

The Horn of Africa Relief and Development Agency of Australia Inc

Annual Report 2014-2015

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 2014 – June 2015.

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. Mohamud 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 leader in research and intervention to improve the health of immigrants and refugees. His research focuses on immigrant and refugee health within CRE specific projects and has extensive links and networks with key refugee and migrant groups in Australia. His other research interests include infectious diseases research (such as TB, Malaria and Vaccine Preventable diseases), International Health Development, Infectious Diseases Outbreak Investigation and Humanitarian Emergencies, Public Health Anthropology, Human Rights and Public Health, and Tropical Diseases Surveillance and Control. He has had several peer-reviewed publications and also reviews for several international health journals.

- **Degeufe Hailu**, Vice 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. Because of the expensive re-training required to qualify for dental registration in Australia, he now works as a multi-lingual interpreter.
- **Sajjad Versi**, Chief Operating Officer. Sajjad, 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 Cornwall'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 has been 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**, 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.
- **Faduma Geddi** (Executive 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 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.
- **Mohammed Omar** (Executive Member). Mohammed came to Australia from Somalia as an eight year old child. He now has a BA and a Master's Degree in Education and is a high school teacher with the NSW Department of Education. He was the Cultural & Anti-Racism Officer with the University of Western Sydney Students' Association (2005-2006). Mohammed started HARDA's youth arm, Horn of Africa Youth Agency of Australia and was its inaugural Chairman. Mohammed was also President of HARDA in 2012.

The following members were part of the Executive Committee between 1 July 2014 to 29 November 2014.

- **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 took a break after her husband Paul took retirement. She has continued to provide valuable advice even while away and returned towards the end of 2015.

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 Cornwall'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 Practicing 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.
- **Faduma Geddi** (who was recently granted permanent Australian residency status) is busy building networks with young African Australians at grass roots level.
- **Melinda Woodhouse** has 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 her report for HARDA on South Sudanese Australian Perceptions of Mental Health, she has taken up further academic commitments. She is 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.
- **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 then took up a posting in the Solomon Islands as Development Research Officer, which ended in 2014. She is now a Consultant to not-for-profits, including HARDA, where she is running the Jobs for African Migrants (JAM) Project.
- **Jordan Lau** has experience in website and software development. He managed the upgrade to HARDA's new website.
- **Tim Hand** worked in education for over thirty years (NSW Department of Education and Communities). Tim is an experienced SEO professional and he provides consultation and services to implement social media strategies for HARDA.
- **Lynette Betts** interned at HARDA, combining her University studies in her final year of a BA in Philosophy and Social Justice at the University of Notre Dame in Sydney with working as a volunteer under the guidance of Georgina Clark.

Projects in 2014-2015

Swim & Survive

HARDA's recurring Swim, Survive and Socialise Project is a comprehensive swimming and water safety program for children 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.

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 over 200 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.

Due to construction at the venue over the January school holidays, the program this year was conducted at the Aquatic Safety and Training Academy (ASTA) at suburban Seven Hills during the Easter school holidays (April). This year, in part due to additional funding received by the ASTA, we were able to expand the programme to include youth for the first time. We ran 45 minute sessions each week day over the 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 earlier in the year 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 **Dooleys Catholic Club** who have funded this project for several years. HARDA has received a grant from Dooleys of \$9950 to run the programme again in early 2016.

Jobs for African Migrants Project

The Jobs for African Migrants project was developed as a partnership between the Horn of Africa Relief and Development Agency and Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre with funding from Perpetual Trustees and Carmel Clark. HARDA engaged the services of Georgina Clark of GP Clark Consultancy to develop and run the program on our behalf. The goal of the project was to ensure 10 male migrants from an African background (aged 20yrs +) living in South Western Sydney were provided with the knowledge and skills and support to seek and gain sustainable employment. The project commenced in May 2015 and is due to be completed in November 2015. The project took part in two phases: the first was a job training component; and the second phase was a mentoring program.

The Jobs for African Migrants project is aimed to assist participants to seek employment through building their professional networking skills, developing effective job identification techniques, and tailoring their qualifications, skills and experience to specific job requirements. During the first phase of the project—the job training component—participants met weekly with Ms Clark and Mohammed Sabsabi (DDM3 Consulting) who designed and delivered the job training program. They provided information and training on the Australian job market and work culture, individual career goal setting, planning and job search support. This portion of the program ended in August 2015.

The second phase of the project—the mentoring component—matches the ten job program participants with individual mentors who will assist them to develop individual job plans and support their progression towards seeking and retaining sustainable employment. This second phase of the project is scheduled for completion in November 2015.

Website Update

Thanks to the generous help of our IT volunteer, Jordan Lau, HARDA launched its new-look website (www.harda.org.au) at the end of July 2015. This followed months of work together with Cindy Larson and the rest of the HARDA team, during which time Jordan took information from the old version of the website and developed a fresher, more modern-looking site. The new website makes more use of graphics and photographs to present the face of HARDA to the world.

Social Media

In conjunction with the website re-vamp, we have also increased our focus on social media, largely thanks to the help of another HARDA volunteer, Tim Hand. Tim has helped highlight for us the importance of developing our social media presence. In particular, we are making a concerted effort to post any relevant information that might be helpful to our target communities on Facebook, so that we may build on our role as a conduit between government and community groups and Horn of Africa migrants.

Child Bride

HARDA was approached for community consultation by a social consultancy group, Cultural Partners, as part of a Multicultural NSW program on forced marriage. The campaign was entitled "Child not Bride—Choose a Brighter Future". We took part in a consultation with Cultural Partners and sent our intern, Lynette Betts, as a representative to a meeting of community leaders on this topic. She attended the Underage Forced Marriage Advocate Information and Training Seminar on 29th July 2015 on our behalf. We agree that this is a serious issue in our constituency that we could perhaps address in a more significant way in the future.

IT Ethiopia

This potential partnership has continued to prove challenging. Girma Dabi wants to provide his former school in his village (Huruta) in Ethiopia with computers for education. HARDA assisted Girma and Michael Power in initial research regarding potential for computers to be donated by local private schools. However, questions remain regarding future steps in the project, and due to a lack of manpower at HARDA, we decided that we did not have sufficient resources to devote to this project. It is pleasing however to note that Girma and Michael have been able to secure a number of computers that are currently being readied for shipment. We congratulate them.

Construction of Maternity Clinic in Kenya

HARDA received funding for the building of a Maternity Clinic in North Eastern Kenya. Construction will soon begin on a 2-room birthing and maternity unit in the isolated Diif Division of Wajir County, Kenya. Once built, the aim is for the maternity clinic to provide primary health care services for mothers and children from 5 villages in Diif Division, Wajir County. The focus of the project is on providing much-needed health services including family planning, mother and child health, immunization, low cost nutrition & food

preparation, and other postnatal care services, thereby providing vital primary maternal and child health services to these vulnerable communities. This project will also develop an innovative system of training traditional birth attendants, reporting and monitoring key maternal and child health issues to the authorities without delay. We are enormously grateful for the generosity of the Global Aid Foundation and the Clark Family Foundation to the extent of \$32,000.

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 partner Waso Relief & Development Agency (WARDA) in Kenya, the project has been put on hold and an alternative project will be found for the funds, subject to approval by the Executive Committee.

Girls Centre of Excellence

The Girls Centre of Excellence, located in North East Kenya, is a 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, 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 of \$21,000 have been forwarded to the Centre this year, bringing the total to over \$343,000. The contributions have come mainly from Global Aid Foundation.

The 250 girls living in the Centre 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 County 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.

Future Directions

Following the raising of the issue of future directions of HARDA in the previous Annual Reports, a Strategic Planning Day has been scheduled for later this year. It will be a crucial time for HARDA and its key stakeholders to develop a plan for the future. We still believe that HARDA is relevant to the communities it is meant to represent but must re-evaluate 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 2014 -2015.

We again thank with gratitude the following for their donations:

- . Colleen Moloney
- . Ayoob Bhayat
- . Donors to Local Aid
- 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
- Dooleys Catholic Club
- Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre
- GP Clark Consultancy
- Julie Owens MHR, Federal Member for Parramatta
- Barbara Perry MP, former 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 Aquatic Safety and Training Centre (ASTA) at Seven Hills
- Michael Power of After Glow

HARDA supports the following:

- The Centre for Volunteering NSW
- The Refugee Council of Australia

- The Settlement Council of Australia

Mohamud Sheikh
President

Date: 29 November 2015

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Michael Muhlbauer
Secretary



