



ChangeMakers  
*Refugee Forum*

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2007-2008



ChangeMakers board and staff with Kumi Naidoo from CIVICUS, December 2007

**27 November 2008**

## **EXECUTIVE CHAIR'S REPORT**

### **WELCOME**

Min ga lar bar – as they say in Burma – and welcome to the second AGM of ChangeMakers Refugee Forum. It is my honour to report to you on the activities of ChangeMakers and on the issues for our communities.

### **CHANGEMAKERS THE ORGANISATION**

In 2006, after several years of regular community forums, it was decided to go to the next step and formally establish an NGO to more actively address the issues of refugee resettlement in the Wellington Region.

Last year in my report to you I said that our major focus had been on establishing the foundations for an effective and financially secure organisation. At that point our staff included a half-time community worker, a half-time financial administrator, and a secondment from the Ministry of Social Development.

Establishing and consolidating our foundations has remained our major focus for the 2007/2008 year. Our main emphasis has been on working out the most effective ways for us to ensure positive resettlement outcomes for refugee-background communities. Our focus has been sharpened by the increasing expectations and requests for us to do work which we did not have the resources to do. This has led us to consider how we can be most effective and how we can make the most advantage of a strong refugee voice and leadership.

The need to clarify our role also coincided with an approach from Mark Dalgety who offered to do an evaluation of ChangeMakers as part of his university studies.

This evaluation is still in progress, but by May this year we were able to agree that our role is to:

- facilitate capacity building of refugee communities and their leaders
- represent the interests and concerns of refugee communities at a local and national level
- work with government and non-government agencies to ensure that they effectively address the issues of refugee resettlement.

This has provided a clearer focus for the Board, staff, the communities and agencies we work with, and for our funding agencies.

To support these roles, we are building up our community development team to work with communities directly and have obtained funding to

employ a full-time community development worker in the Hutt Valley, a part-time youth development worker and a half-time worker for eight months to focus on employment issues. We have now filled all these positions.

For six months of the year we were fortunate to have a secondee from the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector, Glenda McCallum, who helped develop and build up our communications such as the community newsletter. We realised the value of this role and have been successful in getting funding for a part-time communications role.

For the Board of ChangeMakers this year has also been a busy one. They



have worked hard on the evaluation of ChangeMakers, as well as supporting the organisation's growth. The Board decided in 2007 to establish an advisory group to provide support and advice to both themselves and the staff. The Advisory Group is made up of highly experienced and knowledgeable people

from the host community who provide advice on finance, government, fund raising, IT, research, law, communications and management. The Advisory Group has met three times and members have provided invaluable support to staff on a day to day basis and are strong champions of the ChangeMakers' cause.

### **THE ISSUES**

The issues, which have been repeatedly identified by communities over the years, remain the same. But the inter-sectoral Regional Action Plan for Refugee Health and Wellbeing has gone a long way to moving things from talk to action. I discuss the success of the Action Plan later in this report.

Whilst Government continues to take account of refugee community concerns, it would be fair to say that there is still significant frustration and lack of progress around key issues which remain a barrier to refugee resettlement. Two in particular come to mind – family reunification and mental health – as they, in our view, are the major issues for communities yet the ones that government is doing least about. ChangeMakers has now begun research projects on each of these issues.

On a day to day basis, as well as at formal meetings, we continue to understand more about the issues that concern our communities. This knowledge is fed into the formal processes of both the Regional Action Plan for Refugee Health and Wellbeing as well as to the Department of Labour Regional and National Refugee Resettlement Forum process. The

information and understanding we gather is also informing our research and advocacy work.

This year, for the first time, the Department of Labour introduced a new tripartite meeting format. In the past, there were two National Refugee Resettlement Forums (NRRFs) held each year. This year forums were held in regions (RRRF) followed by a national forum in May. After feedback and direction from communities in this region, the Forum focused on two issues – employment and youth. The information and ideas gathered have contributed to the work, direction and where we put our resources at ChangeMakers e.g. we have recently appointed a Youth Development Worker and an Employment Development Worker.

The NRRF was held in Wellington. As in previous years, we have provided officials from a range of government agencies with a comprehensive list of issues and recommended actions. When writing this report, we were still waiting for a response to our submission from the Department of Labour.

## **OUR WORK – KEY HIGHLIGHTS**

It has been a busy year with a variety of different projects and events. I would like to tell you about some of these.

### **Standards for Engagement**

The development of the Standards for Engagement arose from the need to be explicit with those who consult with refugee communities about how best to do this and what the expectations are from communities.



The Standards bring together both the values and principles of good practice guidelines for engagement. We have learnt these from our own experience as well as from the experiences of others. The Standards are unique in that they have been developed by refugee communities. In their development we received useful feedback from many of

the agencies we work with. We have very much appreciated and welcomed the support of agencies in the adoption of the Standards.

### **Action Plan for Refugee Health and Wellbeing**

The Action Plan for Refugee Health and Wellbeing has completed its second year. Again, agencies have worked collaboratively with communities to identify and act on issues of concern. We are very grateful for the continued support of agencies, their managers and staff.

A major change from last year is that ChangeMakers has contracted someone to coordinate and promote the Plan. This role has previously been done by public servants. We are very grateful to a number of government agencies (central and local) for contributing towards this position.

This year the Department of Labour instigated the Wellington Settlement Strategy. Discussions were held with officials as to how the Action Plan for Refugee Health and Wellbeing and the Settlement Strategy would relate to each other. These discussions are on-going.

### **Newsletter**

A regular newsletter is sent by post and email to communities and their leaders. The newsletter provides information about issues of interest to communities, upcoming events and reports on events that have happened in communities. We are currently seeking informal feedback from communities as to how we can improve the newsletters for them. We are looking at ways to produce the newsletter in the languages of our different communities. We would also like to find ways to help communities contribute more actively to the newsletter.

### **Workshops**

To support our community capacity building goals and role we have organised several workshops for community members and their leaders. Workshops have covered topics such as governance, parenting in New Zealand, facilitation and fundraising.



### **Community leaders mentoring programme**

The community leaders mentoring programme continues to be developed. This project was initiated and led by Volunteer Wellington in partnership with ChangeMakers. The role of the mentor is to support and advise community leaders and their communities. Leaders and mentors meet on a regular basis together to network and learn from each other. Six leaders have mentors. Other mentors are waiting for a mentoring opportunity. The programme is being evaluated and this will help to guide its future direction.

### **CIVICUS**

In November last year Kumi Naidoo, the Director General of CIVICUS, met with members of ChangeMakers [see photo on front cover]. CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation is an international alliance dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world. The

discussion focused on refugee issues at an international level and the role of former refugees both in the host nations and in contributing to refugee policy issues and outcomes at an international level.

This meeting was followed up by an invitation to present a workshop at the CIVICUS World Assembly held in Glasgow in June. Sue Driver made the presentation on behalf of ChangeMakers.

### **National networking**

In May this year, following the NRRF meeting, a number of community representatives from around New Zealand met to discuss the establishment of a national network which will:

- provide a national electronic network linking communities together
- be a clearing house for information and ideas (both from New Zealand and internationally) through newsletters and a website
- provide a calendar of events
- alert communities to issues of national concern
- coordinate communities' responses to issues of common concern
- provide support and advice.

There was general agreement for this to go ahead and for ChangeMakers to coordinate it. Discussions were held with the Settling In project (run by Ministry of Social Development) and a joint project has been established and funded. The work on the network will proceed later in 2008.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OUR WORK**

In November 2007, myself and Koos Ali were privileged to receive the Community Service Wellingtonian of the Year Award for our roles in the development of ChangeMakers and the Refugee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan. We were overwhelmed, surprised and very pleased that not only the projects we were associated with had been recognised, but also the issues for refugees. The award was recognition of the work of many people and agencies and we are grateful for their on-going contributions.

### **CHALLENGES**

#### **The need for research**

Advocacy is a key role for ChangeMakers. If we are to be successful advocates then we need to be well informed. Stories are important but need to be supported by robust research. Our community development workers, together with our communities, are now in a position to start gathering information on various issues to ensure that accurate information informs research. In the coming year, we will look to develop our research capability and partner with other agencies on research which addresses the issues and priorities of former refugees and their communities.

### **Sustainable funding**

ChangeMakers has been very successful in receiving funding this year. We have 17 different sources of funding, each with its own accountability and reporting requirements. Writing applications and accountability requirements takes up a considerable amount of our time. With the exception of the funding from the Department of Internal Affairs for the community development position in the Hutt Valley, and the three-year funding commitment from the Community Trust of Wellington, all our funding is for one year or less.

Our aim in the coming year must be to consolidate some of these funding sources and to seek long-term commitments from our funding partners.

### **Political environment**

At this point in time it is too early to assess the impact of the change in government. ChangeMakers will work hard to ensure that the new government is aware of the issues and at the very least, maintains the current quota, resources and entitlements.

With change comes opportunities. The new Prime Minister's mother came to New Zealand as a refugee in 1938. For many young people from a refugee background this will be inspiring. We look forward to working with the new Ministers.

### **THANK YOU**

There are many individuals and organisations that we would like to acknowledge and thank. First of all, thank you to the members of the Board who have inspired and supported the direction and growth of ChangeMakers.

To our funders, volunteers, donors, champions and agency colleagues – without your faith in us, your commitment and generosity, we would not be here today. To the staff, thank you for your energy, hard work and commitment to the vision.

And finally, I would like to finish by thanking our communities and their leaders. In being part of ChangeMakers you are part of something which is unique 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 has ensured a strong refugee voice.

**Adam Awad**

**Executive Chair on behalf of the Board and staff of ChangeMakers**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

### FUNDERS

Community Trust of Wellington	New Zealand Police
Department of Internal Affairs	Office for Ethnic Affairs
Department of Labour	Regional Public Health
Family and Community Services, MSD	Wellington City Council
G Trust	Winton and Margaret Bear Trust
Hutt City Council	Work and Income, MSD
JR McKenzie Trust	New Zealand Community Trust
New Zealand Lottery Board	

We would like to sincerely thank the many Wellingtonians who have supported us financially by coming to our fundraising events such as the BuskAid concert and Grow Your Own, the movie.

### IN KIND SUPPORT

Ron Beernink/ACC	Moxie Design Group
Gill Regan	Securacopy
Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (MSD)	Courtney Place Rotary
Chamber Music NZ	dpod.com

### ADVISORY GROUP

Len Cook	Kitty Hilton
Mel McKenzie	Sara Kindon
Dick Fernyhough	Kathy Olsen
Pam Fleming	Anushiya Ponniah
Kate Frykberg	

### COMMUNITY LEADER MENTORS

Ann Hodson	Lynn Malcolm
Pauline Harper	Shomilla Sidal
Paul Cook	Peter Gibbs
John Schiff	

### 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).**

<b>Naomi Tocher:</b> Community Capacity Building	<b>Mel Harrington:</b> Economic Wellbeing
<b>Joy Wilson:</b> Living Well	<b>Harry Quinn &amp; Karen Smith:</b> Safety & Security
<b>Judi McCallum:</b> Knowledge & Skills	<b>Neil Uitendaal:</b> Housing

## THE COMMUNITIES REPORT: JULY 2007 – JUNE 2008

### Aceh

No formal contact made yet with a leader of this very small community due to ChangeMakers' limited capacity.

### Afghan

It's been a busy year for the Afghan community. Several more families have joined the community this year, boosting their numbers to over 100 people. The community has met to celebrate special days together. A Dari mother-tongue class has been held at Strathmore Primary School with financial support from Wellington City Council. At the AGM in March, a committee of seven was elected, each with a specific role, under the leadership of Niamat Khalili. In April, young Afghan women asked to have some activity as the young men had a soccer team. A meeting of young women was held and they decided on three group activities: swimming, learning from their mothers to cook traditional foods, and having an occasional party. The community receives advice and support from their mentor, Ann Hodson.

### Assyrian

The Assyrian Women's Group is led by Flora Toma. The women enjoyed some parties and social nights during the first half of the year. In early 2008, women met with ChangeMakers and some service providers to discuss what activities they would like to have. They decided to hold regular Saturday evening gatherings to which their daughters and granddaughters could come, picnics and outings, and an occasional trip away. Their mentor is Lynn Malcolm.



The Assyrian Association leadership changed in November. The new committee, chaired by Sarjon Warde, enthusiastically set about consulting the community and several of the activities that were identified are now underway. Restoring the weekly Access Radio programme was their top priority. To help finance this, and to provide a social activity at the same time, the committee started fortnightly bingo nights that have proved very popular. Two community picnics were held during summer, as well as a celebration of Assyrian New Year. Boys and girls have played in a soccer team that has competed in local tournaments. Mentor John Schiff will meet soon with Sarjon.

### **Burmese**



The large number of ethnic groups that make up this community, plus the fact that they are geographically spread across the Wellington region, adds to the challenge of creating one community. Several of the groups have begun working to form an association for their ethnic community. Some are focusing on a Wellington-based association and some on a New Zealand wide one. ChangeMakers organised a parenting course in Lower Hutt that was very well attended by parents from across the community. The Chin community held Chin National Day in February. ChangeMakers supported the Burmese community Migrating Kitchen display at Pataka. Sue Hine and Ryan van Sprang have been Community Mentors-in-waiting.

### **Cambodian**

A long-established community in Wellington, Jean-Claude Sacheun was the chairperson until December 2007 when the community's association was disbanded. At this stage no new leadership has been formalised. Activities in this community are centred around the Buddhist temple in Island Bay and the celebration of significant national days.

### **Eritrean**

The Eritrean community made a successful application to Lotteries for funding support for school holiday programmes and special community events. The community met together four times during this year - fathers played soccer with their children for the first time and mothers played netball and drank coffee together. The community has also welcomed each intake of newcomers under the quota which has begun to increase the size of this small community. Their mentor, Shomilla Sidal, played an active part in these events.

### **Ethiopian**

There has been no progress during this period to establish an Ethiopian community association.

### **Iraqi-al-Rafedain Society**

The Society continues to seek ways to create a sense of community among the Iraqi people in the Wellington region. Three functions were held this year, which they would have liked more people to attend. The first was a dinner for all Iraqi people for Ramadan, the Islam holy month in Porirua; the second a trip for some families; the third a dinner for Iraqi people and the Iraqi ambassador who came from Canberra. Pauline Harper and Paul Cook took over the role of Community Mentors supporting this community to raise funds for a community party.

### **Lao**

No formal contact made this year because of ChangeMakers' limited capacity.

### **Oromo**

The Oromo Community's committee continues to support individuals within the community. The community also has a youth soccer team.

### **Somali**

The Somali Council has continued to be the focal point of activity for this community. The Council's work includes social work, youth-related projects and an Access radio programme.

The Wellington Homework Club made a major contribution to both Somali students and students from other communities. The addition of an Afghan tutor this year has enabled the Club to reach a wider range of students.

### **Sudanese**



During this year, under James Ateam's leadership, the committee focused on governance matters, including reinstating the community's registration as an incorporated society, resolving GST issues and creating a set of accounts. James was supported by mentor Peter Gibbs.

### **Vietnamese**

No formal contact has been made this year with the separate groups of Vietnamese in the Wellington region because of ChangeMakers' limited capacity.

### **Other communities**

ChangeMakers has maintained links with communities of refugee-like background from Zimbabwe and Uganda. We have sent them our regular newsletters and invited them to capacity building workshops.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT: 1 JULY 2007 – 30 JUNE 2008**

Kia Ora.

I am pleased to report to you today as the Financial Administrator for ChangeMakers, having reported last year in the capacity of Financial Committee member of the Board.

The financial situation for 2007/2008 reflects the establishment phase of ChangeMakers. As indicated in the financial report, our expenditure exceeded our income this year. This means last year we had more working capital for 2007/2008 than we have available for the 2008/2009 year. However, the retained earnings from the current year are sufficient to sustain the operations of ChangeMakers.

As you will see from the audited accounts, we received more funds than we originally forecast and a large amount of money was carried forward to the current financial year. This is because we obtained grants to fund specific projects and positions. This is reflected in the current financial year by the increased scale of community development activities ChangeMakers is undertaking.

Overall, the financial position of the organisation is good. However, there are challenges ahead which need to be addressed.

The first is that most of our funding is for one year. Our contracts with staff reflect this short-term funding, but clearly this is not a satisfactory position to be in and an effort will be made this year to secure more long-term, sustainable funding.

Secondly, we have a large number of funders. The time involved in nurturing the relationships with funders and meeting accountability requirements is considerable and we need to explore, for example, reducing the seven contracts we have with government agencies to one, ideally.

I would like to acknowledge that much of our operation depends on the commitment shown by our funders. Equally vital to our operation was the invaluable pool of skills we access from the volunteer friends of ChangeMakers. Our income statement does not reflect the enormous in-kind and voluntary donations from our highly skilled volunteer supporters and I would like to acknowledge this invaluable contribution.

I seize this opportunity to express my special thanks to Dick Fernyhough for his dedication in assisting me to look after our funds and maintain our accounts to the required standards.

**Zerai Mewos, Financial Administrator, ChangeMakers Refugee Forum**