twelve-month period; they are from a CALD background residing in Western Sydney.

The sporting highlight is the African Cup of Football and the Community Festival to be held at Progress Park, Auburn from 1st October 2016.

The objectives of the program are to develop and strengthen teamwork, communication, and leadership and decision making skills. Mentoring workshops are conducted in a culturally sensitive context to demonstrate to African and CALD youth that they can be supported to gain pride and satisfaction from participation in the wider society.

HARDA is partnering with the Auburn Sports Club that is providing a large dose of in-kind assistance in the use of The Progress Park facilities where the workshops and games are held.

Jobs for African Migrants Project (JAM)

JAM was developed in a partnership between HARDA and the Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre with funding from Perpetual Trustees via a grant of \$ 7,500. The project commenced in May 2015 and was completed in November 2015. It was designed as a pilot program, the goal of which was to ensure 10 male migrants from an African background (aged 20 years+) living in Western Sydney are provided with the knowledge and skills to seek and gain sustainable employment.

The program was divided in two distinct phases. Phase 1 involved training over 2 sessions per week for 10 weeks and the second phase saw each job seeker matched with a mentor who provided support via face to face meetings and over the phone.

It is pleasing to report that, at the end of the program, all participants had applied for at least one job, 5 had found employment and one more had accessed training to become a certified security guard.

One comment sums up the success of the project" the training has recharged my soul and given me hope and confidence that I can get work."

Harda has learnt a lot from this pilot, lessons it may be able to incorporate in any future programs. In August 2016, Harda was approached by a group of South Sudanese ladies seeking help in finding employment. Most have been in Australia for many years but have been unable to find work. Following several meetings, we developed an employment program specifically for this group and applied to the Scanlon Foundation for a grant

IT Ethiopia

This project was conceived and driven by Girma Dabi whose fervent wish was to source and send a number of computers to his old school in Huruta in Ethiopia. Girma is an Ethiopian who now lives in Sydney and works as the senior finance manager for the Australian subsidiary a large Japanese corporation. On a trip home in 2013 he was saddened by the lack resources, in particular the absence of computers. After many weeks of hard work by Girma and also Michael Power, about 80 PCs were collected from Fairfax Media and Sydney Grammar School. Volunteers were then mobilised to clean the devices and install new software in readiness for dispatch. Fifty computers were air- freighted by Girma in December 2015 to coincide with his trip to his hometown. He was therefore at his old school for the arrival of the computers. A wonderful story!

The search for more computers to send to various schools in Ethiopia, along with other educational resources, has continued and it is expected that further shipments will take place in late 2016, early 2017.

New Land, New Life Educational Resource

HARDA released an Education Resource in August 2015 to supplement its short 25-minute film, New Land, New Life. This documentary is a valuable resource for Australian students. It tells the inspiring stories of five refugees from the Horn of Africa, all who have undergone great hardship yet made successful new lives in Australia. The stories of these five refugees highlight a multitude of issues and topics that can be examined and analysed from many angles and at many levels. This makes New Land, New Life an ideal tool for teachers to use in either specific or general areas of study. This free Education Resource aims to help teachers

utilise this documentary more fully. It has activities for students at all levels and stages along the learning curve and can be used across many subjects and curriculums. We hope that New Land, New Life and this Educational Resource helps teachers promote a better understanding of refugees and asylum seekers from the Horn of Africa and other areas.

We acknowledge the great contribution from Marisa Brattoni of the Edmund Rice Centre in the creation of the resource.

Connecting Communities

HARDA partnered with Kids Giving Back, a volunteer organisation based in Sydney's eastern suburbs, to run a three-part program with the aim of connecting children aged 7-13 from South Sudanese background with their counterparts in other parts of Sydney in an ambitious cross cultural exchange also involving the respective parents. . The first part of the program was a beach outing to Bondi. On 20 March approximately 16 children and their families travelled by bus from the HARDA offices to meet the Kids Giving Back group at Bondi. The plan was to spend the day doing activities on the beach, but due to the inclement weather (torrential rain after weeks of dry weather!); the activities took place in the scout hall off Bondi Beach. The participants enjoyed getting to know each other while playing cooperative games such as dressing up as mummies, decorating cupcakes and creating structures out of marshmallows and sticks. The day finished up with a meal of fish and chips. The second phase of this program will be a cooking day in Bondi on 7 August, and the final phase a repeat trip to Coogee Beach (this time with good weather!) on 30 October including spending time with members of the Coogee Surf Life Saving Club. Thanks to members of the Kids Giving Back group for their hospitality.

Maternity Ward in Wajir County, North Eastern Kenya

The clinic is now in operation following completion of the building and installation of the facilities in calendar 2016. This project was born out of the vision of Mohamud Sheikh who saw first-hand the necessity to provide pre and post-natal health services to families living in remote rural communities in order to dramatically reduce the mortality rates of babies and mothers. Funds of \$ 31,800 were provided by the Clark Foundation (through Perpetual Trustees) and the Global Aid Foundation. The project was implemented by Waso resource Development Agency (WARDA) based in Garissa, Kenya. We acknowledge the tremendous work put in by Bashir Dhubad Abdille and his team of volunteers in mobilising the members of the five villages in the Diif division of Wajir County to become involved at every stage of the project.

As the clinic develops, it will provide primary health services in: family planning, immunisation, nutrition and food preparation and other prenatal/postnatal needs.

The community of Wel Ari and surrounding villages have never had the privilege of health facilities. The new clinic serves a population of 4,000 people. The project has begun to enhance the ability of mothers, traditional birth attendants and community members to have a voice in the future of their health and the well being of their children.

Grants and Donations

Grants received in 2015/16 financial years: \$ 39, 955

Donations: Centre for Excellence in Kenya- \$ 36,910

Maternity Clinic- \$ 16,800

IT Ethiopia- \$ 5650

South Ethiopia Emergency Food Assistance Program- \$ 16,100

Food Homeless - \$ 5000

Some of the funds shown above will be spent in next financial year and will be featured in next year's annual report.

HARDA and the recipients of these grants and donations expressed their gratitude to the donors.

Strategic alliances, partnerships and thanks

HARDA values its relationship with and the support it has received from many individuals, organisations and agencies in 2015-2016

- The volunteers who staff HARDA's Secretariat.
- The Edmund Rice Centre, Director Phil Glendenning and staff.
- Global Aid Foundation, Mr Shabbir Kharodi, Directors and donors to the Foundation.
- NSW State Government.
- Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre.
- Perpetual Trustees.
- The Clark Foundation.
- St Bakhita Centre.
- Kids Giving Back.
- Auburn Sports Club.
- The Centre for Volunteering NSW.
- The Refugee Council of Australia.
- The Settlement Council of Australia.
- Dooleys Catholic Club.
- The Aquatic Safety and Training Academy (ASTA) at Seven Hills.
- Michael Power
- Colleen Moloney.
- Ayoob Bhayat.
- Girma Dabi, Michael Power and Fiona Carr (IT Ethiopia)



Mohamud Sheikh
President



Date: 20/12/2016

Michael Muhlbauer
Secretary

