

*Successful
refugee
resettlement
needs active
engagement
and leadership
from former
refugees and
their
communities*



ANNUAL REPORT

1 July 2008 - 30 June 2009



Sudanese community leader John Aloro shares a joke with photographer Jess Maccagno

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EXECUTIVE CHAIR'S REPORT

WELCOME

Salaam alakum. Chhom reap suor. Minga la ba. Amakuru. Mhoroi. Osiibye otya nno. And kia ora koutou. I greet you in the languages of our ChangeMakers' communities and, of course, in te reo Māori, the language of the original people of this land we now call home.

I am pleased to be presenting this Annual Report, to this our third AGM, for the year 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009. Thank you once again for your support throughout the year, and for your ongoing commitment to our organisation. It is hard to tell you in words how much we appreciate and value this.

Our Priorities

It goes without saying that the year has been very busy. We've focused on building the capacity of our communities and their leaders, as well as ensuring the voices of refugees are heard in the right places at the right time.

We identified **women, youth** and **employment** as areas of greatest need and potential highest return, and we are proud of our progress. This is in part due to the fact that we have at last been successful in acquiring resources to turn our long dreamed of projects into reality.

Our success is also down to our strong and skilled team of community development workers who have worked with communities to undertake these projects. This team is made up of five people in total - a full-time community development worker in the Hutt Valley and two part-timers in Wellington, a full-time youth development coordinator, and a part-time worker for eight months to focus on employment issues.

Our staff is completed by our Development Manager, Communications Manager and part-time administrator, and myself, the chair of the Board with responsibility to build leadership in the communities.

Evaluation

During the year, Mark Dalgety, an individual with an interest in ChangeMakers, completed an evaluation of our organisation as part of his post-graduate studies. The aim of the evaluation was to:

- describe what we do and why we do it
- identify the value ChangeMakers offers the different groups and agencies we work with
- reflect and learn from what has happened (i.e. what works well and what might need to change).

In summary, there was very positive feedback and a general respect for ChangeMakers as a professional and competent organisation.

Recommendations included our need to:

- communicate the role and projects of ChangeMakers more clearly to other agencies
- address the issue of sustainable funding
- build the capacity and capability of former refugee staff and volunteers.

We are planning how to implement these recommendations.

One of the most significant benefits of the evaluation has been the development of a model that clearly establishes ChangeMakers' vision and how ChangeMakers will contribute to this vision. This model is useful for focusing our work and for making it clear to communities and agencies what they can expect of ChangeMakers. A diagram to illustrate this is included at the end of this report and the evaluation is available on request.

Business as Usual

This year has been a busy one for the Board of ChangeMakers. They have worked hard on the evaluation of ChangeMakers, as well as supporting the organisation's growth. The Board has continued to receive support and advice from our Advisory Group members who have expertise in the areas of finance, government, fundraising, IT, research, law, communications and management. Both the Board and the Advisory Group make a huge contribution to ChangeMakers and we are very grateful to them for that.

The Board and the organisation itself are informed by the six-weekly Forums from which ChangeMakers Refugee Forum takes its name. Issues of concern are discussed and fed into the appropriate processes and events. Despite the fact that the Forums are held in Wellington, there has been good ongoing attendance by our community members living in the Hutt Valley. Travel costs are paid to enable as many people as possible to attend.

We continue to support community leaders to share their experiences and information, support each other and build strong relationships and trust. A dinner together each quarter has been a good way for them to connect and work collectively.

The Communities Newsletter continues to inform communities about events and activities and provide information about ChangeMakers activities. We are always looking for ways to fine-tune the newsletter to meet the needs of the communities. We have also continued to add information to our website – www.crf.org.nz.

Our infrastructure

We have invested considerable time and money in developing a database that can provide staff with quick and easy access to the contact details of our members and stakeholders. We have built the database in open-source software that we also use as the platform for our website. It has a range of functions (eg supporters will be able to make donations via our website), which will be important as we grow.

We have been working for some time on developing a portal for refugees living in the Wellington Region. This project is in collaboration with Refugee Services Aotearoa and Squiz, an IT company that has been a strong supporter of this project. The portal will provide information about all areas that refugees need to deal with when resettling. The design is complete and we are now looking for resources to enable us to develop the content.

We moved at the beginning of the year and are now well settled on level 3, 39 Webb St with the five other organisations that make up the Multicultural Services Centre.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

In addition to housing and mental health (see RRRF story, page 8), we targeted **family reunification** as a key issue for former refugees and a significant barrier to successful resettlement. In collaboration with three other refugee sector agencies, we wrote a discussion paper, *Refugee Family Reunification in Wellington*. This was sent to the Minister for Immigration and the UNHCR Regional Office. Our aim was to get the Government to accept a position statement as the foundation for future discussions on refugee family reunification. We are waiting to receive a response from the Minister and have had very positive feedback from the UNHCR who commented on the high standard of the paper.

One of our practical solutions to addressing the issues our communities face has been the inter-sectoral Regional Action Plan for Refugee Health and Wellbeing. While the Action Plan has gone a long way to move things from talk to action, we have faced some real challenges to sustain its energy and momentum. This is in part due to a lack of resources including not having a staff member dedicated to the Action Plan, an issue that we are trying to resolve. We have continued our discussions with the Department of Labour on how the Action Plan will sit alongside the Department-led Wellington Settlement Strategy.

OUR WORK – HIGHLIGHTS

Successful funding applications have enabled us to increase our staffing levels and get some much-needed projects underway this year.

Youth Work

With Tessa Johnstone on staff as a dedicated Youth Development Coordinator since November 2008, we have been able to create more activities for young people in the communities.

Young ChangeMakers Network

To keep youth connected and informed about youth events and services, including opportunities to be involved in ChangeMakers' activities, we have set up a youth network called 'The YC Wire'. We now have over 100 young people on the network and maintain contact via a monthly newsletter, social networking websites such as Bebo, and texting.

Youth Advisory Group



A youth advisory group, named 'Youth Making Change' or YMCs, was set up in April 2009. The nine young people from seven different communities have provided invaluable advice on the direction of ChangeMakers' youth activities. They have also developed their own youth advocacy project which includes a short film and an info pack.

Youth Media Project

The biggest ChangeMakers' youth project this year was a collaboration with Wellington Refugees As Survivors. We started the project at the

end of the period this report covers (June 2009) and ran 20 workshops over 20 weeks, which used media to



enable youth to express themselves and to build their confidence. Seven young people, collectively named Yunited Voicez, from Sudanese, Afghan, Burmese and Somali communities took part in the programme.

The results will be published in next year's Annual Report.

Youth Workshops

Throughout the year we also developed and facilitated several youth workshops. These included workshops with Hutt Valley youth to identify some of the important issues for young people in the area. And in February, we worked with Victoria University's Sara Kindon to help Te Papa Tongarewa gather ideas for an exhibition on the resettlement experiences of refugee-background youth in New Zealand.

Women

We decided we would focus the energy and time of our Wellington-based Community Development Worker Naomi Tocher on working with the women across the communities. Her starting point was the establishment of a steering group of women to build and connect a network of



Members of the Women's Steering Group at their first meeting

women. Once underway, the Steering Group began identifying the areas of most interest and concern to women and planning events around those areas. The organisation of a Women's Festival, planned for October 2009, was the Steering Group's first major undertaking.

Hutt Valley Community Development

Robert Byer, our Community Development Worker based in Upper Hutt, has made great progress this year with the communities living in the Hutt Valley. He is advised by an Advisory Group of volunteers and we thank them for the invaluable time and support they provide. In response to requests from communities, he has organised workshops on writing CVs, parenting, fundraising and governance. He has also raised the awareness of the needs of refugee-background students by organising a workshop for educators. He has begun work this year on planning for a significant new and exciting initiative in the Hutt – a community learning centre for students and their families.

Robert established a network of non-government organisations and government agencies working on mental health and wellbeing in the Hutt Valley. The network will help identify major issues, available services available and any gaps.



Staff from a range of agencies talk about how to co-ordinate mental health services and support in the Hutt Valley

Refugees into Business

We set up Refugees into Business (RiB) to provide information and advice to former refugees who are in business, or who want to set up a business, in the Wellington region.

RiB provides:

- an opportunity to 'test' ideas or issues with a panel of advisors who are experienced in business and in setting up businesses
- information and links into specialist services
- a mentor to support setting up or growing a business.

There are three stages in the RiB programme. They are:

- Stage 1 - Writing a business plan or, if an existing business, presenting the business issue with assistance from an advisor
- Stage 2 - Presenting the business plan or issue to a panel of advisors
- Stage 3 - Mentoring and support.

Our advisors are a group of volunteers from a variety of different backgrounds who have worked successfully in business in New Zealand. The group is chaired by Retirement Commissioner Diana Crossan.

Building Strong Families Project

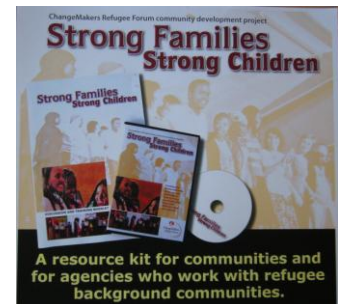
We broke new ground this year with an exciting project, the Building Strong Families drama that, while challenging, was a great success. It involved working with a range of communities to produce a drama.

Members of five communities worked with a professional theatre director and actors to research and create this hugely successful community drama.



The Strong Families Strong Children cast enjoy the appreciate of the audience at their final performance

The drama attempts to spark discussion of family matters which are often hidden from public view and not spoken about enough within families or communities. The play was performed to community audiences four times in Wellington and the Hutt Valley. One performance was professionally filmed and the *Strong Families Strong Children* DVD produced. It is accompanied by a resource booklet to guide communities and agencies when talking about the issues raised in the drama (which you can order from us).



Refugee Speakers Bureau



Speaker Hajar Ali talks to MPs during Refugee Week

The UNHCR approached us to partner with them in trialing a Refugee Speakers Bureau. The model involves training and supporting former refugees to tell their stories. The target audiences are from host community groups (eg service organisations such as Lions, Rotary and Zonta; schools; churches; decision makers and politicians). We contracted professional trainers to run two courses for nine people and then started promoting the Speakers Bureau. In the first half of this year, we spoke at six events. We think the Bureau works well and have applied to the UNHCR to continue funding us so we can develop the Bureau further.

National Refugee Network

ChangeMakers initiated a national network of organisations representing the interests of former refugees and the National Refugee Network was established at the end of the start of 2009.



Members of the National Refugee Network meet UNHCR Commissioner in February 2009

Representatives from Christchurch, Wellington, Hamilton and Auckland are active in the Network. Several members met the UNHCR High Commissioner in Auckland in February. This was the first time he had met with former refugees now living in New Zealand and he welcomed the opportunity. As a result, the Network chairperson was invited by the High Commissioner to attend the tri-partite talks in Geneva in June, which he did.

Participation in RRRF

We have continued to be actively involved in the Regional Refugee Resettlement Forums (RRRFs) held early in the year and followed by a national forum (NRRF) in May. As a result of input from ChangeMakers and others, it was decided to change the structure this year to focus on two key issues.

We felt that the forums had tried to cover too many topics in a short space of time so, through our work with communities, we identified **housing** and **mental health** as the two priority issues.



Mental health and housing were the focus of the RRRFs this year

We also suggested splitting the forum into two and holding one in Wellington and the other in the Hutt Valley to enable former refugees to attend more easily. We were very pleased to have a large contingent from the Bhutanese and Congolese communities living in Palmerston North attend each forum. As in the past, the feedback from the RRRF helped us shape our work-plan and priorities.

This year, we have once again met a number of Ministers of the new government to brief them on issues of concern to our members.

Scholarships for Young Refugees

Following a meeting between ChangeMakers Hutt Valley Advisory Group and Chai Chua, the CEO of the Hutt Valley District Health Board (DHB), four scholarships were made available to refugee-background young people with an interest in working in the health sector. The four young people are studying social work, nutrition, nursing and community development. The scholarship involves a study grant plus the opportunity to work for the DHB during the holidays. This is a wonderful initiative and we want to acknowledge the support of Chai Chua and his staff.

HOW WE SUPPORT COMMUNITIES

Our community development workers support communities in Wellington, Hutt Valley and Porirua and, as I said earlier, have made fantastic progress this year. They work with specific groups within communities and with the community mentors.

You can read about our work with each community below.

Afghan

ChangeMakers staff and mentor Ann Hodson supported the leadership to find venues and financial support for celebrations of special days and to apply for Wellington City Council (WCC) funding for a weekly Dari mother tongue class. They supported the setting up of a sewing group which now meets regularly. An additional mentor, Anna Southen, was teamed up with a group of young women who wanted to cook together.

Al-Rafedain Society (Iraqi group)

Pauline Harper and Paul Cook continued as mentors supporting this community group with fundraising for events and planning a youth project.

Assyrian

John Schiff was introduced and supported as a mentor to the Assyrian Association's executive committee. He worked with them to complete full financial reports for their AGM and apply to WCC for funding for planned activities.

We also offered support to the leader of the Assyrian Women's Group with the aim of increasing the activities of this group.

Burmese

Sue Hine has continued to mentor emerging leaders of this community as they consider how to form a community association across all ethnic groups from Myanmar/Burma. Parenting in New Zealand for new arrivals was the focus of two well-attended workshops held in the Hutt.

Cambodian

No formal support was offered because there was no community association this year.

Colombian

We are working with the six families that make up the new Colombian community to help them build their networks and connect them with the wider refugee community in the Hutt Valley.

Eritrean

ChangeMakers worked with mentor Shomilla Sidal to support the new committee in planning their youth-led Independence Day celebrations in May. A course on writing CVs and interview techniques was also run in partnership with Earthlink Inc, an organisation that assists those who face barriers to employment.

Ethiopian

We offered some support to an emerging youth-led group.

Oromo

Some informal support was provided to this community.

Somali

ChangeMakers joined a planning group for women's activities organised by the Somali Council and assisted with the setting up of the Somali women's sewing group in Newtown. In the Hutt Valley we continue to build a good working relationship with the Hutt Somali group.

Sudanese

Robert Byer and mentor John Schiff supported the executive committee elected in May 2009 to organise a community planning meeting and develop a plan for the year. Ongoing support for the committee and community members included governance training and a project management course. A course in writing CVs and interview techniques was also run in partnership with Earthlink Inc. We also supported a major community celebration in May.

THANK YOU

We receive support from so many people and a wide range of organisations and we would like to thank you all, including those who are not able to attend our AGM. First of all, thank you to the members of the Board. We have reached a point this year where we have faced a number of new challenges linked to the governance and management of our organisation. We have asked a lot of the Board in dealing with this and I appreciate their patience and commitment to working through these issues.

We are also grateful to our funders, volunteers, donors, champions and agency colleagues. We continue to enjoy your faith, commitment and generosity. I also appreciate the dedication, hard work and commitment you consistently demonstrate.

Finally, I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to our communities and their leaders. It is no easy path to be part of an organisation such as ours. We are testing the waters and doing something that has not been done before in New Zealand. Your support, involvement and willingness to work together has ensured that government, agencies and the general public are more aware of our refugee communities and the contribution they make. Your confidence in the vision and your commitment to ChangeMakers enables us to continue to build a strong refugee voice.

Adam Awad

Executive Chair on behalf of the Board of ChangeMakers

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the following organisations and people for their very generous support.

Grants

Bear Charitable Trust	Housing NZ Corporation
Community Trust of Wellington	Ministry of Social Development (MSD): Work & Income
JR McKenzie Trust	New Zealand Police
Nikau Foundation	Office of Ethnic Affairs
NZ Community Trust	Regional Public Health
NZ Lotteries Grant Board	Hutt City Council Settlement Support
Refugee Services	Wellington City Council
Regional Public Health	
St Joseph's School, Upper Hutt	
Tertiary Education Commission	

Contracts

Department of Internal Affairs	Settling In (MSD)
Dept of Labour: Settlement Division	UNHCR Regional Office - Australia
Greater Wellington Regional Council	
Family & Community Services (MSD)	

Collaboration

Wellington Refugees as Survivors	Multicultural Services Centre
Wellington Community Law Centre	Wellington People's Centre
Refugee Family Reunification Trust	

In-Kind Support

Ron Beernink - IT Advisor	All the volunteers who supported the Youth Media Project
Jessica Maccagno – photography	
Hunter Abbey - help to make youth documentary	Squiz – for use of computers and support for a refugee portal
Sisters of Mercy, Upper Hutt	

Advisory Group

Len Cook
Mel McKenzie
Dick Fernyhough
Pam Fleming
Kate Frykberg

Kitty Hilton
Sara Kindon
Kathy Olsen
Anushiya Ponniah

Mentors to Community Leaders

Ann Hodson
Pauline Harper
Paul Cook
John Schiff

Lynn Malcolm
Shomilla Sidal
Peter Gibbs

Action Plan Participants

We would like to thank all our Action Plan partners for their ongoing commitment and support, and in particular our section facilitators (see list below).

Naomi Tocher: Community Capacity Building

Judi McCallum: Knowledge & Skills

Joy Wilson: Living Well

Mel Harrington: Economic Wellbeing

FINANCIAL REPORT: 1 JULY 2008 – 30 JUNE 2009

I am pleased to present to you the audited financial accounts for 2008/2009.

As you will see, ChangeMakers managed a lot more funding this year, with a more than three-fold increase in the organisation's income. This increase was used to employ community development staff and contributed to the success of their projects, as highlighted in the Executive Chair's report.

This year, as with the previous year, there was a small deficit. This is attributable to two unbudgeted projects – the evaluation of ChangeMakers and the office move from Taranaki Street to Webb Street.

The impact of the recession of late 2008/early 2009 did not affect fundraising for the financial year. However, the combination of having a multitude of funders, single year funding and funders' preference for funding projects means covering our overheads continues to be a challenge.

As the organisation goes forward, we will focus our efforts on having fewer contracts and increasing our donor database. We are also exploring ways of reducing overheads through shared resources and functions with other agencies. Both these strategies will contribute to a more sound and secure funding base and efficient operations. They will also enable us to build up retained earnings.

I would like to acknowledge our funders and importantly the work of our volunteers, whose contribution is not reflected, of course, in the financial statements.

My thanks also go to Dick Fernyhough for his continued support in helping me maintain our accounts to meet the required standards.

Zerai Mewos

Financial Administrator, ChangeMakers Refugee Forum

Change Model for ChangeMakers Refugee Forum