

# More than five minutes of fame



**A journey of intrigue, commitment and  
surprise**



## **An evaluation of STARTTS Community Cultural Development Program**

*Funded through an Australia Council for the Arts – Creative  
Community Partnership Initiative*

**Evaluation Report January/February 2014**



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**Project Aim:**

***“To increase bonding and bridging social capital and wellbeing of small and emerging refugee communities through arts and non-arts partnerships”***



*“To me it was awesome. Performing as a group, little kids and us and the routine that we did ... the outcome, the crowd, was feel like WOW, that’s the word, WOW”*  
(Participant, Afro-Contemporary Youth Dance).

*“I think the important thing is getting out of your comfort zone and joining other confident men and women is really interesting. It’s really good coming from different countries, coming from Africa, working together...I’ve got a good feeling working with people...you feel comfortable...I’m just enjoying the presence of everybody in the group”* (Participant, Walking Project)



*“Confidence has been dealt and how you can use your own ideas and make creative things out of here. It was a big thing. This has just opened ways and doors”* (Participant, Sierra Leone women’s performance group)



## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all of the participants that assisted in the evaluation of this project, giving up their time to share their experiences and expressing their much valued opinions. Congratulations to all those who have participated in the project, whether it be through dance, music, artwork, theatre, film, literature or other artistic production, you should all be proud of your hard work, dedication and achievements. I have thoroughly enjoyed watching your moving and skilful performances and you have inspired me to challenge myself with a new style of dance and drumming!

I would also like to thank the staff of STARTTS, particularly Jiva Parthipan (CCDP Officer) and Elizabeth Schaffer (Evaluation Officer), both of whom have generously supported me, offering their time, information and wisdom to assist me through the process of writing of this evaluation. And lastly, I wish to thank my mentor Honorary Professor Eileen Pittaway for her oversight and guidance throughout the process.

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*'Hand of Hawa', by Idil Abdullahi (Somalia)  
Third Prize, Relationships Australia (Victoria) Award*

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## Executive Summary

This is the evaluation of STARTTS' Community Cultural Development Program (CCDP), a highly successful and exciting arts project, which began in December 2011. The CCDP was funded by the Australia Council for the Arts for two years, with co-contributions made by the Westpac Foundation, also for two years. The aim of this program is to:

*“Increase bonding and bridging social capital and wellbeing of small and emerging refugee communities through arts and non-arts partnerships”*

The CCDP has brought together and guided a diverse group of men, women and children of refugee backgrounds through a journey of professional art development and self-discovery. Participants across a range of ages and different cultural and ethnic backgrounds were encouraged to explore creative pursuits in dance, art, theatre, film, music and literature, and in doing so, were able to use this as a means of personal and cultural expression. Participants were challenged to commit to their practice and to their peers, and to learn new ways of thinking about and creating art, beginning to form their own style and artistic identity. What emerged, was a collection of artworks that were a unique fusion of traditional and contemporary, described by some as somewhat reflective of their lives in settlement.

Community development is about finding ways to assist communities to identify their own needs and come up with solutions to address these utilising the strengths and resources within their own community, working to build resilience and social cohesion and therefore creating sustainable change (Ife, 2006; STARTTS, 2012). The CCDP has been a mechanism for those individuals and groups that wish to engage in artistic practices to do so, either for professional or personal development. Participants were offered guidance from arts professionals to strengthen their artistic skills, showing them new possibilities for their practice and how to navigate the arts world, and providing them with opportunities to be part of mainstream exhibitions and performances. The participants were also able to receive psychosocial support from counsellors and other STARTTS staff to assist them through the process and address personal issues as they arose.

STARTTS have been monitoring and evaluating the progress of the CCDP since its commencement. Collation of the data to date, and writing of the independent evaluation report, took place throughout December 2013, January and February 2014. The purpose was to ascertain the extent to which the program achieved its objectives and made substantial progress towards its goal. The focus of the evaluation was on both the short and long outcomes of program activities, in terms of assessing participants' artistic development, access to mainstream arts opportunities, and impact on social capital. The evaluation utilises the Social Capital Evaluation Tool to assess these outcomes (Bartolomei & Pittaway, 2013). The designing of this tool was a project commissioned by STARTTS, and designed in conjunction with the Centre for Refugee Research. The evaluation also provides recommendations to inform future community cultural arts programs within STARTTS, as well as can be used as a guide for mainstream arts organisations or others who intend to undertake similar projects with refugee individuals and communities.



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## Background

The CCDP evolved from previous work of STARTTS, including the Dancing in Harmony Project and small-scale arts projects that youth workers, community development workers and counsellors have undertaken with clients. These initiatives have proven to be both enjoyable and beneficial to the refugee communities, offering them alternative means of expression and healing, and connecting them to others who share similar interests and experiences.

STARTTS has had a long running interest in the development of social capital as an important means of recovering from trauma and facilitating successful settlement. This led to a research project with the Centre for Refugee Research, in consultation with refugee individuals and groups, to examine the meaning of social capital and how it can be measured to evaluate community development projects. It was for this reason, that the Centre for Refugee Research were engaged to undertake the evaluation.

## Program Objectives

- 1) Engage and build sustainable arts-based infrastructure in the following small and emerging refugee communities: South Sudanese, Sierra Leonean, Burundian, Congolese, Liberian, Karen, Hazara, Tibetan, Mandaean and Assyrian/Chaldean
- 2) Engage communities in developing social capital through participation in arts and cultural activities (specifically, the streams outlined under Key Project Activities of the Funding Agreement)
- 3) Implement a sustainable cultural development program for each small and emerging refugee community, distributing ownership of the project, and enabling sustainable relationship maintenance and development
- 4) Undergo independent evaluation, demonstrating the impact upon social capital and wellbeing of participants in the project.

The objectives have been measured against the Key Performance Indicators established by STARTTS at the beginning of the project, as identified in the funding agreement:

- a) Number of artists and artworkers engaged
- b) Number of participants in the program
- c) Demonstrated evidence of the embedding of CCD principles into STARTTS systems and programming
- d) Number of new partnerships formed and developed
- e) Demonstrable impact upon social capital and wellbeing of participating communities
- f) Disseminate information on the project(s) and findings of the evaluation program in appropriate form
- g) Independent evaluation demonstrating the impact upon social capital and wellbeing of project participants

The evaluation also assessed the extent to which STARTTS CCDP's short and long-term outcomes (outlined p.29-30) have been met, and the contribution to the overall goal.



## Evaluation methodology

Due to the large number of project activities, the STARTTS Evaluation Officer, CCDP Officer and independent evaluator agreed that the most effective way to approach the evaluation was to focus on three of the major project activities as case studies: Dance Africa Dance, Walking Project and the Iraqi Youth Project. These were chosen as they covered the CCDP's three identified priority areas of community, professional development and youth, due to the strong qualitative and quantitative data collected in relation to these project activities, and to highlight their positive outcomes which were strongly linked to the goal of increasing social capital.

A mixed methodological approach was taken to gather rich data from the participants through collection of statistics, thematic analysis and utilisation of the social capital evaluation tool. Participants from a range of CCDP project activities were recruited through purposeful sampling to be involved in the evaluation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted by STARTTS staff throughout the project and by the independent evaluator at the time of this evaluation.

The evaluation findings will be provided to the participants and staff of STARTTS to review and amend for clarification purposes. The evaluator will then finalise their report and submit to the Australia Council for the Arts (KPI f & g).

## Summary of Key Findings



These key findings have been categorised according to project outcomes and linked to the related objectives, KPIs and social capital indicators. Annexure 2 provides information relating to the social capital evaluation tool, including details of the social capital objectives and indicators that have been used for measurement in this evaluation.

### ***Progress toward achieving short-term outcomes (Objective 1; KPI a, b, d)***

The CCDP engaged over 1,400 participants and over 30,000 audience members across a range of arts activities including dance, visual art, music, song, theatre, film, creative writing/literature, Capoeira Angola, circus skills, workshops, excursions, competitions and youth camps. Men, women and children were engaged, aged 5 to 70, from a diverse range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds including Ethiopian, Sierra Leonean, Ghanaian, South Sudanese, Burundian, Liberian, Congolese, Eritrean, Ivoirian, Afghan (Hazara), Iraqi (Assyrian, Chaldean, Mandaean), Iranian, Sri Lankan (Tamil), Kurdish, Burmese (Karen), Vietnamese, Bhutanese, Tibetan, East Timorese, Native Fijian, Ukrainian, Coptic Egyptian, Chilean, Venezuelan, Cuban, Peruvian and Argentinian.

Over the two years of the program, the short-term outcomes were exceeded:

- 24 groups were supported through capacity building workshops and mentoring receiving a range of assistance including submission writing, auspicing, business, marketing and fundraising strategies, and access to rehearsal space.
- Over 50 individuals were assisted to access various mainstream artistic opportunities such as participating in Africultures Festival, Refugee Art Exhibition, City of Sydney Eisteddfod, Mandaean Got Talent, Afro-Latino Festival, 'Fast and Fresh' and 'Short and Sweet' dance competitions, Powerhouse Youth Theatre Fairfield and received tickets to performances by Bell Shakespeare, Sydney Dance Company, Bangarra Dance, Opera Australia and at Belvoir Street Theatre.
- Over 500 refugee young people accessed various art-based workshops and mentoring opportunities to increase their artistic skills. The four youth art camps engaged 145 youth from Congolese, Afghani, Pakistani, Iraqi and Sierra Leonean backgrounds. Over 120 young people (predominantly Afghani and Iraqi) participated in the Powerhouse Youth Theatre creative writing project. The Coffs Harbour creative writing and drawing school project engaged four local schools. 25 young people from refugee and CALD backgrounds participated in 'Arts Connect', 18 youth went on excursions to mainstream performances and 6 young people participated in a film workshop.
- A number of individual refugee artists received guidance with career pathways and access to performance opportunities. Two young men and a young woman participated in a series of dance self-choreography workshops with professional choreographers and devised their own solo performance piece for events such as the 'Fast and Fresh' competition and Dance Africa Dance 2013. Following this, one of the male performers, who had had no prior dance experience, went on to lead the Afro-contemporary Youth Dance Group and win the 'Best Male Dancer' title in the 'Fast n Fresh' dance competition. 19 people were linked to auditions and professional development workshops. Two filmmakers received mentoring in directing, filming and editing.
- An arts development database was developed containing information in relation to community artists and mainstream art organisations, and utilised by the CCDP Officer to notify participants of upcoming arts funding and performance opportunities.
- Cultural arts organisations were established in the African communities, including the Afro-Contemporary Youth Dance (ACYD) and St Mary's Dancing and Krumping group.
- Six successful showcase initiatives took place: the Refugee Art Exhibition 2012 and 2013, Dance Africa Dance 2012 and 2013, the Iraqi Youth school-based project and Coffs Harbour schools project.





## ***Progress toward achieving long-term outcomes***

STARTTS have made excellent progress toward achieving its long-term outcomes.

*“The project has helped me to feel proud of what I can do and what I’ve done, what I have achieved. I feel very proud of that and it has given me the confidence to pursue my interest in film-making and it has broadened my networks as well, getting to know other creative people and working them in the future as a result of the project. Also, for me I think in some ways I really enjoy community oriented projects so something like this that is small and community based there is something special about it and to showcase what my skills and talents are to the general Australia population it is like, I have a sense of to be proud of that, being able to acknowledge this is my culture and to be received by other people and that is unique to who we are that is what I like to do...” (Director of short film ‘Imprint’, participant Dance Africa Dance)*

Social capital projects are designed to support individuals and communities to strengthen positive social relationships, connections, and networks, which increase their capacities to address problems in common and enhance wellbeing through increased access to social resources. The considerable degree to which the CCDP has increased bonding and bridging social capital, through the strengthening of social capital enablers, leading to the enhanced wellbeing of participants is highlighted in these findings (Objective 4; KPI e, f & g). The evaluation identifies that the CCDP has made a significant impact on participants, benefiting them socially and emotionally, whilst increasing their skills in artistic production. Evidence gathered from a number of the refugee participants suggests that social capital has increased through a boost in their confidence and belief in their own abilities, the expansion of friendships and networks and the strengthening of their connection to the wider Australian society.

*“Some of the young people that I’ve met, they were interested in just seeing what this ‘thing’ contemporary dance was, were happy enough to come along to meet each week, to see each other and have some fun dancing together but over the two years, they’ve developed a commitment to each other and a recognition of their own skills in relation to dance but also telling stories, and some of the people that I have met have taken on roles of leadership with their friends and the younger people. It’s also been really good to observe how supporting sometime like this, dance, actually supports a whole family” (STARTTS Evaluation Officer)*

## ***Expression and processing of traumatic experiences and increasing wellbeing through opportunities to engage in art practices (Objective 2; KPI e; SCN7, 11; SCR N 2, 6; SCE 5, 10)***

The CCDP has provided opportunities for people to process and express their thoughts and feelings through different artistic mediums outside of a traditional therapeutic framework.

*“Dance will express your feelings, so if you’re feeling stressed, you can express it”  
(Participant, Iraqi Youth project)*



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*“It just shows how the Africans can actually make some happiness out of that, how dancing is sort of curative measure of some of their, um, sort of their discontent or psychological things they may have encountered over the years, I think it’s sort of healing process which is actually very good” (Audience member, Dance Africa Dance).*

*“They said that traditional counselling is not what works for them they feel much more benefit from coming together as a group and singing about experiences, sense of release from those things in being able to sing about them, turn something painful into something more manageable and almost joyous, a celebration...It is kind of a big deal for them, connected to settlement in Australia” (STARTTS Dancing in Harmony [DIH] Officer).*

Providing a space where people could come together to participate in an art form which they found enjoyable, people began to develop a sense of connection, safety and trust outside of formal support groups and their immediate community. Together they were able to share their stories and ideas, and find ways to express themselves through their artwork.

*“Just to be able to tell my story in such an innovative way um, something that I don’t think has been done before, to be able to tell my Ethiopian story, and it was amazing, to see myself in there was an experience to remember” (Participant, dancer and star of short film, Dance Africa Dance)*



Through shared interests and experiences, the groups developed a joint purpose, and often this led to an enthusiasm for future endeavours. A sense of hope and aspiration arose between them that together they could do and be more, becoming more actively engaged in their own and the wider community, and believing in the improved prospects for themselves and their family.

*“...to educate our children to tell them why are we here and where did we come from. If they see the CD and learn about the history as well, it is healing in a different way for us because the Sudanese people express their feelings through songs and music most of the African people when they sing and dance, when they are sad you can express your feeling through the music and when you are happy. So the coming out of our country or the independence of south Sudan is a big thing for us because we have lost lives and now we are happy...and the future is good and if there is a way we can help them from there, we can. So there are a lot of things we would like to do” (Participant, South Sudanese women’s group).*



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### ***Individual capacity building (Objective 2; KPI e; SCE 6, 7, 10, 14; SCN 10)***

Participants described their experiences of sharing their own ideas and learning new ways of dancing and performing. Through dedication to their art practice, they proved to themselves that they were able to do things that they and others, did not know they could do. This led to feelings of self-confidence and belief, pride, energy and motivation to continue. The identification of and increase in their individual capacities has strengthened the social capital enablers required to access social capital, including increased confidence to engage with mainstream arts and other organisations, and strengthened ability to form friendships and maintain positive relationships. Participants described these changes as occurring throughout the creation and rehearsal of the piece, as a result of working with others who have shared interests and experiences, including professional choreographers, and sharing their piece with audiences.

*“...at the moment I’m trying to find my confidence, because at home, work, they are all laughing at me because I’m not that kind of person that can dance, I’m a quiet person, so they’re just laughing at me. But I’ve told them that I can do it... I’m just keep pushing it along” (Participant, Walking Project)*

*“..when we finished the show it was like, yeah I want to perform it again, it was pretty good. Afterwards, you feel like you want to do anything, you can do any challenges, you feel like you can do these things” (Participant, ACYD)*

Through mentoring, participants learnt new artistic skills and found ways to combine different styles of artistic practice. This was an eye opening experience for some who had not experienced contemporary dance and music styles before and whilst initially there was some confusion and hesitation, over time everyone enjoyed trying something new.

*“When you have African dancing and African events, everyone expects you will do African cultural dancing, and this is African people coming together and doing something totally out of left field, I think that’s what the interesting aspect of the whole performance will be, it will be something people won’t expect” (Participant, Walking Project).*

*“That’s why I kept saying trust the process, trust what he’s telling you to do, just do it” (Participant, Walking Project)*

*“...most had not been exposed to this form of dance, I was impressed with how much they gave” (Martin Del Amo, Choreographer, Walking Project)*

Participants were surprised at their own ability to commit to their practice and to achieve, and were also pleased with people’s reactions to their performances.

*“I didn’t dance before, so I learned it. I was surprised. I was surprised of my ability, was thinking that I put so much energy. Because I think that no one is going to dance but when I see everyone shouting and liking the dance I put more energy into the dance” (Participant, Iraqi Youth Project)*



*“To me it was awesome. Performing as a group, little kids and us and the routine that we did with Lucky here, it was really nice, the outcome, the crowd, was feel like wow, that’s the word, wow.... We were a little bit nervous, but when you are nervous, you feel like that when you care about something, and also the way we done it and the crowd and when we got there and the result from the crowd, it was really nice” (Participant, ACYD)*

This boost in confidence led some participants to feel increased independence and autonomy, leading to a sense of control over ones life. It also gave some a new sense of aspiration and encouraged some to branch out and explore their arts potential.

*“It gave me more self esteem, more confidence, but it actually helped me even more...it made me feel like I become...more independent and more responsible” (Solo and ACYD performer).*

*“Being part of the Walking Project was absolutely mind-blowing. It was such a different experience, something I have never done before...It was very different, I was just happy and it was an amazing thing to be a part of. From there I went to work with others. [It was the] starting line I needed to look at something different, part of the mainstream, to challenge myself” (Participant, Dance Africa Dance).*

Further, their increased efficacy and responsibility, combined with their enthusiasm and commitment, led a number of participants to emerge as leaders within their groups.

*“I really didn’t expect it to turn out like this, being a leader. I just started out like a dancer like anybody else here. I’ve learned a lot since I joined this group...I learned a bit of patience...[The leadership course organised by STARTTS] taught me a lot. One thing I didn’t expect, it taught me my values as a leader... but I didn’t really actually think about that before ...I’ve learned how to become a better role model to the younger kids as an adult. It helped me learn more about myself...now I’m studying business at uni and maybe in the future I will open up a business that has something to do with dancing or like this type of activity because I enjoy it” (Leader ACYD and solo performer Dance Africa Dance).*

*[Have you seen any changes in the participants?] Definitely, leadership, entrepreneurship and self-confidence... people have become cultural ambassadors, leaders. [Several participants] they have become good advocates of their own community and their artforms” (CCDP Officer).*

Overall, the professional choreographers were very impressed by the participants’ efforts and developed capacities.

*“I think they have really committed to the process...anxiety but also the pleasure and reward that comes with that” (Martin Del Amo, choreographer)*

*“It’s sort of like they understood the worth of it personally and they wanted to get it right. They were very lively, an electric energy, that is the beauty of theatre, the energy of an audience focused on you and the importance that it brings...it’s a formula that can’t go wrong...confidence, self identity, a confidence in terms of telling a story of yourself, confidence not only about what your skills are but how you put those things together ...I was so proud at the end...they far exceeded my expectations about what was possible. It was wonderful to do it” (Francois Awad, choreographer)*



***Bonding Capital (Objective 2; KPI e; SCE 8, 10-13; SCRN 1, 6; SCN 1, 4, 7, 8)***

Through providing opportunities for participants to come together to develop their skills and have some fun, people got to know one another, becoming more open and able to trust their peers. Strong bonds were created within the group where participants could share ideas and experiences, and support one other.

*"We are not a team, we are like brother and sister"*

*"...You dance with the person in front of you and express feeling and you have to connect so you know what the person in front of you is going to do so you don't hit. In our dance we all hold hands, we do the same move together, everyone should know what they are doing together and then move together so they have to memorise everything. We have to act as one" (Participants, Iraqi Youth Project)*



*"I learned from here ...they are very inspiring, its about having fun, we all feel like a family and that's what it's created - a good relationship around us, we need to look after the little ones when they come and show them this is the way...we all working together, just having a nice friendly environment...this dancing thing is creating a big unity among ourselves" (Participant, ACYD).*

Participants enjoyed the stability of meeting with their group on a regular basis and established commitment to each other and the group's purpose, excited about the challenges ahead.

*[What will happen, what will you and the group be doing in one year?]*

*"We'll be professionals by then! I'm hoping in a year's time we have a bit more people and bigger audiences and hopefully our relations get stronger, and as a group we get better and learn more, because every time we come here we learn more and get better...just doing the dances and being in sync - that's what I'm hoping for...we'll be everywhere" (Participant, ACYD)*



The CCDP achieved its aim in strengthening support to community cultural arts groups through encouragement of cultural expression and exploration through various artforms. Opportunities were increased for participants to share their traditional and newly formed cultural art practices with a mainstream audience, and discover new ways of performing and seeing themselves.

*"[In Iraq people dance a lot], it expresses everyone's culture...celebrating culture"  
(Participant, Iraqi Youth Project)*

*"The other success I would say is actually seeing people taking...what I call cultural capital, seriously. I have met people who since doing projects...stand on their own, taking their arts as a serious thing...it's community cultural development...they are creating something new in a new country...creating what I would call ...that kind of group of young Africans, for example, are creating an Australia-African identity" (CCDP Officer).*

*"They were able to express and understand what defined their culture - not only the physical expression of the culture but the purpose behind them. I felt that it allowed to think about it and express it and ultimately when you have a representation of your culture, non African and even Sierra Leone background...it was a very emotional experience after the performance (Francois Awad, choreographer).*



Participants' cultural self-esteem, confidence and pride increased, and for some of the older participants, there was a revived passion and desire to share their cultural and personal heritage with their children.

*"'Imprint' [short film] I was to be able to tell my story in such a unique way, an experience I will never forget...presented me with the opportunity to say I am a dancer, I got this from my mum. I got an Ethiopian dance group and our aim is to instil dance into the younger generation about our culture and where they came from. I want to do this through dance. Through this film, I got dance from my mum, I'm doing it now, and I want my sons to know about Ethiopian dance, a perfect opportunity to do this and I can see more things coming out of this. It has been humbling" (Participant Walking Project and 'Imprint')*

***Bridging Capital (Objective 2; KPI e; SCE 4, 8, 11, 15; SCN 3, 11; SCRN 3, 5)***

Participant's sense of pride in their own community cultural group, as well as their performance group, was evident on stage, with audience members noticing the joy the participant's felt in being able to share their culture, talents and artistic creations, and this was reported to heighten their enjoyment.

*"Good variety in styles, ages, and weight of subjects. Great evening and it was obvious the performers were enjoying themselves, which heightened my enjoyment. Make it annual please!" (Audience member, Dance Africa Dance)*

Of those who participated in the Dance Africa Dance audience surveys, 90% said they were very much satisfied with the performance, with audiences noting the improvement over the two years. On average 63.5% said they were here to support refugee/African community arts and 16% said they came to celebrate their cultural heritage. 55% in 2012 and 72% in 2013 were from Anglo/European/Australian background. Overall, audience members had very positive comments about the showcase, particularly impressed with the range of ages of participants and the diverse and unique art styles, and requesting more showcases like it in the future:

*"Uplifting experience"*

*"Energetic, diverse, talented men and women and children. Wonderful"*

*"I enjoyed this event so much. Need more of this!"*

*"Congratulations to the organisers. A wonderful project for the boys, to get them involved"*

*"Made me cry and laugh – thank you"*

Similarly, the audience's highly positive reactions to the performance pieces built the participants' confidence and motivation to continue to pursue their art, as well as provide them with a greater sense of acceptance in the wider community, that people outside of their cultural group were showing an interest in what they had to offer.

*"I was amazed watching it, the message across to the audience, everything was just beautiful, the colours and the costume, the traditional dance gave extra flavour to the place, you could see the expression on people's face and that was the best...the audience was mixed, it wasn't just Africans it was different ethnic backgrounds, I liked that. The audience gave support to the performers, that was really the best" (Participant, Dance Africa Dance)*

*"Most people who came to see it thought it was really amazing. It was really comforting, especially as we are with African background they would understand. Even on the day when we performed we put so much energy into it. Even though they don't understand it - it felt good taking the audience on some kind of journey, even if they mightn't have really understood it" (Participant, Walking Project)*

The Iraqi Youth Project was a school-based program that linked a professional choreographer with a group of newly arrived refugees to create a dance and short film. This project activity proved to be beneficial for the participants to feel connected to each other in a new country, as well as to work toward breaking down some of the barriers they faced at school, with their peers full of praise and interest following performance of the piece.



*“And especially before going to the stage, some of us thought that the students might laugh at us because we are different to them, but then after the dancing we went outside everyone was like ‘Oh you did a good job’” (Participant Iraqi Youth Project)*

*[No1. important reason for being part of the dance group] “Creates a connection between me and the dance and makes me know more about me and my culture and what’s being. Plus meeting people that I don’t meet everyday around because they’re from IEC and I am from high school. I want to create a connection between me and them. It’s happening and I want that program to keep going” (Participant, Iraqi Youth Project).*

This group was particularly effective in successfully creating a group in which young people from different ethnic backgrounds could connect and find unity, which might not have been possible in their home country.

*[Why do you like doing it, why do you think the group should keep going?]  
“It makes us feel happy because we are all from the same culture...are from Iraq”  
“We are showing our culture to everyone”  
“We not gonna lose our culture” “We’re proud of it”  
(Participants, Iraqi Youth Project)*

Through the project STARTTS have also connected people and provided them opportunities to try new things and supporting them to challenge themselves.

*“...biggest impact? Not so much the project, but more the people. It is good to get to know many people. In the group, and people outside. People outside and the people we work with at STARTTS allows me to motivate myself and keep on going forwards and keep looking for different opportunities” (Participant, Walking Project, 2013).*

***Linking participants to professional arts development opportunities and providing knowledge and access to the Australian arts-infrastructure  
(Objective 1, 2 & 3; KPI a, b, d & e; SCE3, 4, 5, 6; SCN 4, 5, 6, 12)***

The STARTTS community services team utilised their connections in the arts industry to recruit professional choreographers and mentors who offered advice and skills training to many of the individuals and groups. Three talented dancers emerged during the first Dance Africa Dance were approached to attend self-choreography workshops with professional choreographers to perform solo pieces in the 2013 showcase, providing them with the skills and encouragement to pursue their arts careers. Two filmmakers received mentoring in directing, shooting and editing.

Throughout the arts development process, there were skills that participants were required to learn, to prepare them for professional performances, that were often things the participants were not used to, with many only ever having participated in social dance.

*“Punctuality is a huge thing”  
“Some people did not understand the purpose of warm up is to reduce the risk of injury”  
“...not about skill but rather about commitment - that counted much more”  
(Martin Del Amo, Choreographer)*





*"They noticed that they can dance, many never did before. It's not like dancing at a wedding. We really need to continue and implement other things...learn to be fast, concentration, balance. Old and new. How to think outside the square" (STARTTS Youth Worker)*

*"Well, surprising actually...you learn something new, which is actually a thing later. If someone like dancing, you can continue. I've learnt a lot of stuff, I knew what it meant to dance, you need energy, and first when we did the skipping it was sort of like hard, I don't know if everyone felt the same but it was really hard for me. You know, you need your body to keep in motion, and to become soft, not to stiffen, and you need to know when actually to stop and when to go with the rhythm and these kind of things. So it's very much good, and now I can go to a dance academy (laughs). I can continue" (Participant, Walking Project and solo performer).*

Due to the differences in experiences and expectations, the choreographers and other mentors were required to adjust their ideas and processes to meet the needs of participants, leading to a reciprocal learning experience.

*"I was very aware of but I had not had much experiences of Africans or refugees"  
"Learned through trial and error"*

*"I felt that we bonded quite quickly - they saw I was working very hard for them...my aim was for them to get as much out of it as I could...that was where the respect came from"  
(Martin Del Amo, choreographer)*

*"This was a very special experience for me. I feel like I've had a huge variety of experiences professionally and personally but I do feel honestly that this was a really special moment in my development"*

*"You need to work with what they have and what their commitment is"  
"...the lesson for me is come in a little bit more open...now I think if you can adapt then it's ok anyway....my experience, the first thing I noticed was a hurdle of trust"  
(Francois Awad, choreographer)*

*"I have learned a lot starting with developing really good relationships. Establish good relationships and you understand each other" (Patrick Lartey aka 'Lucky', Choreographer)*

There were qualities in the professionals that the participants and STARTTS workers felt worked well within this setting of working with community cultural groups:

*"He was very encouraging and patient"*

*"We helped to create a vision, he helped us to see it...our capacity, he really encouraged us. If we aren't able to if we aren't able to do that he is very flexible, working off from where we are"*

*(Participants, Sierra Leone women's performance group)*

*"One of the main [challenges], that interface between the arts world and community development. It has been a tricky process finding artists in terms of choreographers that get community work...they come with their own expectations. Challenging to find people who can bridge that gap between worlds" (STARTTS staff member)*



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***Capacity of STARTTS to run arts projects, incorporating CCD principles (Objective 3; KPI c & d; SCE 5, 8, SCN 2, 4, 9, SCRN 4, 5)***

STARTTS is largely achieving its stated project objectives through program activities, and is well positioned to continue arts and cultural projects with refugee groups. STARTTS understands that community development work is an ever evolving, continuous process of learning and adjusting to meet particular individual and community needs (STARTTS, 2012:12). This is due to the fact that every community is different and there is no one set of characteristics to define that community, but many voices that make up that group. The CCDP engaged participants from across a range of different refugee communities, within each of which were a vast array of experiences, skills, knowledge and expectations about what might come out of this project. STARTTS project staff were therefore required to be adaptable to each person's needs and desires, and be able to negotiate ways in which they could commit to come together for a common goal.

*“Anybody needs to understand and anyone working with them, that their lives are anything but simple. Many are here by themselves, staying with extended family, major family issues, some haven't been here long and are still dealing with settlement issues, and torture and trauma issues. One [participant] has so much, she comes for a few weeks and then not for a few weeks, I will call her...the group at this point is beneficial for her, maybe later clinical services, for now this is what she is ready for. To me that is so significant that we are able to do that in a culturally sensitive way” (STARTTS DIH Officer)*

The success of this project can largely be attributed to the capacity and strengths of STARTTS as an organisation, in terms of the skills of its staff and resources, its reputation within the wider community and its strong networks and partnerships, creating a positive and capable environment in which arts projects can be sustained. The CCDP Officer worked closely with other staff to expose them to skills in arts and cultural production, as well as promoting general awareness within the organisation. Utilising the expertise of counsellors, community development staff and youth workers within the project has proven to be of great advantage in the initial engagement and retaining of participants in the program. These skills and knowledge was crucial when emotional, psychological and other external issues arose, such as family breakdown or child protection matters arose, particularly when working in the school-based projects.

*“I couldn't have done this as an individual...I was thinking if this was, you know I got this myself and I was trying to work from an office somewhere, there is no way, you know we have the institutional support structure [at STARTTS], like counsellors even sometimes [and other staff with links to the community]. And then to [train the staff to] understand their [participants] art forms as well, to be able to guide them or contextualise their [staff] work as well” (CCDP Officer).*

The collaboration of these skills and knowledge was essential to achieving its goal of building social capital, therefore the project was first and foremost a social capital building project, rather than purely a professional development project.

*“More emphasis on the community component of it, because that's what has seen the best results. The arts tool is hugely effective particularly of the communities we have been*



*working with, community development is part of it, the way it fits at STARTTS, people have a range of expertise we can connect people to” (STARTTS DIH Officer).*

STARTTS’ positive rapport with the refugee community has enabled the program to flourish, with participants feeling a sense of stability and safety in the program environment, being able to rely on and trust in staff to assist them the best they can.

*“Yes we do new things and get involved, involved in new things with [youth worker] because I always enjoy doing things with her” (Participant, Iraqi Youth Project).*

*[No1 Importance of being in the group] “First STARTTS and second my passion for dance”*

*[How did you manage to balance work/uni/dance life?]*

*“Even though I don’t go to class, she [STARTTS DIH Officer] always texts me and reminded me...I feel considered”*

*(Participant, Walking Project, ACYD and solo performer)*

*[What have family and friend’s reaction been?]*

*“I’m still going to tell some people, I don’t know. Our people are so reluctant, you need to explain it to them, what it is. But usually STARTTS programs are known around our communities, so they will show up [to the performance]”*

*(Participant, Walking Project)*

STARTTS capacity to run community cultural development programs has reported to have noticeably increased throughout the project, through a process of learning and adapting as the project has progressed and through the sharing of skills and knowledge by the CCDP Officer.

*“From last year through to this year the number of participants [in Dance Africa Dance] is bigger, the performances were a little bit more professional and there were people that were there last year that came back in 2013, so you can see that it is something people want to keep going with and working toward making this bigger. It was just the way it was done this year, audience participation – performance in the courtyard, bringing out creativity in people and great way of getting together. Obviously the way in 2013 it showed there was a lot of work put into it which undoubtedly means there has been some amazing cooperation to create something unique” (Participant, Dance Africa Dance).*

*“Great night and I appreciated the changes from last year – tighter program, short runtime, good build up. Great performance” (Audience member, Dance Africa Dance)*

As the project has progressed, and more people have become involved, the STARTTS community have become excited and more committed to doing further arts projects such as this in the future.

*“STARTTS has made also more commitment towards this arts because last year they appointed a full time person out of their own money to run the capoeira project so I think that’s STARTTS showing commitment...the fact that they are putting in their own core funding towards it...and I think generally there is a bit of excitement amongst the staff, there is lots of things happening” (STARTTS CCDP Officer).*



Throughout the project, the professional choreographers engaged offered praise to STARTTS and commented on the positive working relationship. They were also able to provide some useful suggestions for improvement in relation to the procedures required when running arts programs. Upon receiving this feedback, STARTTS have incorporated suggestions and adapted practices accordingly, demonstrating their growing capacity in this area.

*“I felt like my relationship with STARTTS was a very good relationship. I was briefed as much as I could have been, ... Artistically it worked very well – needs freedom or you get someone who works in a textbook way. If there were huge boundaries to work within, a lot of interference artistically that inhibits the process. STARTTS has been great in that process – provide brief, feedback, but they definitely left me to do it” (Francois Awad, Choreographer)*

*“When someone is prepared to the best of their ability, and what is about to come, they have a better ability to be what you want them to be ... if they knew about that commitment and what was expected of them would have been a benefit...If you are going to run another one, have a performance contract about their commitment – prepares them for professional life” (Francois Awad, Choreographer)*

*“I must say I was very impressed...understood from the beginning how difficult it is to get a performance and maintaining commitment...brought people together and was always there half an hour early, speeches he gave...follow up any problems. Lots of work behind the scene to support my process”(Martin Del Amo, choreographer)*

*“[CCDP Officer] approached me earlier last year – clear that STARTTS was not used to dealing with artists. The whole contract process was difficult...poorly formatted and not professional. But larger problems were in relation to copyright and insurance. Need to find out what the standard is in the arts world and use this as the basis. Also legally, these days organisations should also pay super and workers compensation – you need to look into this in the future” (Martin Del Amo, choreographer)*



## Analysis and discussion

The CCDP succeeded in achieving its objectives through facilitating cultural and arts activities that encouraged professional development and exposure to mainstream arts, whilst more significantly, increasing individual capacities, social and professional networks and overall wellbeing of participants.

The key project activities increased opportunities for small and emerging refugee communities to participate in excellent art practices through three streams: community cultural development, youth and refugee artists. A wide range of participants, varying in age, gender, ethnicity, culture and arts skill ability, were engaged and provided with an opportunity to surprise themselves with their own capabilities and talents, and share with others what they and their cultural traditions had to offer. Individuals and groups were exposed to mainstream performances and exhibitions, assisted to build their professional arts capacity and many supported to become cultural ambassadors. The CCDP enabled participants to increase their sense of autonomy and independence through providing them with knowledge about how to navigate mainstream arts infrastructure and offering them opportunities to work with the CCDP Officer in pursuing their arts endeavour. By encouraging participants to initiate and undertake tasks for themselves, linking them with professional networks, and mentoring them in professional arts development, many of the groups will likely be sustainable in the future, having developed the capacity to independently manage their own affairs. Many have developed aspirations for the future, not only in an arts-related field, but have built the self-esteem to pursue other endeavours and connect with the wider Australian community in different ways.

One of the highlights and main successes of the project were the ‘Dance Africa Dance’ productions in 2012 and 2013, which showcased a fusion of various forms of traditional and contemporary dance to create a unique and exciting experience for audiences. The participants consisted of existing cultural and art groups who were supported to create a semi-professional piece, a newly commissioned piece specifically produced for the showcase, where participants auditioned, received professional choreography training for a well-known choreographer and were paid for their performance, and in 2013, three dancers and two filmmakers received professional training and mentoring to create solo pieces. Performers were of all ages and skill levels, and each gained something different from the project, from becoming inspired to become a professional artist, to developing skills as leaders, to finding new friendships and supports. The production enabled participants to display their vast talents, be acknowledged and rewarded for their commitment, and reflecting their personal experiences of their emerging identities through settlement in Australia.

Engagement of African refugee communities, and the Iraqi refugee community particularly, have been hugely successful. There are constantly new project activities emerging. From the very popular Dance Africa Dance to ‘Mandaeen’s Got Talent’, a competition in Sydney which has been publicised on the internet to reach other Madaean’s living overseas, CCDP activities are receiving positive reception. STARTTS should continue to encourage the participation of diverse, small and emerging refugee groups in mainstream arts events and professional development.



Much of the qualitative data collected from participants, STARTTS staff and professional choreographers suggests that a contributing factor to the success of the project was that STARTTS as the key provider in running community cultural and arts projects. It was noted that STARTTS was capable of managing the tasks involved due to having the capacities necessary to engage refugee community groups and retain their interest in arts projects. The findings reflect the importance of STARTTS as they have a number of important strengths which can contribute to success:

- The ability and capacity to draw on staff from other roles in the organisation and utilise their connections and skills to engage and retain refugee individuals and groups in these projects, especially important is the access to counsellors to support and facilitate arts creation processes
- Its reputation within the wider community and the established links and networks with other communities and organisations upon which connections and resources can be drawn upon
- The positive working relationships and rapport that has been built with refugee communities over long periods of time (which can lead to sustainability in projects that involve them)
- The value that participants place on STARTTS, acknowledging and appreciating the dedication of staff in assisting them through arts process and caring for their general wellbeing.



## Challenges

### Program challenges

Those who took part in the evaluation identified some of the challenges they encountered during project implementation and made suggestions for improvement. In addition to the recommendations previously mentioned by the choreographers in terms of becoming more skilled in professional arts procedures (eg. contracts and insurance policies), participants also offered some feedback for consideration.

*“My only thing would be a little bit more time for people to practice and a bit more run through the whole thing. With the walking project only had 9 rehearsals and it involved a lot of complex moves, as that needs a little bit more ...rehearsal time, running through the whole thing on stage. Everything was fantastic. But maybe more than one day”*  
(Participant, Walking Project).

The CCDP Officer explained the challenge of working in a non-professional arts environment.

*“Doing an arts related job in a non-arts related environment and it has been a huge challenge and partly it is about educating the people I work with.... nobody I can ask whether I am going through the right process...I have to have a parallel process”(CCDP Officer)*

*“I think [if STARTTS worked closely with a mainstream arts organisation] it will give a profile for the work because even though we have done a lot, I don’t think... out there people... you know they know big projects which has had the chance to have a performance outcome they know about it, Baulkham Hills everyone knows STARTTS, ... they know Dance Africa Dance, but, the rest of it kind of goes into, well it’s not in people’s imaginations”*  
(CCDP Officer)

Working in the fast-paced and varied environment meant project staff were not always able to take the time for self care and utilise the provided external supervisor, or meet with their manager to debrief, as much as they would have liked.

*“Sometimes I think I could deal with it a bit more. I use my colleagues for that and get different perspectives. Probably a little more would be good. We have an external supervisor that comes in once a month, option of seeing her in a group or individually. ...Making time for it. Sometimes I think if I don’t do this, I...would get all this done and not be stressed. Lot of out of hours and weekend work. Easy to miss external supervisor”*  
(STARTTS Project Officer)

### Evaluation Challenges

There were also challenges encountered whilst undertaking the evaluation. Due to the evolving and organic nature of the project, which gave freedom to the participants to access and exit the program as they wished, and take part in STARTTS run activities as well as initiate their own, there were some difficulties collecting quantitative data. This posed problems in relation to the identifying the number of people attending programs at any given time, and who was involved in more than one project activity. As the



quantitative data is limited, precise numbers of participants cannot be provided. Despite this, the documentation of project activity indicates that a large number of people were able to successfully participate in the project.

This evaluation was based on three case studies, analysing the feedback from participants who took part in interviews. Whilst the considerable benefits of the project can be evidenced here, the extent to which this is true for all those who participated in the CCDP is undetermined, however we can assume all participants involved had a similar positive experience.

The CCDP was multifaceted, strongly linked to and building on already existing cultural and arts groups and activities established or supported by STARTTS. Therefore it was at times challenging to separate which outcomes were a direct result of this project, as effectiveness and impact can be seen to be cumulative. For instance, other STARTTS youth and community workers, particularly the DIH Officer, have been working closely with many of the groups that performed in Dance Africa Dance for some time. Whilst the CCDP Officer organised the logistics of the event, recruiting choreographers, identifying participants and used their skills to connect participants with arts networks, it was often other STARTTS workers that were directly supporting the groups through the rehearsal process and assisting the CCDP Officer with scheduling rehearsals, liaising with choreographers and preparing for the performance. Therefore it is difficult to determine, for instance, whether the strengthening of social capital enablers such as 'Increased sense of safety and stability' (Bartolomei & Pittaway, 2013) was a result of the opportunities provided as part of the CCDP or more related to the consistency and encouragement of their STARTTS Officer that supported them directly throughout the process.

However, this need not be perceived as a problem, as in fact the very nature of STARTTS means that projects such as this can be flexible and strengths drawn upon from within the organisation, as well as networks connected to the organisation to enhance the success of projects. Due to the sensitive nature of working with people from a refugee background, it is highly beneficial to have access to a variety of skilled staff such as counsellors and bilingual workers, who can assist project workers to access communities and develop rapport and good working relationships with them. Without these skills and connections, working with refugees, even in an arts capacity, may be detrimental to their social and emotional wellbeing, and participants may not stay engaged.

These identified challenges have informed the recommendations made herein.





## Conclusion

The STARTTS Community Cultural Development Program was successful in implementing a broad range of arts activities with a diverse group of refugee participants, maintaining their engagement and encouraging their enthusiasm. This was made possible due to the energy and motivation of participants to explore new challenges and commit to the process of learning, the strong rapport that exists between refugee communities, and STARTTS' positive reputation and networks in the wider community. The qualitative data collected suggests that a contributing factor to the success of the project was that STARTTS was capable of managing the tasks involved due to having the capacities necessary to engage refugee community groups and retain their interest in arts projects. The ability and capacity to draw on staff from other roles, such as counsellors and youth workers, meant that participants and arts project Officers were supported psychologically and emotionally during the arts creation processes.

The findings reflect that whilst this project has had a strong focus on providing participants with access to professional development and opportunities to access the wider Australian arts industry, the goal in itself was not to produce 'fame' for a number of professional artists. Rather, it was the process of participants finding potential in themselves, finding joy in their art and forming new relationships that was the real success and benefit of this project.

The increased sense of self-esteem, confidence and control felt by the participants as a result of the CCDP are all critical enablers that lead to the building of social capital. The project effectively enabled participants to strengthen their bonding and bridging social capital through providing them with a safe and open space where people could take risks and learn new skills, form new friendships and social supports, and extend their broader networks, improving settlement outcomes including education and employment opportunities and feelings of connectedness.

The CCDP is first and foremost a social capital project that aims to provide education and support in the arts to community cultural groups, and is not merely focused on professional development outcomes. This program has benefited not only the participants but also the STARTTS staff and arts professionals who have been a part of the mutual learning process throughout the project. Basing itself on community development principles, the project aimed to provide opportunities for learning, building capacities, forming friendships, strengthening supports and networks, and providing a link to mainstream society in which the experiences of differences cultures can be shared and explored. With the support of the CCDP Officer and other STARTTS staff, participants have fulfilled this project goal through their own process of commitment, intrigue in learning, energy, passion and sense of personal and collective achievement and pride.



## Recommendations

These recommendations are drawn from analysis of the findings and based on the feedback from those who took part in the evaluation.

### It is recommended that:

1. STARTTS continue to run community cultural and art programs, and support existing art groups within the communities, enabling refugee communities to find outlets for artistic expression and to support participants throughout this process in terms of professional guidance and development, resources and psychosocial support.
2. STARTTS ensure that participants are sufficiently informed and prepared when committing to performances and exhibitions, and feel supported throughout the process. This might include creation of an MOU between performer, STARTTS and any other arts professional or organisation involved to recognise the expectations, roles and responsibilities of each party.
3. STARTTS continue to pursue wider engagement of and be open to supporting people from all refugee backgrounds in community cultural arts activities and providing them with access to artistic guidance, encouragement and support in their chosen artistic endeavours. The STARTTS team, in their different roles, to continue to identify and offer arts opportunities to potential participants through their work with clients.
4. STARTTS further engage with schools where refugee young people attend, replicating and/or adapting projects similar to the successful Iraqi Youth Dance Project. This might involve seeking closer links with the Department of Education to expand the program more broadly through curriculum activities, thereby increasing bridging social capital and positive settlement experiences for young refugees.
5. STARTTS continue to seek funding and form further partnerships and collaborations with mainstream arts organisations to implement project activities: creating wider opportunities for participants; to promote and share their art with the broader Australian society; and to support the development of a sustainable arts infrastructure within the organisation.
6. STARTTS continue to build capacity to run professional arts activities, particularly focusing on increasing their knowledge of arts industry law, policies and processes, for instance, improving skills in professional arts contract writing and marketing. This includes taking steps to further support the CCDP Officer, providing them with greater access to resources and others in the arts industry to assist with the technical aspects of executing artistic productions.
7. STARTTS management, working with the CCDP Officer, to continue to offer staff 30% community development time within their role, and to promote the CCDP as a beneficial and exciting way of allocating their volunteer time, to be involved in creating, implementing and supporting cultural arts activities. This was seen to be



hugely beneficial to participants during the course of this project, when emotional, psychological and other external issues arose, in recruiting and retaining participants, and assisting the CCDP Officer to undertake their work.

8. STARTTS management to continue to monitor the impact of such projects on staff and ensure that they access internal and external supervision provided, promoting self-care to prevent burnout and ensure that staff feel supported, confident and motivated.
9. STARTTS staff working on the CCDP should strive for consistent, frequent and accurate quantitative data collection (to complement their well documented qualitative data) as part of their planned and detailed monitoring and evaluation process. This will ensure that high quality and clearly evidenced project results can be produced in order to fully demonstrate success of the project.
10. In future evaluations, it is recognised that due to the nature of STARTTS projects, it is difficult to delineate the outcomes and effects of one project, when participants are often involved in other STARTTS activities concurrently.

**Recommendations for STARTTS when working mainstream arts professionals and organisations who intend to work with people from a refugee background on cultural arts projects. That the STARTTS CCPD team:**

1. Provide a framework and training to mainstream arts entities who work with people from a refugee background, to ensure that they have an understanding of the refugee experiences and issues that are faced in settlement. Those who engage with community cultural arts groups should be open to a reciprocal learning experience as part of the creative process, and have the ability to adapt expectations to meet the needs of participants.
2. Raise to awareness and provide guidance to mainstream arts professionals and organisations who work with refugee artists and community cultural arts groups, to be sensitive to the needs of participants and understand how to access appropriate support and make referrals where necessary, to ensure the emotional, physical and psychological wellbeing of participants during project activities.

**Recommendations for funding bodies**

1. That funding bodies continue to fund beneficial and successful projects such as the STARTTS Community Cultural Development program, contributing to the strengthening of bonding and bridging social capital of diverse refugee community groups, and assisting by providing access to professional development opportunities and pathways.





## Background to the Project

STARTTS has long held the well-supported belief that recovery from trauma and positive settlement can occur in many different ways for refugee communities, across psychosocial and cultural aspects of their individual and community life. Consultation with various refugee community leaders by the STARTTS Community Services Team identified the central importance of artistic expression in the process of healing and establishing new lives. This project has evolved out of these discussions and the support already offered by STARTTS workers to assist communities in developing their artistic expression and to come together to share and celebrate their social and cultural traditions. With the appointment of the CCDP Officer, who has extensive experience in the arts and community development, as well as significant connections to the 'mainstream' arts world in the UK and Australia, work begun on the project alongside STARTTS staff in various roles, bringing together a range of expertise and understanding, and linking with community networks.

A focus of the CCDP was to 'bridge the gap' between community arts and professional arts, with project activities designed to increase participant's knowledge, skills and capacity to access and navigate mainstream arts infrastructure. As a result of this process, STARTTS' have worked to achieve its aim of strengthening social capital enablers (eg. self-confidence) and building social capital (eg. professional and social networks) for refugee participants, leading to improved overall wellbeing. Another important aspect of the project was to increase awareness and intrigue of the wider Australia society into the refugee experience and the cultural strengths that these groups have to share.

The Centre for Refugee Research UNSW was engaged by STARTTS as the independent evaluator for this project, following work undertaken together to develop a tool to measure social capital and evaluate community projects that aim to increase this (See *'The Glue that Binds'* by Doney et al. 2013).



## Project goal and objectives

*“To increase bonding and bridging social capital and wellbeing of small and emerging refugee communities through arts and non-arts partnerships”*

### Project objectives:

1. Engage and build sustainable arts-based infrastructure in the following small and emerging refugee communities: South Sudanese, Sierra Leonean, Burundian, Congolese, Liberian, Karen, Hazara, Tibetan, Mandaean and Assyrian/Chaldean
2. Engage communities in developing social capital through participation in arts and cultural activities (specifically, the streams outlined under Key Project Activities of the Funding Agreement)
3. Implement a sustainable cultural development program for each small and emerging refugee community, distributing ownership of the project, and enabling sustainable relationship maintenance and development
4. Undergo independent evaluation, demonstrating the impact upon social capital and wellbeing of participants in the project.

### Short-term project outcomes:

- Small and emerging arts and cultural refugee groups receive support with: capacity building workshops, submission writing, access to rehearsal and performance space, access to performance opportunities targeting a wider Australia audience
- Individuals from various refugee communities access ‘mainstream’ performances and exhibitions
- Refugee young people access various art-based workshops and mentoring opportunities to increase their artistic skills. They are also linked with mentors and further education opportunities. The project will reach 100 young people through youth camps, 80 through STARTTS/PYT school holiday workshops and up to 150 through school workshops.
- A number of individual refugee artists receive guidance with career pathways and access to performance and funding opportunities
- A number of relevant databases developed (containing information relating to individual refugee artists and cultural art groups, arts funding opportunities for small and emerging refugee groups and mainstream performance and exhibition opportunities)
- Capacity of STARTTS staff to run Community Cultural Development projects increased
- Two new arts organisations established in African communities
- Six showcase initiatives (2 Refugee Art Exhibitions, 2 African Dance events, 2 youth showings)



## Long-term project outcomes

- Increased bonding social capital within refugee communities and bridging social capital with Australia society at large through participation in arts and cultural activities
- Enhances skills and capacities among small and emerging refugee communities, required to negotiate Australian systems associated with acquiring resources for cultural and art development
- Refugee communities are encouraged to express and process aspects of their traumatic experiences through art and cultural activities thus enhancing the prospects of recovery
- Increased cooperation and collaboration between diverse refugee communities
- Increased skills among refugee communities and individuals in producing art particularly focusing on young people
- Increased access to 'mainstream' performance and exhibition opportunities for refugee artists
- Increased business skills among refugee individual and groups, particularly focusing on the creation of arts-based social enterprise

## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- a) Number of artists and artswomen engaged
- b) Number of participants in the program
- c) Demonstrated evidence of the embedding of CCD principles into STARTTS systems and programming
- d) Number of new partnerships formed and developed
- e) Demonstrable impact upon social capital and wellbeing of participating communities
- f) Disseminate information on the project(s) and findings of the evaluation program in appropriate form
- g) Independent evaluation demonstrating the impact upon social capital and wellbeing of project participants



## Evaluation Methodology

The research evaluation questions below were formulated drawing on the project aim and objectives, with a particular focus on the impact on social capital and its enablers for refugee individuals and communities.

1. What is the level of inclusivity, accessibility and sustainability of STARTTS arts activities?
2. What has been the impact of the project on improving participant's wellbeing?
3. What has been the impact of the project on bonding within and between refugee communities?
4. What has been the impact on bridging with the wider Australian society, in both an arts capacity as well as linking to positive settlement outcomes?
5. What has been the impact on forming linkages with the arts field and other educational and employment opportunities?
6. To what extent have the participants been engaged in professional development, and their awareness, knowledge of and access to the Australian arts industry increased?
7. What is the (increased) capacity of STARTTS to run community cultural arts projects?

A participatory approach was taken to project design and evaluation of the CCDP, an important and necessary aspect of both STARTTS' and The Centre for Refugee Research's work with refugees (Doney et. al 2013; STARTTS 2012). This involved engaging the participant refugee communities in the formulation of project objectives and planning, and providing them with opportunities to be meaningfully involved in the evaluation. In doing so, the key community development principles of participation and empowerment were upheld, and the participant's learning, and strengthening of social capital enablers enhanced further. The experience of being involved in the project design and evaluation provided opportunities for participants to have their skills, experience and knowledge acknowledged, their successes recognised, and capacity to build new relationships strengthened, providing a foundation for strong social capital.

It was decided between the STARTTS Evaluation Officer, CCDP Officer and independent evaluator that due to the vast number of project activities, the best way to the approach the independent evaluation was to explore three of the major events as case studies. Dance Africa Dance, Walking Project and Iraqi Youth Project were chosen as they covered the three identified priority areas of community, professional development and youth, and had strong qualitative and quantitative data collected of which the outcomes strongly linked to the goal of increasing social capital.

The evaluation used a mixed-method approach, drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data to gain a greater understanding of the complex project impacts, yielding greater validity than from one method alone. A purposeful sample was taken, to gather detailed information in regards to the three case studies. Statistics were gathered in relation to the participants and activities involved in the project, and a collection of interview transcripts and quantitative questionnaires were thematically coded and analysed, to gain rich data about the impact of this project.



This evaluation draws on the feedback from eight focus groups and three individual interviews with program participants (of a range of ages, nationalities and gender), four STARTTS staff interviews, three choreographer interviews, and audience surveys from Dance Africa Dance 2012 and 2013. Interviews were semi-structured and contained open-ended questions to explore participant's experiences and wisdom. The majority of interviews were conducted by STARTTS project officers as the project progressed, being documented verbatim and provided to the evaluator for analysis. A sample of interview questions from STARTTS can be found at Annexure 3. The Centre for Refugee Research evaluator also conducted interviews with a selection of participants who were significantly involved in the project in different ways. These interview questions can be found at Annexure 4. Reported changes experienced by project participants were used as the method of qualitative data collection, particularly useful as there was no baseline data to compare post-project results to. This is also an ethically sensitive way of collecting data in a community development context and gains validity from the in-depth data it produces.

Images contained in this report have been given with the permission of STARTTS and are gathered from a collection of the performances undertaken during this project. All quotes are from the verbatim documentation of the research consultations and interviews conducted by the evaluator and STARTTS project officers. Consent was gained from participants as to the use of quotes and photographs.

Annexure 5 provides details of the evaluation plan.

## Evaluating Social Capital

As this project's aim was to increase social capital for refugee communities and individuals, the social capital evaluation tool, commissioned by STARTTS and formulated with the Centre for Refugee Research in collaboration with refugee groups, has been utilised in the project evaluation. The tool was utilised in this evaluation to measure the impact of the CCDP on strengthening social capital enablers and building social capital for refugee participants against the social capital objectives and indicators identified (Bartolomei & Pittaway, 2013) - See Annexure 1 and 2.

### Social Capital definition

Social capital refers to social relationships, connections, networks and resources that exist within a community, as well as the 'norms' or formal and informal rules that govern social interaction, such as trust and cooperation (Rostila 2010).

Drawing on social capital literature, the Centre for Refugee Research developed the following working definition to describe the broad goal of social capital projects:

*'Supporting individuals and communities to strengthen positive social relationships, connections, and networks which increase their capacities to address problems in common and enhance wellbeing through increased access to social resources'*.





Three broad types of social capital have been defined in the academic literature: bonding, bridging and linking social capital (Granovetter 1973; Putnam 2000; Szretzer & Woolcock 2004).

Bonding Capital	Social connections to people within one's own social or ethnic group, or close to one's self (eg. neighbourhood). Important in providing emotional and social support.
Bridging Capital	The horizontal connections to people and groups in the wider community (eg. People in other ethnic communities, or employment networks). Important in facilitating information exchange, social inclusion and community participation.
Linking Capital	The vertical connections to people in positions of authority or relevant social institutions. Important for accessing social power and gaining opportunities for upward mobility.

The social capital evaluation tool includes three categories of Social Capital Objectives. The first two categories of objectives and indicators relate directly to the core aspects of social capital in the literature, namely 'Social Connection and networks' and 'Social Capital Relational Norms'. The third category of 'Social Capital Enablers' are a new and specific set of objectives that were identified during the STARTTS and Centre's research as being critical to social capital building work with refugee communities (Bartolomei & Pittaway, 2013:4).

### **Social Capital Enablers**

"Social capital enablers are factors that are critical for enabling refugee individuals and communities to access and build on existing social capital, thereby enabling them to extend social connections and networks and build new links in settlement. Social capital enablers include individual capacities, community capacities and socio-political factors" (Doney et al. 2013:27).

The creation of positive social connections are crucial for people who came to Australia as refugees, from assisting them in the healing of trauma, to supporting them to successful settle in their new home.

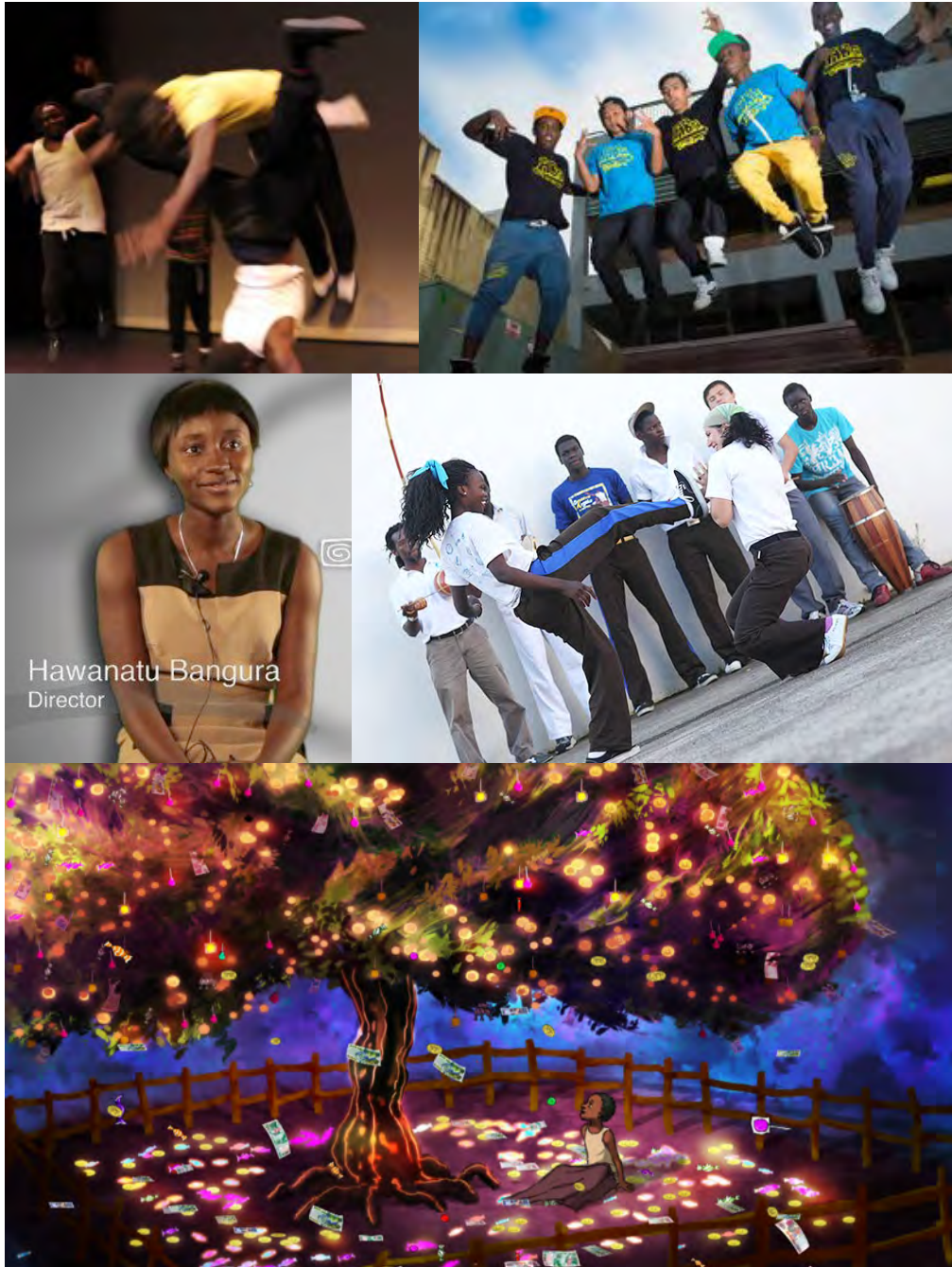


**Model showing the Four Aspects of Social Capital (Doney et. al 2013)**

<b>Social connections and social networks</b>	<b>Relational norms</b>	<b>Social resources</b>	<b>Social capital enablers</b>
<p>Family connections</p> <p>Links to settlement service providers</p> <p>Links to teachers and schools</p> <p>Relationships with teachers/mentors</p> <p>Educational networks/opportunities</p> <p>Employment related networks/opportunities</p> <p>Connections to people with shared interests</p> <p>Connections to members of one's own immediate community</p> <p>Networks of community organisations</p> <p>Connections to community leaders</p> <p>Connections to people from outside one's immediate community</p> <p>Connections to people in positions of authority</p> <p>Links to political systems and networks</p> <p>Transnational social networks</p>	<p>Community Goodwill, Mutual support and cooperation</p> <p>Trust</p> <p>Community Harmony</p> <p>Organisational accountability and transparency</p> <p>Understanding and acceptance of diversity within the community</p> <p>Family Harmony</p>	<p>Money</p> <p>Community infrastructure</p> <p>Community-run organisations and services</p> <p>Appropriate settlement services</p> <p>Emotional support</p> <p>Employment pathways</p> <p>Educational pathways</p> <p>Cultural activities</p> <p>Social, recreational and sport activities</p>	<p><b>Individual capacities</b></p> <p>Socio-economic status</p> <p>Educational attainment</p> <p>Understanding of broader Australian culture</p> <p>Sense of freedom and equality</p> <p>Sense of safety and stability</p> <p>Sense of independence and autonomy</p> <p>Self-confidence and self-esteem</p> <p>Sense of belonging</p> <p>Sense of hope/aspiration</p> <p>Cultural self-esteem</p> <p><b>Community capacities</b></p> <p>Cultural capital</p> <p>Cultural fluency</p> <p>Efficacy and responsibility in community leadership</p> <p><b>Socio-political factors</b></p> <p>Respect for and acceptance of diverse cultures</p> <p>Provision of appropriate and responsive settlement services</p> <p>Recognition of the skills, qualifications and experience of people from refugee backgrounds</p> <p>Opportunities for family reunion</p>



## Findings



## Dance Africa Dance

Dance Africa Dance was a mainstream performance which ran in 2012 and 2013 at the major arts venue Riverside Theatre, Parramatta, being the key event established as part of the CCDP. It was established to bring together and showcase the talents of existing African refugee arts groups who are supported by the STARTTS Dancing in Harmony (DIH) Officer, and to engage other emerging and independent African community dance and performance groups. There were 61 performers in the first and 146 performers in the second showcase, consisting of men, women and children of all ages, from Sierra Leonean, South Sudanese, Congolese, Liberian, Ethiopian, and Burundian backgrounds, and including young people of Burmese and Afghan backgrounds.



In preparation for the performance, individuals and groups were exposed to professional training, choreography and rehearsal, and were provided with the opportunity to perform as professionals to a diverse audience. Tickets were open to the public and advertised via email, Facebook, the venue, flyers/posters and by word of mouth through, with both shows selling out.

The events required a high level of coordination by the CCDP Officer, who produced the two showcases, managing the budget, coordinating the performers, recruiting professional choreographers and production staff, liaising with the venue, organising publicity, and conducting post-production tasks and documentation. The CCDP worked closely alongside the STARTTS DIH Officer, Evaluation Officer, community and youth workers, and counsellors, who were able to provide valuable assistance and support. STARTTS counsellors were particularly crucial throughout the artistic process due to the nature of creating performance pieces that involve storytelling of often personal experiences, as well as the challenge of learning professional artistic practices, that were quite different to the types of social dance many participants were used to. The provision of counsellors to the CCDP was made possible by the STARTTS policy allowing them to allocate 30% of their time toward community projects.



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The performances ranged from traditional cultural dance and drumming, to modern hip-hop and contemporary dance, acrobatics and capoeira, expressing the diversity and vibrancy of African culture. The 2013 performance showcased the talents of three individual solo dancers and two filmmakers who had received self-choreography workshops and mentoring. This second showcase was a reflection of the professional growth of the participants over the two years and further creative development of the pieces.



**Capoeira group**

**Afro-Contemporary Youth Dance**



**Africa United performance group**

*For a full list of individuals and groups involved in the showcase, see the performance running sheet at Annexure 7.*



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Evaluation for Dance Africa Dance began following the first showcase and through to the conclusion of the second performance. Interviews and focus groups with participants, choreographers and project staff about their experiences as part of this project activity, were undertaken initially by the STARTTS Evaluation Officer, and over the course of the CCDP, also by the DIH Officer and independent evaluator. Audience surveys were also taken at the end of the performances. For the purposes of this evaluation, the transcripts from the focus groups of six performance groups, and interviews of three individual performers, two choreographers and three staff members have been reviewed and used in analysis to inform findings.

**Findings in relation to expression and processing of traumatic experiences and increasing wellbeing through opportunities to engage in art practices (Objective 2; KPI e; SCN7, 11; SCRN 2, 6; SCE 5, 10)**

Through shared connections and experiences, the groups developed a joint purpose, and often this led to an enthusiasm for future endeavours. A sense of hope and aspiration arose between them that together they could do and be more, becoming more actively engaged in their own and the wider community, and believing in the improved prospects for themselves and their family.

*"...everything has changed for me...my whole life has changed. I used to be sad all the time and now I am happy...I stay up until late in my room writing songs...and practicing new dance steps" (Participant, ABA Crew)*

*"STARTTS removed shame" (Participant, Sierra Leone women's performance group)*

*"We want this one to happen because a lot of people died during the war and a lot of us are now widows...so we like to document this one so the children will sit and ...remember...can tell you amazing things" (Participant, South Sudanese Women's Group)*

*"I am a different person...I'm jocular! ...This is a new word we learnt at school this week!" (Participant, ABA Crew)*

**Findings in relation to increased self-esteem, confidence and ambition (Objective 2, KPI e; SCE 7 & 10)**

Participants described their experiences of being able to share ideas and learn new ways of dancing and performing. Through expression in their art, they were able to prove to themselves that they were able to do things they and others, might not have known they could do. This led to feelings of self-belief, confidence, pride, energy and motivation.

*"Just confidence about how right everything feels about taking my dancing passion further I think it ignited that thing that I have always had about being on stage and confidence that I can do it and I know that's the right path for me, it reinforces that" (Participant, Dance Africa Dance)*

*"I would still continue my dance with them because my confidence is improving and every time I dance with them I feel like I'm one of them" (Participant, ACYD).*

*"[I don't feel] scared any more, feel confident" (Participant, ABA Crew)*



*"...when we finished the show it was like, yeah, I want to perform it again! It was pretty good. Afterwards, you feel like you want to do anything, you can do any challenges, you feel like you can do these things" (Participant, ACYD)*

*"It had a big effect. 'A' changed so much since I met her. She was so shy, low self-esteem. Then she cut her hair short – because that's what she wanted!" (STARTTS CD worker)*

*"It's sort of like they understood the worth of it personally and they wanted to get it right. They were very lively, an electric energy, that is the beauty of theatre, the energy of an audience focused on you and the importance that it brings...it's a formula that can't go wrong... as long as they are prepared...confidence, self identity, a confidence in terms of telling a story of yourself, confidence not only about what your skills are but how you put those things together and when you are prepared, I don't think that things go wrong it that scenario" (Francois Awad, choreographer)*

Participants felt pleased at audiences reactions, reinforcing their feelings of self-worth and pride, and encouraging them to continue to pursue their arts potential.

*"When people give us good applause it makes us feel great...we dance better" (Participant, ABA Crew)*

*"In Sydney we loved doing our "group freeze" in the streets and everyone smiled" (Participant, ABA Crew)*

*"I was amazed watching it, the message across to the audience, everything was just beautiful...the audience gave support to the performers, that was really the best" (Participant, Sierra Leone women's performance group)*

*"Doing the nights [I] could feel the positive energy from the audience. At the end of the show some people came and congratulated me, some people wanted to get her ...[to] perform at other shows" (Participant, Sierra Leone women's performance group)*

*"I would like to go for other performance roles...as a performer you are doing something you get a good response from the audience, that motivated me for the audition for the Lion King" (Participant, Sierra Leone women's performance group)*

### **Findings in relation to individual capacity building (Objective 2; KPI e; SCE 6, 7, 10, 14; SCN 10)**

Through mentoring and hard work, participants were able to develop new artistic skills and knowledge.

*"African people we're used to dancing to rhythm, there's a rhythm, you hit at a certain spot, this doesn't have rhythm. And African people when they dance they don't count, there's no counting in the African dancing, so to think back to counting, yeah, it's different. I found it very interesting – the simplicity of the actual steps, and also the complexity of the combinations of everything" (Participant, Dance Africa Dance)*

*"I was so proud at the end...they far exceeded my expectations about what was possible. It was wonderful to do it" (Francois Awad, choreographer)*



**Findings in relation to developing leadership potential (Objective 1,2 & 3, KPI e; SCE 14; SCN10)**

Through the increased efficacy and responsibility gained through CCDP activities, combined with their own energy and commitment, some participants emerged as leaders within their groups, becoming a role model for others.

*"I created this thing. I went to [STARTTS staff member] and told her I want to create the Street Krumping project and she sat with me and wrote out the project and from there, it became successful and we start culture"*  
(Leader, St Mary's dance and krumping group)

*"I started this group when "A" [STARTTS worker] asked me to come and try out this dance group. I said alright, I'm gonna come and see cause I've never actually done anything like this before so I came to one of the practices and I actually liked it, ... just kept coming back for more... I really didn't expect it to turn out like this, being a leader... I've learned a lot since I joined this group... I don't usually hang with kids, so I learned a bit of patience...[the Leadership course] taught me a lot... One thing I didn't expect, it taught me my values as a leader...that was a really good course" (Leader, ACYD).*



*"...I've learned just steps how to become a better role model to the younger kids as an adult. It helped me learn more about myself...now I'm studying business at uni and maybe in the future I will open up a business that has something to do with dancing. Or like this type of activity because I enjoy it" (Leader, ACYD)*

*"[The] leader of afro-contemporary, he has just grown so much from when I first met him in terms of confidence and willingness to be a leader, and his capacity and effectiveness as a leader has grown so much, so it has been awesome seeing that happen" (STARTTS DIH Officer).*



Working with and being inspired by their mentors and professional choreographers, some participants now have aspirations to teach, sharing their knowledge and experiences with others:

*“No matter the challenge, convince myself I can do it, instead of wasting my talent. I think this project challenged me to look for a way out. One of the way might be teaching children” (Participant, Walking Project).*

*[I: In ten years time will you still be dancing?] “I might have my own dance school; I’m going to be a singing teacher; I’m going to be a doctor; me too. I’m going to be a teacher, I don’t know!” (Participant, St Mary’s dance and krumping group).*

*“Working with Martin [professional choreographer] I did enjoy that experience, he will tell you, I tended to get a bit over excited, to pick up all the steps and teach people and he said ‘you take this group of people over there in the corner and teach them’, I couldn’t wait for the next day!” (Participant, Imprint film and Walking Project)*

**Findings in relation to bonding with families, other refugee individuals and communities with shared interests (Objective 2; KPI e; SCE 4,5,8,10-12; SCN 1, 7&8,10; SCR N 6):**

This project was an opportunity for family members to reconnect, generations young and old, coming together to share in the joy of dance and performance.



*“[Through] ‘Imprint’ [short film] I was to be able to tell my story in such a unique way, an experience I will never forget. Through talking to [CCDP Officer] and a few other people, I think it just...presented me with the opportunity to say I am a dancer, I got this from my mum. I got an Ethiopian dance group and our aim is to instil dance into the younger generation about our culture and where they came from. I want to do this through dance. Through this film, I got dance from my mum, I’m doing it now, and I want my sons to know about Ethiopian dance, a perfect opportunity to do this and I can see more things coming out of this. It has been humbling” (Participant, Imprint and Walking Project).*



*“That was a very special performance we did...so interesting to have three or four generations – great response from the audience. It was the first time performing on stage, [the older women especially] lacking confidence in performing but with help of choreographer who knew how to work with community groups...he was very patient...he really supported us and helped us to get to that stage where they are going to be able to do this and make him proud. Very special piece, we had so much fun... Since then, I think their confidence has grown, they keep performing ...[The] Dance Africa Dance dvd they always watching it and showing it to themselves: pride” (Participant, Sierra Leone women’s performance group).*

Deep connectedness grew between the participants, through shared experiences, and the development of cooperation and collaboration.

*“It just creates a really cool environment and you feel belonging and wherever you feel belonging that’s the place you want to go to. And that’s why I keep coming back and at the end of the day it’s like a family. That’s how I look at it and its really good” (Participant, ACYD)*

*“We’ve learnt to work together, develop our own dances...even though we come from very different places and are different ages [14 to 18]” (Participant, ABA Crew)*

*“Seeing the afro-contemporary group go from a random group of young people to a community...the way that they express that appreciation of the space and group to come together is amazing. Last year I organised for someone...to make a short film...[That’s] when they kind of realised how great the group was. We asked them about life in their countries of birth and a lot spoke about village life and how they felt so connected to other people and that is something they missed in Australia. But they get this in this group, similar to home. Seeing them realise that themselves, make that connection, essentially, as they created that, I have enjoyed seeing them reach that point and make those realisations. They kind of own that group” (STARTTS DIH Officer).*





For many participants, working closely as a group, and dedicating their time to each other has developed their teamwork skills and given them aspirations for a bright future together.

*[What will happen, what will you and the group be doing in one year?]*

*"We'll be professionals by then! I'm hoping in a year's time we have a bit more people and bigger audiences and hopefully our relations get stronger, and as a group we get better and learn more, because every time we come here we learn more and get better and that actually helps us in the performances, just doing the dances and being in sync - that's what I'm hoping for....we'll be everywhere"*

*"We'll be all over the world, it's going to be crazy. It's going to be a bigger group for sure. We'll be professionals"*

*"In one year's time, you'll probably see us on Australia's Got Talent"*

*(Participants, ACYD)*

*"From last year through to this year the number of participants is bigger, the performances were a little bit more professional and there were people that were there last year that came back in 2013, so you can see that it is something people want to keep going with and working toward making this bigger. It was just the way it was done this year audience participation – performance in the courtyard, bringing out creativity in people and great way of getting together. Obviously the way in 2013 it showed there was a lot of work put into it which undoubtedly means there has been some amazing cooperation to create something unique" (Participant Walking Project and 'Imprint')*

Through the cultural bonding process, participants were able to appreciate aspects of their traditional cultures, and see how this could be realised in a new Australian context.

*"The other success I would say is actually seeing people taking...what I call cultural capital, seriously. I have met people who since doing projects....stand on their own, taking their arts as a serious thing...it's community cultural development at the end of the day. To give value to what they do and also in that process...they are creating something new in a new country. Especially with the younger ones you know, like the filmmaker I worked with, she is actually creating what I would call ...that kind of group of young Africans, for example, are creating an Australia-African identity" (CCDP Officer).*



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**Findings in relation to bridging with the wider Australian community through linking up with new people and through storytelling (Objective 2, KPI e; SCE 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15; SCN 2, 4, 6, 7, 9; SCR N 1, 3&5)**

For many, the opportunity to perform was a chance to share with others their culture and past experiences, as well as a way to express their emotions and display their artistic abilities.

*"I was amazed watching it, the message across to the audience, everything was just beautiful, the colours and the costume, the traditional dance gave extra flavour to the place, you could see the expression on people's face and that was the best" (Participant, Sierra Leone women's performance group)*

*"...the audience was mixed, it wasn't just Africans it was different ethnic backgrounds, I liked that. The audience gave support to the performers, that was really the best" (Participant, Sierra Leone women's performance group)*

*"Cultural identity and that integration when you have people in the audience that are not from your background you tick that because you have suddenly made yourself available" (Francois Awad, choreographer).*

Audience surveys were taken immediately following the Dance Africa Dance performances in 2012 and 2013. Of those who participated in the survey, on average across the two years, 90% indicated they were very much impressed and satisfied with the performance. In the second year running, more audience members came from outside of Sydney's west. 55% in 2012 and 72% in 2013 were from Anglo/European/Australian background. On average 63.5% said they were there to support refugee/African community arts and 16% said they came to celebrate their cultural heritage. 55% in the first year and 66% in the second year had no professional or work-related connection to the event.

The showcase broadened access of a mainstream audience to experience traditional and emerging African performance, with 81% in the first year and 86% in the second year remarking that their appreciation of African cultures had increased, and an average of approximately 64% feeling better connected to the African Australian communities.

Feedback from the audience was very positive, with many impressed with the participant's skilled and expressive performances, and articulated their wishes to see more.

*"Thank you for the invite – uplifting experience"*

*"Energetic, diverse, talented men, women and children. Wonderful!"*

*"Fantastic production, great mix of traditional and contemporary"*

*"Great to see young people blossoming in dance"*

*"A beautiful intro into African culture"*

*"Loved the variety"*

*"Good variety in styles, ages and weight of subjects. Great evening and it was obvious the performers were enjoying themselves which heightened my enjoyment. Make it annual please!"*

*"Congratulations to the organisers. A wonderful project for the boys, getting them involved"*

*"Great! Made me cry and laugh – thank you"*



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Bridging also occurred at a broader level, influencing and expanding the participant's networks and connections to other Australians:



*"Dancing has helped me settle into Coffs Harbour" (Participant, ABA Crew)*

#### **Findings in relation to professional development, aspiration, and prospects for arts careers (Objective 1 & 3, KPI e; SCE 3, 4, 6 & 10; SCN 4, 5, 6, 12; SCRN 2)**

The experience of working with professional choreographers was new for most of the participants and whilst it was at times challenging, it was a rewarding learning experience for all involved.

*"Even when he was interested in us...in STARTTS, although he has worked with Lion King...wow, are we really able to live up to that expectation, although we aren't professionals and have different range of all age levels, he was able to work at all our levels. The creative work was giving him ideas and even with the dance that we created was out of our idea. We showed him and he took our parts. We helped to create a vision, he helped us to see it...our capacity. He really encouraged us. If we aren't able to if we aren't able to do that he is very flexible, working off from where we are" (Participant, Sierra Leone's women's performance group)*

Working with choreographers, participants were able to turn their personal stories into a professional piece, which they could be proud of.

*"We danced our own cultural dance but [also learnt different types of dance]...even though it was our idea, the way he put everything together it was very clever. He also added his own flavour into the performance which was very creative" (Participant, Sierra Leone's women's performance group)*

*“Even the show, I was so amazed with what came out of the show because when I was watching them I wasn’t seeing them as oh my god this was the people...these were the people that [the choreographer] was trying to get out the energy and the courage and the confidence...I was seeing them as a professional... amazing, it was a story connected to that.*

*That is the story that is about our homeland”*

*(Participant, Sierra Leone women’s performance group)*

*“Dance Africa Dance was a great opportunity to perform, to meet other performers”, “When we went into the Riverside theatre from the carpark we walked up a long hallway with little blue lights...I loved that...I wanted to walk up and down there for 2 weeks!”*

*(Participant, ABA Crew)*

For some individuals, the opportunity to be part of a professional artistic process has inspired them to pursue a career in the arts, or become a leader in order to teach and inspire others. One particular participant, who had no prior experience in dance, was identified and invited to be a part of the Walking Project in Dance Africa Dance, and has become the leader of the Afro-Contemporary Youth Group. Following professional mentoring, they have now participated in several paid arts opportunities and competitions, receiving highly positive feedback in relation to their performance ability from his peers, audience members, and arts professionals.

Two other solo performers also received self-choreography workshops with a professional choreographer assisting them to develop a solo performance piece. Two filmmakers received mentor assistance with the production of their films, which were shown at Dance Africa Dance 2013. These individuals show promising talent and with continuing hard work, potential future careers.

Since Dance Africa Dance, many of the participants have been connected to and received opportunities to perform in mainstream arts events, receiving positive feedback from audiences and professional judges.

*“Last year we did Africultures and this year one of the main people on that committee saw us at Dance Africa Dance and came up to ask us to be in it this year. We got accepted today”*

*(Participant, Walking Project).*

*“After that show (Dance Africa Dance) we’ve been doing a lot of performance outside – last week Fairfield. And there was no people there and we thought ‘what are we doing here?’ and then we started dancing and people were like wow, they were supporting, everyone was supporting, they never seen us before and like they on the carpet and they had to turn their chairs around just to support us...I couldn’t believe we were the winners - maybe our style was....completely different and unique...it was really nice, a really good thing”*

*(Participant, ACYD).*

*“We were the winners there, we won \$400, still in our saving account. We are the champions. ...we created a real fan base on that day. Like people were saying can you scream louder for African contemporary and people went yay” (Participant, ACYD).*



## Findings in relation to the capacity of STARTTS to run community cultural development projects (KPI c; SCN 2; SCR N 4)

It was evident that STARTTS had created a sense of stability and safety for the CCDP participants, who are able to rely on the staff and trust that they will assist them the best they can.

*[How did you manage to balance work/uni/dance life?]*

*“[Choreographer] made me, and [STARTTS DIH Officer]. Even though I don’t go to class, she [STARTTS DIH Officer] always texts me and reminded me...I feel considered” (Participant, ACYD, Walking Project and solo performer)*

*“People support us and that feels good” (Participant, ABA Crew)*

*“STARTTS collaborative process in terms of, they had a mentor, we met every once a week until the time that I had to film/shoot, meet every week used to guide me, I haven’t done dance before she had background what will work not work then I go and think about how to tell story. And [CCDP Officer] there most of the time too, there too support, provided support really great” (Filmmaker and participant, Dance Africa Dance).*

Choreographers reported a positive experience working with the participants and STARTTS staff throughout the project.

*“I felt like my relationship with STARTTS was a very good relationship. I was briefed as much as I could have been, It is really hard to know the level of the people if you are not a choreographer .. I did feel under prepared but i don’t think there is a way of fixing that. Artistically it worked very well – needs freedom or you get someone who works in a textbook way. If there were huge boundaries to work within, a lot of interference artistically that inhibits the process. STARTTS has been great in that process – provide brief, feedback, but they definitely left me to do it” (Francois Awad, choreographer)*

*“This was a very special experience for me I feel like I’ve had a huge variety of experiences professionally and personally but I do feel honestly that this was a really special moment in my development” “You need to work with what they have and what their commitment is” (Francois Awad, choreographer)*

*“I must say I was very impressed... Lots of work behind the scene to support my process”  
“Rewarding”  
(Martin Del Amo, choreographer)*

*“I have learned a lot starting with developing really good relationships. Establish good relationships and you understand each other. Also I’ve been teaching for a long time with Australians, they come because they want to learn how to dance. Its very different...working with kids. When you are working you have to find a way of not scaring the person, building a relationship, make it enjoyable for a person and they think ‘Oh I can really do this’” (Patrick Lartey aka ‘Lucky’, Choreographer)*

Feedback and advice was provided by the professional choreographers engaged as to how the project could be improved in the future, in respect to the professional capacity of STARTTS to run arts projects, and including feedback for participants.



*“I think confidence in their business model, their projected business plan is definitely lacking...they definitely need to feel like they have a product worth pursuing. I definitely feel that it is viable from what I mentioned – in terms of the grant aspect they are in a huge benefit – African group willing to tour regions – maybe a drumming project. It is a straightforward and achievable thing to run a tour...” (Francois Awad, choreographer)*

*“It was far more basic and more of a beginner level than I had anticipated but I don’t think that’s anybody’s fault because it’s very hard to judge that and because I’ve been in situations professionally where I’ve given a brief and it’s completely wrong because you can’t physically explain unless you are in that scenario. So the lesson for me is come in a little bit more open...now I think if you can adapt then it’s ok anyway....my experience, the first thing I noticed was a hurdle of trust. I felt like I was very much an outsider coming into a group...when I would go and try to speak to them it was very difficult. ..I felt like to overcome the trust barrier it was more about knowing who I was as a person and knowing my background professionally. As soon as I got that out it changed the dynamics of the group” (Francois Awad, choreographer)*

*“So that’s confidence, in terms of emotionally, by using their stories, something that came across quite quickly into the story telling aspect was the fact that the group had not discussed these stories...and that shocked me, really shocked me. Having known that prior it might have been a better experience for everyone, including myself and them, to have brought in a counsellor or something to work through those ideas first. To allow that process to evolve in the therapeutic context and then eventually you would get more” (Francois Awad, Choreographer)*

Due to the differences in experiences and expectations, the choreographers and other mentors were required to adjust their ideas and processes to meet the needs of participants, leading to a reciprocal learning experience.

*“It was a constant battle trying to provide my directions and allowing them [the participants] just to trust me artistically ...my artistic projected idea was ten steps ahead so they didn’t know where that was going and they couldn’t visualise it because it was not their background...trying to get the idea of being abstract across to them was very difficult...that sometimes you need to add ideas or motifs to make them {the audience} understand what you are doing {even though they} don’t do that traditionally” (Francois Awad, Choreographer)*

The audience members of Dance Africa Dance, who took part in the survey, also comments on ways in which the performances and production could be improved, whilst highlighting the improvements over the two years.

2012

*“A little chaotic, last act great”.*

*“It got better as it progressed – very good”*

*“Congratulations to the organisers. A wonderful project... A little too long”*

*“Sound was too loud for last act. Light on audience in second last piece was blinding”*

*“Bright lights in the last two dances didn’t work as I couldn’t see the dancers”*

*“Needs to be advertised more”*

*“I just would like to suggest tickets for children to be free or at least concession”*



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2013

*“Great! Do it more often, maybe engage school groups not just community”  
“Most enjoyable. I thought that event needed a commentator...to explain & cue  
direction clearly”*

*“It got better as it progressed – very good”*

*“Great night and I appreciated the changes from last year – tighter program, short  
runtime, good build up. Great performance”*

**Findings in relation to the qualities of professionals and project officers that the participant’s valued, which might inform future cultural community development practice (Objective 1 & 3; SCN 2, 4 & 12)**

STARTTS project staff and participants similarly reported that working with the choreographers was a pleasure, and that they valued when professionals were open minded and able to adapt to the needs of the community groups and individuals they were working with.

*“When the artist wants to come in and possibly choreograph to them without any appreciation of who they are and what there experiences are. The people that we work with, they aren’t from the arts world and so they might need to take more time, and that sometimes those expectations aren’t appropriate” (STARTTS staff member)*

*“Francois’ professional artistic abilities helped as well. He’s more than a choreographer. He helped young people to respond. They were exploring everything through dance, they were giving opinions about what to do, change this and that. Francois is very open to going with the group, two-way learning. He was like “We can put the experience with the moves and we can create something nice” (STARTTS youth worker)*

*“...first time performing on stage – lacking confidence in performing but with help of choreographer who knew how to work with community groups, very patient, Francois, he really supported us and helped us to get to that stage where they are going to be able to do this and make him proud. Very special piece, we had so much fun” (Participant, Walking Project, Sierra Leonean women’s performance, solo performer)*

*“It was a good experience, we learnt so many things from him [choreographer]...learnt about dance, um, the way he was talking to us and encouraging us, and yeah a very good person” (Participant, Sierra Leonean women’s performance group)*

*“Even when he was interested in us...in STARTTS, although he has worked with Lion King...wow, are we really able to live up to that expectation, although we aren’t professionals and have different range of all age levels, he was able to work at all our levels. The creative work was giving him ideas and even with the dance that we created was out of our idea. We showed him and he took our parts. We helped to create a vision, he helped us to see it...our capacity, he really encouraged us. If we aren’t able to if we aren’t able to do that he is very flexible, working off from where we are” (Participant, Sierra Leone women’s performance group)*



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*“...local community development practitioner, he is really good at getting parents to bring kids along and keep them in line. He is great at speaking to them, speak in a way that they understand, articulate to them importance of the group for them in future” (DIH Officer)*

It was identified as crucial that those arts professionals that work with people from a refugee background have a firm understanding of what community work is about and that there are sensitivities that should be taken into consideration when working with such groups.

*“One of the main [challenges], that interface between the arts world and community development. It has been a tricky process finding artists in terms of choreographers that get community work...they come with their own expectations. Challenging to find people who can bridge that gap between worlds. Helping them to understand some of the challenges that groups’ experience...The artist may not understand the other commitments and challenges that the group is experiencing, they do enjoy it but sometimes other things take priority. A challenge that I would say is that I feel in this position you are a buffer between communities and the art world. That is ok, [but need] to help bridge that gap and help to understand (STARTTS staff member)*

*[Choreographers and others who work with refugee communities on arts projects need] an appreciation of communities and community work... to push them and bring them up to another level without devaluing them as people or overlooking their needs” (STARTTS DIH Officer).*

Dance Africa Dance was a successful project which contributed to STARTTS’ objectives under Stream 1 in relation to ‘Community Cultural Development’ by increasing opportunities for mainstream performance, increasing skills and capacities to participate in cultural and artistic activities, and in doing so, assisting recovery from trauma and enhancing their settlement experiences of refugee communities.

This major project activity increased the access of performers from African refugee backgrounds to professional arts practice, networks and professional development, thus contributing to the objectives 1, 2 & 3 and various outcomes in relation to accessing workshops and mentoring, rehearsal space and mainstream performance opportunities and building professional arts capacity building. It also contributed to the aim of increasing bonding (within and between refugee communities) and bridging (with the wider Australia society and arts industry), social capital and wellbeing of participants.

Whilst many of these groups already existed and have been supported by the DIH Officer, Dance Africa Dance allowed them the opportunity to develop their professional arts skills and knowledge by working with professional choreographers and production staff, and be able to perform their pieces in a professional setting, sharing their pieces with audiences who were supportive and recognised their efforts and talents.



## Walking Project



The 'Walking Project' was a newly commissioned work, specifically created for Dance Africa Dance (2012), developed by the CCDP Officer in conjunction with professional choreographer, Martin del Amo. This piece was a paid performance opportunity for participants, providing a pathway for them to semi-professional dance practice. The DIH Officer was instrumental in sourcing \$10,000 additional funds from Parramatta City Council to pay the wages of the choreographer and performers. Participants were recruited through advertisements or invitation (through being known to STARTTS through other arts groups) and auditioned for the piece. Eight young men and women of different ages and dance experience were chosen.

Martin del Amo is a well-known Australian choreographer, having had pieces shown during the Sydney Festival at the Sydney Opera House in 2012, amongst other successes. As part of a wider strategy of fostering a culture of professional artistic performance in African communities and providing African youth with dance performance opportunities, he was commissioned to choreograph this dance piece. The CCDP brief was to provide a training and development opportunity for amateur African dancers, while creating a piece that comprises a professional performance in its own right. He introduced the participants to contemporary dance, which was a new experience for most, but which resulted in a rewarding challenge for the group.

*"Being part of the Walking Project was absolutely mind-blowing. It was such a different experience, something I have never done before" (Participant, Walking Project).*

Evaluation focus groups were conducted with this group during the rehearsal stage in 2012 and post-performance in 2013.



### **Findings in relation to increased self-esteem, confidence, ambition and ability (Objective 2, KPI e, SCE 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 13; SCR N 2)**

People were intrigued by the new style of dance and impressed with their ability to pick up the new skills, providing them with increased self-esteem and confidence.

*“Now I know that nothing is too difficult, you know, I can learn and go on, doesn’t matter are you 40, 45, 50, you can still be trained and go on and be excellent.. I’ve discovered my potential now” (Participant, Walking Project)*

*“Just confidence about how right everything feels about taking my dancing passion further I think it ignited that thing that I have always had about being on stage and confidence that I can do it and I know that’s the right path for me, it reinforces that” (Participant, Walking Project and ‘Imprint’).*

They were also surprised and delighted at people’s reactions to performances, giving them a sense of accomplishment, pride and encouragement:

*“...a lot of people were amazed at our speed and how we could keep our space” (Participant, Walking Project)*

*“Most people who came to see it thought it was really amazing. It was really comforting, especially as we are with African background they would understand. Even on the day when we performed we put so much energy into it. Even though they don’t understand it - it felt good taking the audience on some kind of journey, even if they mightn’t have really understood it” (Participant, Walking Project)*

*“It felt great. It was good to finally be able to show...what we were putting into it. We went in with a lot of energy. I did notice when we went into it the whole audience went silent” (Participant, Walking Project).*

*“It was very different, I was just happy and it was an amazing thing to be a part of. From there I went to work with others. [It was the] starting line I needed to look at something different, part of the mainstream, to challenge myself. Through STARTTS opportunities [I was able] to go and express interest [and perform] in public arts project ‘13 Rooms’ Kaldor Public Arts Project” (Participant, Walking Project).*

### **Findings in relation to bonding with other refugee individuals and communities with shared interests (Objective 2; KPI e; SCE 6-8; SCN 7-9)**

*[What helped to cement the group?]*

*“Intrigue” “From the beginning they were up for it as an adventure” (Martin Del Amo, choreographer)*

Participants were able to build friendships with like-minded people, that they might not have otherwise met.

*“Making new friends, like-minded people in the same line, same path, same journey” (Participant, Walking Project and, ‘Imprint’).*



Participants developed cooperation and collaboration between with each other, expressed through their performance.

*“I think the important thing is getting out of your comfort zone and joining other confident men and women is really interesting...coming from different countries, coming from Africa and working together, it’s a really good thing, it’s really nice, and I’ve got a really good feeling working with people, that sort of introduce you to new nationalities and you feel comfortable, and I’m just enjoying the presence of everybody in the group” (Participant, Walking Project).*

The renewed energy felt by the participants led to some families reconnecting and sharing in the joy of dance together.

*“...now I’m evening thinking I should be aiming to join any dance group with my daughter and see how we can get there and one day, who knows, next 10 years, or twenty years when I’m an old man dancing” (Participant, Walking Project)*

**Findings in relation to bridging with arts professionals and audiences, and strengthened connection to STARTTS (Objective 2; KPI e; SCE 3, 8, 13, 15; SCN 2, 4, 8; SCR N 5)**

Participants felt a sense of unity and pride in their achievements, in producing something unique and of a professional standard, connecting with the audience in positive, unexpected ways.



*"Yeah they all really loved it. Their reaction! The fact that we are lying down and then jumping its like something children would do... even though in our faces there was not much expression. It reminded them of when they were young" (Participant, Walking Project).*

*"I remember what that non -African response was the other night! He said you did good job because I have seen lots of African performances. He said: Keep going! Where did you get trained? I said didn't get trained! He said if you guys did this in theatre I would go a hundred times!" (Participant, Walking Project)*

*"...a lot of people were amazed at our speed and how we could keep our space. Another one just about the running and walking, and what animals we were meant to be" (Participant, Walking Project)*

*"It felt great. It was good to finally be able to show a caseworker what we were putting into it. We went in with a lot of energy. I did notice when we went into it the whole audience went silent" (Participant, Walking Project).*



*"From the beginning they were up for it as an adventure" (Martin Del Amo, Choreographer)*



**Findings in relation to professional development (Objective 1, 2 & 3; SCE 3, 4, 6, 10, 13, 14, 18; SCN 5, 6, 7, 12)**

Participants committed to the professional development process, learning new dance styles and coming to understand professional arts processes and systems. Their motivation and aspirations grew alongside their skills and confidence.

*“African people we’re used to dancing to rhythm...this doesn’t have rhythm. And African people when they dance they don’t count...so to think back to counting, yeah, it’s different. I found it very interesting – the simplicity of the actual steps, and also the complexity of the combinations of everything...It does add to it being interesting, it does add to it being abstract, everything is abstract, the music, the steps... people see different things into it”*  
(Participant, Walking Interview)

*“I think it has [been an increase in professional dance opportunities] because [CCDP Officer] will let us know about it. In the past, before, there hasn’t been that much opportunity. I usually heard it through other people .. but it was hard to hear about other opportunities. It is good now as [CCDP Officer] gives a flood of emails letting us know what is coming on... I do enjoy it. After the show last year made me [think about]...acting and performance more seriously. It used to just be on the side but now I want to take it further”*  
(Participant, Walking Project).

*“Well, surprising actually...you learn something new, which is actually a thing later if someone like dancing, you can continue. I’ve learnt a lot of stuff, I knew what it meant to dance, you need energy, and first when we did the skipping it was sort of like hard, I don’t know if everyone felt the same but it was really hard for me. You know, you need your body to keep in motion, and to become soft, not to stiffen, and you need to know when actually to stop and when to go with the rhythm and these kind of things. So it’s very much good, and now I can go to a dance academy (laughs). I can continue”* (Participant, Walking Project).

*“Well, not like, I’d done traditional dancing. But even then, I didn’t used to perform in front of stages and groups, you know, we usually just do it between our family, you know, when we’re celebrating something, so that’s when we’re usually just dancing and all of that. But yeah, I just joined this thing because I wanted to see how it feels like, you know, experience it, and then, yeah, it’s been pretty fun so far”* (Walking Project and solo performer).

The choreographer was required to take time to explain new artistic concepts and have patience in teaching participants new skills, however with time, everyone gained a sense of trust and dedication to each other and the process.

*[I: What helped cement the group]*

*“I can’t put my finger on one thing but it happened over the first few weeks...I did think it had to do with them starting to understand what I was trying to do, or at least being intrigued”*

*“I think they have committed to the process...they were very excited and energised by the experience and felt they have achieved something”*

*“...not about skill but rather about commitment - that counted much more...I think they have really committed to the process...[some have felt] anxiety, but also the pleasure and reward that comes with that”*

*(Martin Del Amo, Choreographer)*



As many of the participants had not performed outside of social cultural dance, a shift to semi-professional dance was a challenging task. Choreographers were therefore required also commit to the group, have patience and belief in the group's abilities, adjust expectations and be open to learning.

*"Everything was taken at face value"*

*"Punctuality is a huge thing"*

*"Some people did not understand the purpose of warm up is to reduce the risk of injury...I find it difficult"*

*"...most had not been exposed to this form of dance, I was impressed with how much they gave"*

*(Martin Del Amo, Choreographer)*

### **Findings in relation to the capacity and strengths of STARTTS in running community cultural development art projects (KPI c; SCN 2; SCR N 4)**

Participants were appreciative of the opportunity to be a part of this paid semi-professional performance and reported that they felt supported throughout this learning process.

*"Yeah I really respected and appreciated the STARTTS response... I wanted to do the ... project [but] I was worried [I] couldn't put any work in... But with them putting energy into.. telling me I would be fine really helped me believe in myself. It was a lot of fun and I was working on adrenalin a lot. I may not have had energy.... I was really tired but after being up there and seeing the audience I gave it my best and it went well" (Participant, Walking Project).*

*[What have family and friend's reaction been?]*

*"I'm still going to tell some people, I don't know. Our people are so reluctant, you need to explain it to them, what it is. But usually STARTTS programs are known around our communities, so they will show up [to the performance]" (Participant, Walking Project)*

*"It is good to get to know many people. In the group, and people outside. People outside and the people we work with at STARTTS allows me to motivate myself and keep on going forwards and keep looking for different opportunities" (Participant, Walking Project).*

Participants also offered their feedback for STARTTS to take into consideration in future CCDP activities.

*"My only thing would be a little bit more time for people to practice and a bit more run through the whole thing. With the walking project only had nine rehearsals and it involved a lot of complex moves, and that needs a little bit more time...and I think a bit more time toward the rehearsal time, running through the whole thing on stage. Everything was fantastic but maybe more than one day" (Participant, Walking Project)*

The Walking Project performance piece was well received and produced positive and varied results for participants. Many of the relationships created throughout the process, between the eight participants, and with the choreographer, have continued beyond the life of the project, and created possibilities for future artistic collaboration.





## Iraqi Youth Project

The Iraqi Youth Project (IYP) was initiated by one of the STARTTS youth workers who has an ongoing relationship with Fairfield High School and IEC, working with the young refugee students who attend the school. Newly arrived students were dealing with trauma associated with living in a war zone and escaping to travel to a new country where they faced further challenges setting up a new life in a new culture.

A joint planning process involving the CCDP Officer, youth worker and Fairfield High School student support officer took place to engage students and their parents. The twenty participants were newly arrived (<6 months in Australia) Iraqi refugees who were enrolled at Fairfield High School or IEC, and who had varying levels of traditional and modern dance experience.



Professional choreographer Francois Awad was enlisted to assist with the dance choreography, providing 16 training sessions at the school. Francois also produced a short film about the process of creating the piece, which shared the participants' interests and views on why the project was important to them (see YouTube link at Annexure 6, p.80).

Alongside training in dance, weekly sessions also included time for the group to explore their cultural inheritance such as learning more about different Iraqi musical traditions and costumes, or to discuss issues of concern in daily life, such as helping participants to negotiate cultural and religious restrictions to taking part in dance and public performance.

The first performance with accompanying film was delivered to an audience at a STARTTS multicultural celebration, hosted by the STARTTS' Capoeira program and Vietnamese Women's Group. The participants had the opportunity share in cultural

celebration with people from other refugee backgrounds, and gave them their first taste of public performance. The second performance took place at Fairfield High School as part of an end of year celebration. They gave two performances to an audience of 800 students and staff.

An interview with the group, STARTTS youth worker and school student support Officer following completion of the two public performances in 2013, for the purposes of evaluation.

### **Findings in relation to increased arts ability, self-esteem, confidence and ambition (Objective 2; KPI e; SCE 4, 7 & 10, 11, 13)**

This project allowed for the personal expression of participants, leading to an increased sense of wellbeing.

*“Dance will express your feelings, so if you’re feeling stressed, you can express it”*

*“Feel calm after pressure”*

*“Because something I like it, make you feel relaxed, happy if you have any problem you will dance”*

*“We have fun”*

*“I learned a lot of things”*

*(IYP participants)*

Participants described their surprise at their own ability to create an artistic performance piece, building self-belief and confidence.

*“I didn’t dance before, so I learned it. I was surprised. I was surprised of my ability, was thinking that I put so much energy. Because I think that no one is going to dance but when I see everyone shouting and liking the dance I put more energy into the dance” (Participant, IYP)*

*“Dancing in front of the audience will build your confidence much more because there are people that are self conscious and then people cheer and they feel they are dancing in a group, they have to be friends, be a family, creating confidence” (Participant, IYP)*

They were also delighted at their peers’ reactions to the performance, giving them a sense of accomplishment, pride and encouragement:

*[I: What did it feel like to be so successful on stage?]*

*“Adrenalin rush - a bit of a rush”*

*“I felt surprised”*

*“It’s a good feeling – between good and bad. When we did it the first time, we were shy, how we going to do it again? And the same, people liked it”*

*(IYP participants)*



**Findings in relation to bonding with other youth from a refugee background with shared interests (Objective 2; KPI e; SCE 5, 8, 11, 15; SCR N 2 & 3)**

*"[In Iraq people dance a lot], it expresses everyone's culture...celebrating culture"  
(Participant, IYP)*

Deep connectedness grew through shared experiences with participants beginning to feel a sense of belonging.

*"We are not a team, we are like brother and sister"*

*"Like family"*

*"Because it's my talent..I can dance and my friends are here and I feel happy when I do it"*

*(Participants, IYP)*

Participants, who were from diverse groups within the Iraqi community, were able to develop cooperation and collaboration through the artistic process, something perhaps which may not have been possible in their home country. This sense of unity and harmony was represented through their dance.

*"It all happens from religion. This person has that religion and this person has that religion and they try to kill each other. [In the Iraqi youth dance group] no one cares about religion – we are all Iraqis"*

*"...you dance with the person in front of you and express feeling and you have to connect so you know what the person in front of you is going to do...In our dance we all hold hands, we do the same move together, everyone should know what they are doing together and then move together so they have to memorise everything. We have to act as one"*

*"It makes us feel happy] because we are all from the same culture"*

*"We are showing out culture to everyone"*

*"We not gonna lose our culture"*

*"We're proud of it"*

*(Participants, IYP)*

*"We only learnt that Iraq was a multicultural society when we came here. No one talks about it there. There is no literature there about it. We have students from all over Iraq sharing different types of dance. It is settling their issues from their country, and let's not forget, back home in Iraq they are fighting with each other, But here they are dancing. We need to create this unison, this cohesion. When you are on this side of the fence you are a student and that is all. Otherwise there will be friction. Factions fighting at school"  
(School teacher)*



**Findings in relation to bridging with the wider Australian community, connecting with new people through storytelling and dance. (Objective 2, KPIe, SC 3, 6, 8, 12, 15, 16, 18; SCN 3, 4, 6, 7; SCRN 2, 3, 5)**

The performance at school was an effective tool for transcending the barriers that had somewhat isolated participants from the rest of their peers initially. The universality of dance connected them to the rest of their school peers, finding a commonality, and soon teachers and other peers recognised and became interested in hearing more about their skills and experiences.

*[What did it feel like to be so successful on stage?]*

*"Adrenalin rush - a bit of a rush"*

*"It's a good feeling - between good and bad. When we did it the first time, we were shy, how we going to do it again? And the same, people liked it"*

*"They still felt like they know what's gonna happen. Even though they don't know what the dance actually means they have the feeling of 'I know that this dance is about the culture' - connected to the audience, our dance"*

*"And especially before going to the stage, some of us thought that the students might laugh at us because we are different to them but then after the dancing we went outside everyone was like 'Oh you did a good job'"*

*"The second one when they shout (lots of responses indicating shouts of approval, yeah, aahhh). We think that people don't like it, don't like dance, but they were clapping and taking photos"*

*(Participants, IYP)*

Participants were pleased that their peers and teachers were showing curiosity and interest in them, giving them a sense of pride in their culture and confidence in sharing things about themselves.

*[What is the No.1 important reason for being part of the dance group]*

*"Creates a connection between me and the dance, and makes me know more about me and my culture and what's being. Plus meeting people that I don't meet everyday around because they're from IEC and I am from high school and I want to create a connection between me and them. It's happening and I want that program to keep going"*

*"They liked the culture and the music and it moves, the music moves"*

*"Everyone was dancing. They liked it"*

*"... it's about our culture - people want to know about us, what we like to do, food, dance"*

*(Participants, IYP)*

Strengthened connections between participants and their school teachers also developed. Teachers indicated they felt the project was incredibly valuable as it helped the students to form new friendships and feel more trusting and safe at school through



the sense of acknowledgment, acceptance and interest about their cultural identity. Through working with the Francois, who is also of Middle Eastern background, assisted the group to feel more connected and understood, building positive relationships.

*[I: Why should it keep going?] "It's good, you feel happy doing it and you like the teachers"*

### **Findings in relation to increasing access to professional development and other art opportunities (Objective 1, 2 & 3; SCE 3, 4, 6, 10, 13, 14, 18; SCN 5, 6, 7, 12)**

Following the ongoing relationship built with Powerhouse Youth Theatre (PYT), STARTTS is partnering with them for a new work to be released in 2015, titled 'Little Baghdad'. This production will focus on and display the Iraqi culture, and will include a theatre performance and exhibition.

The CCDP Officer will be part of the steering committee for the project. The first phase will take place in 2014 and involve research and development. STARTTS role will be providing introductions and expert advice on various Iraqi communities and artists, linking already existing STARTTS groups (including members from the Iraqi Youth project) and individuals of Iraqi descent, and making sure they are well represented and honoured in artistic decision making. The CCDP Officer will also assist with the funding application.

### **Importance of STARTTS to the arts development process (SCE 17; SCN 2; SCR 1, 4)**

The STARTTS youth worker and school support officer were able to identify and address an identified need in a culturally appropriate way, which provided participants with alternate means of psychosocial support using their own skills and passion. Incorporating the dance sessions with other youth activities can be seen to be an important contributing factor in the success of the project. The contact and strengthened engagement that participants and their families have had with STARTTS has assisted in identifying settlement and other issues within the community, that STARTTS have been responsive in addressing and providing support where required.

*"Yes we do new things and get involved, involved in new things with Lina because I always enjoy doing things with her"*

*[Why is that important?]*

*"Because it tells us that we are not going to forget her and sometimes she teaches us skills - paint, stories, experiences in life, information" (Participant, IYP)*

*[What is the number one importance of being in the group?]*

*"First STARTTS and second my passion for dance" (Participant, IYP)*

This project was particularly special as it brought together a group of young people representing a range of Iraqi communities including Assyrian, Mandaean, Chaldean and Muslim, and utilising the universal medium of dance, was able to provide participants with a means of personal expression and enabled the breaking down of cultural and language barriers, between participants, as well as with their wider school peers and teachers. The project activity was a unique process and experience for each participant.



Participants were co-creators in the process, working with the choreographer to share some of their traditional Iraqi dances, and incorporating this with modern hip hop, to create their own artistic (and perhaps cultural) identity, to which others could relate to. The success of this project was the transcendence of barriers, bridging the gap and finding common ground between peers, reducing the young people's isolation and increasing their sense of belonging and safety.



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## Discussion of other activities of the Community Cultural Development Program not formerly evaluated

The CCDP also involved a variety of smaller scale projects, including broader participation in the arts outside of dance, including art, music, theatre, film, creative writing and circus skills. In addition, the CCDP Officer was productive in sourcing opportunities for participants to go on excursions to see professional art works and linking them to auditions and other professional development opportunities. BELOW ARE THREE EXAMPLES OF THESE

Two highly successful arts events, in which the CCDP Officer was involved, were the Refugee Art Exhibition and the Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe performances. In addition, the CCDP Officer has worked alongside two choirs, in linking them to funding, resources and opportunities for mainstream performance.



## REFUGEE ART EXHIBITION

STARTTS have been a partner of the Refugee Art Exhibition, part of Refugee Week, for some years. The appointment of the CCDP Officer meant that STARTTS could play a larger role in this event, and the CCDP Officer who was a member of the steering committee took on a curator role in the exhibition, engaging more refugee artists to be part of the exhibition and extending the tour of the artwork to other venues, following the main refugee week event at Pitt Street Church. Some of the artists involved were then linked to other art competitions and exhibitions, such as the Melbourne Art Prize (of which three of the finalists were refugee artists and one of them winning the prize). Many of their artworks were sold through these events.



**restoring HOPE**

**Refugee Week 2013 16-22 June  
Invitation to Launch**

**The Refugee Council of Australia, STARTTS and the Australian Refugee Film Festival warmly invite you to the official NSW launch of Refugee Week 2013.**

Join us in celebrating the valued contributions refugees make to Australian society.

Saturday 15 June 2013, 2.00pm to 5.00pm,  
Pitt Street Uniting Church, 264 Pitt Street,  
Sydney, NSW

- Keynote speaker Yarrie Bangura, star of Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe
- Presentation of the 2013 NSW Humanitarian Awards
- 7th Annual Screening of the Australian Refugee Film Festival
- Dario Palermo Refugee Art Exhibition
- Live music

**RSVP Contact (02) 9211 9333 • Email: [media@refugeecouncil.org.au](mailto:media@refugeecouncil.org.au)**

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<b>Sponsors</b> AUSTRALIAN REFUGEE FILM FESTIVAL	 AMES	NSW AMES

Refugee artists involved in this project activity were of varying backgrounds, including South Sudanese, Colombian, Iraqi, Bhutanese, Burmese, Hazara, Pakistani, Sri Lankan Tamil, Syrian, Chile and Iranian. The project also reached out to engage and support refugee youth and GLTBIQ emerging communities with access to exhibition opportunities. These project activities achieve the outcome of producing two refugee art showcase initiatives, and make progress toward meeting its outcomes in providing emerging refugee communities with the access to 'mainstream' exhibition opportunities targeting a wider Australia audience.



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## THE BAULKHAM HILLS AFRICAN LADIES TROUPE

The Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe (under the auspice of Racing Pulse Productions and direction by Ros Horrin, an acclaimed Australian theatre director) developed and produced their own theatre piece that told the journey of survival of four women who came to Australia as refugees. The CCDP Officer partnered with the director and production company to fundraise, promote and offer assistance to the artists throughout the creative development process. The production was first performed at Riverside Theatre Parramatta, and after a highly successful and critically acclaimed season, it moved to the Belvoir Theatre to again produce sell out shows (see Annexure 6 for promotional material). This project was a major milestone for STARTTS. The CCDP Officer along with other STARTTS staff took a few other refugee groups to the showings at Parramatta.



Due to the nature of the piece, which dealt with highly sensitive and personal experiences of the refugee women, STARTTS provided a counsellor to provide support for the participants and for staff. They also were also effective in providing training in Core Concepts of working with refugees to the production staff. These resources and training was important to assist them to process their traumatic experiences and remain engaged in the project. This project activity met its objectives and long term outcomes through not only being successful in assisting a group of artists to become professional performers and showcase to a mainstream audience, but also in the development of mutual support between group members to assist them to express and process aspects of their experiences through art and cultural activities.

## CHOIRS

### *Spanish Speaking Choir*



The Spanish Speaking choir was formed to provide those over 55 years of age in the Spanish speaking community an opportunity to interact and socialise with a group to reduce stress and increase their inclusion within society. STARTTS was able to support this group be a part of the 'Community Choirs Project', a product of Opera Australia in collaboration with the Sydney Opera House. 400 people from across five community choir groups, forming one of the largest community choirs to perform at the Opera House.

### *Choir of love*



The Choir of Love was formed to promote inter-communal respect and understanding amongst Assyrian, Chaldean and Syriac youth, welcome and reduce social isolation of newly arrived refugee youth, share cultural traditions and develop confidence and creativity through artistic learning and expression. There are approximately 50 members across the three singing groups within the choir. They have been supported by STARTTS through the provision of rehearsal space and connections to arts networks and performance opportunities, such as participating in the City of Sydney Eisteddfod in 2013, to which they were finalists. They participate in community events and are currently in the process of negotiating a new work with Opera Australia.

*'Together we sing for love and peace'*



## Conclusion



Through their participation in the CCDP, many refugee artists have been able to increase their artistic skills and develop career pathways to mainstream arts. However, the findings suggest that it was not necessarily the ‘fame’ associated with being involved in these arts projects that has been what is important to participants. Rather more significantly, it has been their own process of self-discovery, the forming of lasting relationships and the opportunity to express themselves through individual and collective storytelling, that has been the real success and benefit of this project.

The development of participant’s self-esteem, confidence, pride, sense of control and aspiration, as a result of the CCDP, are all critical enablers that lead to the building of social capital. From here the participants have been able to learn new arts skills and increase their capacity to seek out opportunities for further professional development and employment in the wider Australia society. The project has increased their sense of safety and connectedness to their families, their community, the broader refugee community and wider Australia society in general, developing strong new friendships and social supports. Further, participants have provided the wider Australian population with new understandings and appreciation, and created intrigue, through sharing culture, experiences and talents. All of these benefits have and will undoubtedly continue to contribute to improving overall wellbeing of participants and increasing a sense of belonging and being settled in Australia.

The CCDP can be seen as first and foremost a social capital building project, rather than purely a professional development project, that has benefited not only the participants but which has also improved the capacity of STARTTS as a whole, generating excitement amongst employees about arts projects, as well as contributing to the awareness and development of professional artists-choreographers, as part of a mutual learning process.

It is important to see the long-term impact of such project activities. Effectiveness should not solely be measured in terms of the number of professional artists STARTTS have assisted to produce, but instead, focus should be on the skills, attitudes, knowledge, insights and connections that participants have developed. It should also be noted that the success of the project is not a direct result of STARTTS CCDP, but also attributed to the participant’s own process of commitment, intrigue in learning, energy, passion and

sense of personal and collective achievement and pride. These strengthened capabilities will enable them to transcend barriers and build new meaningful ways of taking part in artistic and cultural expression, and contribute to the life of the community into the future.



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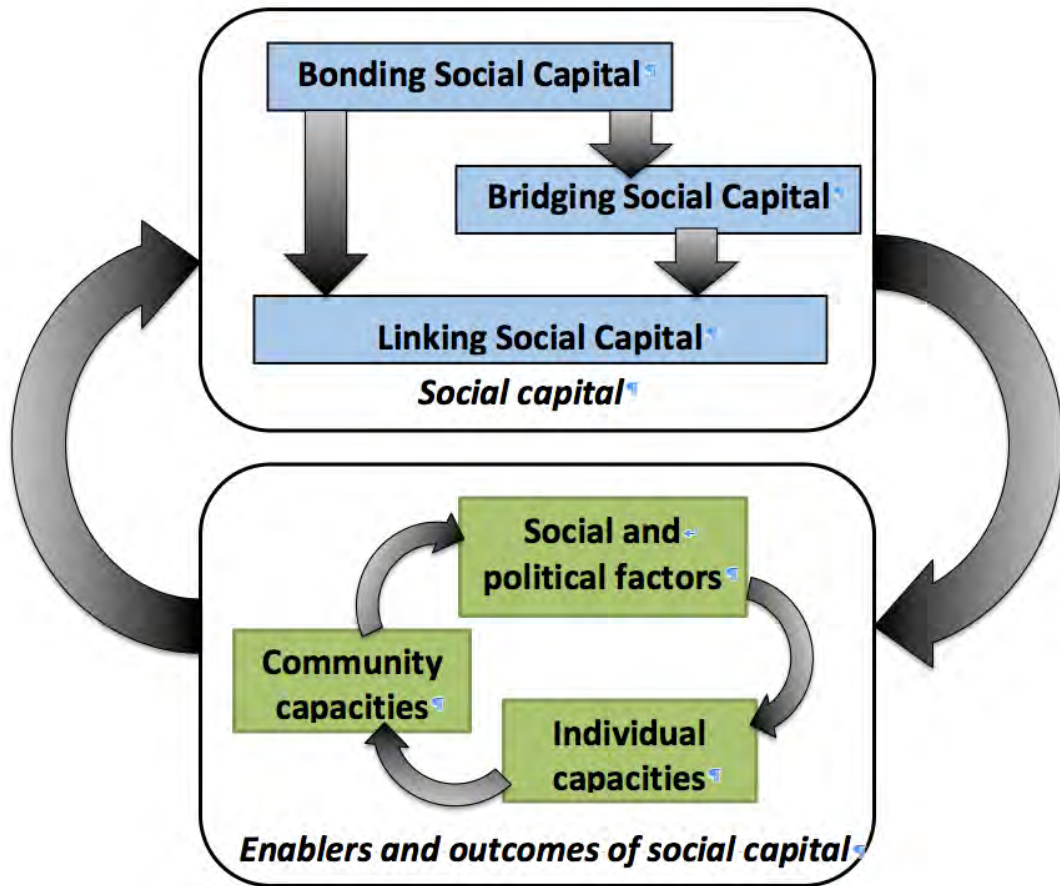
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**Annexure 1**  
*(Doney et al. 2013)*



## Annexure 2

(Bartolomei & Pittaway 2013)



## Social Connection and Networks (SCN) Objectives and Indicators

<p><b>SCN Objective 1</b> Improved, Strengthened or Expanded family connections</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Maintaining connections with family and friends overseas using social networking/internet</li> <li>1.2 Increased access to the support of extended family including through family reunion</li> <li>1.3 Increased proximity to immediate family (i.e. affordable housing in same area for children)</li> <li>1.4 Increased understanding of parenting attitudes and norms in Australia</li> <li>1.5 Increased number of family social activities</li> <li>1.6 Increased time spent in positive shared family activities</li> </ol>
<p><b>SCN Objective 2</b> Established, Strengthened or Expanded links to settlement service providers</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Increased confidence in approaching settlement services</li> <li>2.2 Increased access to specialist/appropriate settlement services</li> <li>2.3 Increased sense that services are responsive to individual and community needs</li> <li>2.4 Established/ Improved relationships with individual staff</li> <li>2.5 Increased number of positive relationships with individual staff</li> <li>2.6 Increased trust in individual staff</li> <li>2.7 Positive relationships with staff members from one's own ethnic/religious community</li> <li>2.8 Increased trust in staff members from one's own ethnic/religious community</li> </ol>
<p><b>SCN Objective 3</b> Established, Strengthened or Expanded links to teachers and schools</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1 Increased confidence in approaching teaching staff</li> <li>3.2 Increased access to specialist/appropriate teaching staff</li> <li>3.3 Increased sense that teachers and schools are responsive to individual refugee and community needs</li> <li>3.4 Established/ Improved relationships with teaching staff</li> <li>3.5 Increased number of positive relationships with individual staff</li> <li>3.6 Increased trust in individual staff</li> </ol>
<p><b>SCN Objective 4</b> Established, Strengthened or Expanded connections with educational or employment mentors</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1 Improved relationships with educational or employment mentors</li> <li>4.2 Increased number of positive relationships with individual educational or employment mentors</li> <li>4.3 Increased trust in teachers or mentors</li> </ol>



<p><b>SCN Objective 5</b> Strengthened, Expanded educational networks and opportunities</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b> 5.1 Increased positive contacts in relevant educational fields 5.2 Increased access to relevant educational opportunities 5.3 Increased participation in relevant educational opportunities</p>
<p><b>SCN Objective 6</b> Established, Strengthened or Expanded employment related networks and opportunities</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b> 6.1 Increased contacts in relevant employment related fields 6.2 Increased access to employment opportunities 6.3 Increased access to professional development, training and work experience</p>
<p><b>SCN Objective 7</b> Established, Strengthened or Expanded connections to people with shared interests and experiences (e.g. politics, sports, same refugee journey or single new mothers)</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b> 7.1 Increased access to recreational events, activities or groups within one's own community 7.2 Increased access to mainstream recreational events, activities or groups 7.3 Increased participation in recreational events, activities or groups within one's own community 7.4 Increased participation in mainstream recreational events, activities or groups</p>
<p><b>SCN Objective 8</b> Established, Strengthened or Expanded connections to members of one's own immediate (e.g. ethnic or religious or geographic) community</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b> 8.1 Increased positive relationships with community members 8.2 Increased positive contact with other community members 8.3 Increased number of friends or contacts within one's own community 8.4 Increased trust in other community members 8.5 Increased opportunities to participate in religious events or activities 8.6 Increased tangible support from religious network</p>
<p><b>SCN Objective 9</b> Established, Strengthened or Expanded networks of community organisations</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b> 9.1 Increased access to ethno-specific community organisations 9.2 Increased number of effective ethno-specific community organisations 9.3 Increased collaboration between community organisations within one's own community 9.4 Increased collaboration between community organisations from ethnic sub-communities 9.5 Increased collaboration between ethno-specific organisations 9.6 Increased (official) recognition of ethno-specific community organisations 9.7 Increased collaboration between ethno-specific and mainstream organisations 9.8 Increased numbers of volunteers/organisational members</p>
<p><b>SCN Objective 10</b> Established, Strengthened or Expanded connections with community leaders</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b> 10.1 Increased positive contact with community leaders 10.2 Increased positive relationships with community leaders 10.3 Increased sense that community leaders represent one's own issues 10.4 Increased tangible support from community leaders</p>
<p><b>SCN Objective 12</b> Established, Strengthened or Expanded links people in positions of authority</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b> 12.1 Increased access to political systems and networks 12.2 Increased access to business and professional networks and associations 12.3 Increased access to government and private funding bodies</p>
<p><b>SCN Objective 13</b> Established, Strengthened or Expanded transnational social networks</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b> 13.1 Increased access to Internet based social networking (Facebook etc.) 13.2 Increased access to international information from the Internet, TV and radio</p>







## Social Capital Relational Norms (SCRN) Objectives and Indicators

<p><b>SCRN Objective 1</b> Increased community goodwill, mutual support and co-operation</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Increased tangible support received from community members (i.e. child/elder care)</li> <li>1.2 Increased tangible support given to community members</li> <li>1.3 Increased voluntary work</li> </ul>
<p><b>SCRN Objective 2</b> Increased trust</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Increased willingness to seek help from others</li> <li>2.2 Increased willingness to engage with people outside one's own community</li> <li>2.3 Increased willingness to participate in community organisations</li> <li>2.4 Increased willingness to engage with political structures, authorities and institutions</li> </ul>
<p><b>SCRN Objective 3</b> Increased community harmony</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1 Decreased conflict within a community</li> <li>3.2 Increased acceptance of diverse views and opinions</li> <li>3.3 Increased collaboration between diverse community organisations</li> </ul>
<p><b>SCRN Objective 4</b> Increased organisational accountability and transparency</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1 Increased trust in community organisations, settlement services or social institutions</li> <li>4.2 Improved community and stakeholder engagement in community organisations, settlement services or social institutions</li> <li>4.3 Improved systems of governance for community organisations, settlement services or social institutions</li> </ul>
<p><b>SCRN Objective 5</b> Increased understanding and acceptance of diversity within the wider community</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.1 Increased understanding of other communities or social groups</li> <li>5.2 Increased acceptance of people or communities who are different to oneself</li> <li>5.3 Increased sense of being accepted and understood by people who are different to oneself</li> </ul>
<p><b>SCRN Objective 6</b> Increased Family Harmony</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6.1 Increased positive communication between parents and children</li> <li>6.2 Increased understanding, trust and respect between parents and children</li> <li>6.3 Improved communication and agreement between parents and children about their respective support needs</li> <li>6.4 Increased understanding of mainstream gender and cultural norms and values</li> <li>6.5 Improved understanding and communication between husbands and wives</li> <li>6.6 Decreased domestic and family violence</li> <li>6.7 Increased understanding of Australian Family law and Child Protection services</li> </ul>



## Social Capital Enabler (SCE) Objectives and Indicators

### Social Capital Enabler (SCE): Individual capacities

<p><b>SCE Objective 1</b> Increased socio-economic status</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Increased family income</li> <li>1.2 Attainment of employment that provides an income adequate to one's family needs</li> <li>1.3 Attainment of employment that utilises ones skills and qualifications</li> </ul>
<p><b>SCE Objective 2</b> Increased educational attainment</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Completion of relevant professional, vocational or academic course(s)</li> </ul>
<p><b>SCE Objective 3</b> Increased understanding of mainstream culture</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1 Increased understanding of mainstream cultural and gender norms and values</li> <li>3.2 Increased understanding of Australian systems and institutions</li> <li>3.3 Increased understanding of Australian law</li> <li>3.4 Increased understanding of Australian politics</li> <li>3.5 Increased understanding of mainstream professional or organisational cultures and practices</li> </ul>
<p><b>SCE Objective 4</b> Increased sense of freedom and equality</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1 Increased confidence to engage in political, cultural or religious activities</li> <li>4.2 Increased access to educational and employment opportunities</li> <li>4.3 Increased opportunities to access family reunion</li> <li>4.4 Decreased experience or perception of racism, gender and other forms of discrimination</li> </ul>
<p><b>SCE Objective 5</b> Increased sense of safety and stability</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.1 Decreased exposure to all forms of violence including sexual and gender related abuses</li> <li>5.2 Increased confidence to travel, drive or walk alone in the place in which you live</li> <li>5.3 Increased understanding of how to address and manage conflict</li> <li>5.4 Increased access to appropriate and affordable housing</li> <li>5.5 Increased opportunities to access family reunion</li> </ul>
<p><b>SCE Objective 6</b> Increased sense of independence and autonomy</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6.1 Increased sense of control over one's life</li> <li>6.2 Increased understanding of decision-making processes and how to influence them</li> <li>6.3 Increased knowledge of your rights and how to access them</li> </ul>

<p><b>SCE Objective 7</b> Increased self-confidence and self-esteem</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <p>7.1 Increased confidence in one’s professional, linguistic, social or familial abilities</p> <p>7.2 Increased ability to calmly handle challenging situations</p> <p>7.3 Increased educational and employment aspirations</p> <p>7.4 Increased engagement with people or organisations outside one’s own community</p> <p>7.5 Increased willingness to take on new roles</p>
<p><b>SCE Objective 8</b> Increased sense of belonging</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <p>8.1 Increased participation in mainstream culture, community events and activities (e.g. sporting or arts events, public celebrations or festivals)</p> <p>8.2 Increased participation in events and activities in one’s own community (e.g. social or religious festivals, local school, youth group or community organisation)</p> <p>8.3 Increased participation in civic activities and events (e.g. Local Council elections, local Climate change group)</p>
<p><b>SCE Objective 9</b> Increased English language ability</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <p>9.1 Increased English (General, Work or Education specific) language skills</p>
<p><b>SCE Objective 10</b> Increased sense of hope or aspiration</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <p>10.1 Increased enthusiasm to make plans for the future (e.g. to study, work, have a family)</p> <p>10.2 Increased engagement in mainstream life and activities (e.g. voting, joining community campaigns)</p> <p>10.3 Belief that moving to Australia has improved own and /or children’s life prospects</p>
<p><b>SCE Objective 11</b> Increased cultural self-esteem</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <p>11.1 Increased confidence in one’s own community’s strengths, competence and abilities</p> <p>11.2 Increased sense of pride in one’s community and culture</p> <p>11.3 Increased opportunities to maintain culture and language</p>

## Social Capital Enablers Indicators: Community capacities

<p><b>SCE Objective 12</b> Increased cultural capital</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <p>12.1 Increased opportunities to maintain community cultural practices (e.g. festivals and religious events)</p> <p>12.2 Increased opportunities to maintain and develop traditional community knowledge and skills (e.g. literature, art, music, medicine)</p>
<p><b>SCE Objective 13</b> Increased cultural fluency* (understanding and navigating Australian customs and norms)</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <p>13.1 Increased confidence in accessing and navigating mainstream Australian services and activities</p> <p>13.2 Increased engagement in mainstream Australian social and community events</p> <p>13.3 Increased engagement in mainstream employment and educational activities and networks</p> <p><i>*See linked Socio-political Objective 16 below</i></p>



<p><b>SCE Objective 14</b></p> <p>Increased efficacy and responsibility in community leadership</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <p>14.1 Increased sense of trust in community leaders</p> <p>14.2 Increased incidence of collective action and co-operation to address shared problems</p> <p>14.3 Increased community participation in collective action to address shared problems</p>
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## Social Capital Enabler Indicators: Socio-political factors

<p><b>SCE Objective 15</b></p> <p>Increased respect for and acceptance of diverse cultures</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <p>15.1 Decreased experience or perception of racism, gender and other forms of discrimination</p> <p>15.2 Increased experience of interest in one's culture by others</p> <p>15.3 Increased positive media or political coverage of refugee communities' issues, contributions, religions and cultures</p> <p>15.4 Increased sense of being accepted and understood by people who are different to oneself</p>
<p><b>SCE Objective 16</b></p> <p>Increased cultural fluency* (mainstream understandings of cultural diversity and the refugee experience)</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <p>16.1 Increased access to mainstream services through culturally and linguistically sensitive and accessible pathways</p> <p>16.2 Increased access to sensitive and responsive mainstream service providers</p> <p>16.3 Increased engagement in culturally and linguistically sensitive mainstream employment and educational activities and networks</p>
<p><b>SCE Objective 17</b></p> <p>Increased provision of appropriate and responsive settlement services</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <p>17.1 Increased government funding for culturally appropriate and specialist settlement services</p> <p>17.2 Increased access to culturally appropriate and specialist settlement services</p> <p>17.3 Increased sense that services are responsive to individual and community needs</p> <p>17.4 Increased professional and employment opportunities for people from refugee backgrounds within the settlement service sector</p> <p>17.5 Increased resources to support refugee community run organisations and services</p>
<p><b>SCE Objective 18</b></p> <p>Increased recognition of the skills, qualifications and experience of people from refugee backgrounds</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <p>18.1 Increased access to opportunities to build local employment experience</p> <p>18.2 Increased access to bridging programs</p> <p>18.3 Increased access to professional employment pathways that recognise prior learning and experience</p>
<p><b>SCE Objective 19</b></p> <p>Increased opportunities for family reunion (Advocacy objective)</p>	<p><b>Indicators</b></p> <p>19.1 Increased number of places available for family reunion</p> <p>19.2 Increased access to appropriate services to assist with family reunion applications</p> <p>19.3 Increased access to financial support for sponsors</p>



### Annexure 3

#### Sample of participant interview evaluation questions – STARTTS

1. How did it feel to perform at the Riverside?
2. What is the biggest impact being a part of this project has had on you?
3. Has being a part of this changed your understanding of professional dance in Australia? In what ways? What have you learnt?
4. Do you feel you've made new connections in the world of dance? Do you think they are likely to lead to future opportunities for you?
5. Have any further opportunities already come out of this, like for example hearing about another performance you're interested in being a part of through someone you have met on this project?
6. Has being a part of this increased your own professional dance and employment opportunities?
7. What's your vision for the future in relation to dance?
8. Do you think you're likely to stay in touch with the others in the group? With Jiva?
9. Do you think the Riverside performance helped to increase awareness of African culture and community among mainstream Australians? How does that feel?



## Annexure 4

### Participant interview evaluation questions – Centre for Refugee Research

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your experience of being involved in the project?
2. Did you like being part of this project? If yes, what did you like best? If not, why not?
3. Was there any part which was particularly challenging?
4. Has being involved in the project changed your relationships with your family, for example, the way that you and your children/family spend time together? If yes, how? (eg. amount of time together, frequency, quality, nature of activities). Positively or negatively?
5. Has being part of the project introduced you to new people, that perhaps otherwise you might not have had the chance to meet (perhaps within your cultural/ethnic community, the refugee community, or otherwise)?
6. Did you feel supported in the project by other participants, STARTTS staff, and/or mentors?
7. Do you feel there has been increased cooperation and collaboration between diverse refugee communities?
8. Has being part of the project assisted you in anyway, in getting to know about Australian culture and people within it (can include from learning English skills to expanding supportive networks)?
9. Has being involved in the project expanded your knowledge and understanding of the Australian arts culture and educated you in professional/business skills related to this (applying for funding, access to rehearsal space and performance opportunities)
10. Did you feel you had some ownership over the project, being a part of, or at least considered in project planning and decision-making? If so, how did this make you feel?
11. Do they have any advice for STARTTS staff about how the project could be improved?
12. Can you sum up in a word or a sentence, how this project has made you feel about yourself, and your outlook on the future? *Respondents can be asked to report on changes as well as to reflect on **why** change has occurred and the impact of those changes on other aspects of their lives.*



## Annexure 5

### Evaluation Plan

Evaluation to be conducted by:

Rochelle Baughan (Consultant evaluator, Centre for Refugee Research)

In conjunction with:

Elizabeth Schaeffer (Evaluation Officer, STARTTS)

A team approach to evaluation was taken, with the independent evaluator working alongside the CCDP Officer and STARTTS Evaluation Officer, utilising the monitoring and evaluation materials gathered during project implementation as well as data gathered at the time of evaluation. A team approach was necessary also, to be sensitive to the needs and availabilities of the refugee participants. Engaging participants in the evaluation and having their input valued and reflected in the evaluation findings and recommendations is hoped to give them a sense of ownership of the project and its future direction, as well as to recognise their successes in a public forum. This is essential for the sustainability of an arts-based infrastructure within these communities.

**Background:** STARTTS prior history of partnership with the Centre for Refugee Research in program monitoring and evaluation contributing the field of community development to improve service provision.

**Purpose of the evaluation:** To measure whether the CCDP has achieved its intended objectives, outcomes and overall aim, and to identify successes, learning and areas for future improvement. The Australia Council for the Arts will be interested in this report as part of their funding requirements, STARTTS' can utilise the findings and recommendations in future project development, and participants will benefit through the continuation or improvement of services and programs.

**Primary audience of the evaluation:** CCDP participants and project staff, Australian Council for the Arts and other stakeholders.

**Evaluation resources:** Communicating with STARTTS staff (project officers, youth workers, community development workers, counsellors etc), project documentation (eg. monitoring/progress reports), participants (through interviews and focus groups) audience surveys, choreographer interviews.

#### Key evaluation issues/questions:

Research questions were formulated drawing on the Project aim and objectives, with a particular focus on the impact on social capital and its enablers for refugee individuals and communities.

1. What is the level of inclusivity, accessibility and sustainability of STARTTS arts activities?
2. What has been the impact of the project on improving participant's wellbeing?
3. What has been the impact of the project on bonding within and between refugee communities?



4. What has been the impact on bridging with the wider Australian society, in both an arts capacity as well as linking to positive settlement outcomes?
5. What has been the impact on forming linkages with the arts field and other educational and employment opportunities?
6. To what extent have the participants been engaged in professional development, and their awareness, knowledge of and access to the Australian arts industry increased?
7. What is the (increased) capacity of STARTTS to run community cultural arts projects?

**Data collection methods:**

- Desktop review (project briefs, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, monthly/quarterly/other progress reports, activity reports, work plans, relevant emails, project reports, relevant statistics, surveys)
- STARTTS staff interviews/discussion
- Semi structured interviews and focus groups with participants (undertaken by STARTTS project officers and the independent evaluator, taking place across the two years of the project)
- Observation: watching footage/viewing artworks

**Data collection tools:**

- Interview questions for staff and interviews and focus groups with participants, thematic coding and analysis of qualitative data
- Gathering and analysing quantitative data

**Data analysis:** Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis, drawing on the rich information provided the participants. Information will be collated into findings against objectives, short and long-term outcomes and KPIs, and drawing on these, recommendations will be made in relation to future project planning and delivery.

**Dissemination:** The evaluation report will initially be provided to STARTTS project officers and participants for review and verification. All informants to the evaluation will be given the opportunity to read and comment on the preliminary findings and draft recommendations and this feedback will inform the final review document. The findings and recommendations are hoped to provide useful feedback to contribute to future projects, as well as provide the participant's with recognition of their successes and learning, and to ensure they feel ownership of the project at all stages. The report will then be submitted to the Australia Council for the Arts.

**Timeline:**

- December 2013 - speak with STARTTS staff and devise an evaluation plan
- January 2014 - data collection (desk review, interviews), data analysis
- February 2014 - write up report, send to STARTTS for review by project staff and participants for clarification of information
- March 2014 - disseminate report and its findings to Arts Council and STARTTS staff and participants.





## Annexure 6

### Media and promotional materials

#### STARTTS website

<http://www.startts.org.au/services/community-services/community-cultural-development/>

#### Dance Africa Dance



2012

Francois Awad & Sierra Leone Refugee Theatre Project:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvNhooKOlml>

Full Performance:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsVdki4hIok>

2013

Highlights:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vqW\\_r9Hz4C0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vqW_r9Hz4C0)

Full show:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZ3089pagl8>

Post event interviews:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhCXeQbiEBU>



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## Iraqi Youth Project


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQPafQsYlh0>

## Baulkham Hills Ladies Troupe

Racing Pulse Productions, Riverside & Belvoir in assoc. with STARTTS presents

# THE BAULKHAM HILLS AFRICAN LADIES TROUPE

A celebration of women, human rights,  
laughter and resilience.



**Thousands of Africans have migrated to Australia, bringing with them their cultures, their stories and their futures.**

Yarrié grew up in a camp in Guinea. She is doing her HSC. Aminata is from Sierra Leone. She is an ambassador for the UNHCR. Big Mama Rosemary is from Kenya. She is a community leader and she knows how to live. Yordi was a child soldier. Now she's the mother of four amazing kids. They are one half of The Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe and they would like to welcome you into their worlds.

These marvellous women turn their extraordinary and harrowing stories of survival into a joyous theatre of humanity. With the help of four other African women – singers and dancers and actors – the ladies are going to take this great opportunity to be who they want, say what they want, and become as amazing as they can. This is how they celebrate a new beginning in a land of refuge.

The Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe is a celebration of women, human rights, laughter and resilience. With a bit of sage advice on hair care.

## THE BAULKHAM HILLS AFRICAN LADIES TROUPE

Stories told by women who lived them  
Written and Directed by Ros Horin.

**9-18 MAY 2013**

Thu 9 May 6:30pm, Fri 10 May 7:30pm, Sat 11 May 7:30pm,  
Tue 14 May 7:30pm, Wed 15 May 7:30pm, Thu 16 May 6:30pm,  
Fri 17 May 7:30pm, Sat 18 May 2:15pm & 7:30pm

**TICKETS \$47 ADULT / CONC \$42\***

\* Transaction fees may apply

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RIVERSIDE

## Dance Workshops

# DO YOU WANT TO PERFORM...

## ...AND GET PAID?

ARE YOU OF AFRICAN ORIGIN  
AND OVER 18 YEARS?  
ARE YOU FREE EVENINGS IN  
NOVEMBER 2012?

We are looking for enthusiasm and commitment not experience.

**Selection/audition on 2 October 2012, 6-9pm**

**CONNECT STUDIOS**  
Upper levels of The Connection Arcade, Darcy St, Parramatta

For more information and to register your interest call Jiva Partippan 0412863644  
You must attend the selection date to be part of the project



## Fairfield Youth Project

<http://youtu.be/cQPafQsYlh0>



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## **Refugee Art Prize Melbourne**

<http://www.multiculturalarts.com.au/events2013/heartlands.shtml>

## **Arts Connect (Granville Library)**

[http://youtu.be/vRzjsSFBL\\_s](http://youtu.be/vRzjsSFBL_s)

## **Art Workshop**

Fairfield City Museum & Gallery invites you and your guests to the launch of

### **SOLID GROUND - REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKER ARTISTS**

On Saturday 29 June at 2pm

Exhibition dates: 29 June - 17 August 2013

This exhibition chronicles refugee artists from the last three decades. It is a tribute to artistic excellence and human resilience, ranging from community through to professional practice. This exhibition is organised by STARTTS - The NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors and will also commemorate the life and work of Danilo Palermo, founder of the annual Refugee Week Art Exhibition, and continue his legacy of supporting artists from refugee backgrounds.

Artist-led Workshop - Contemporary Henna Art  
Saturday 6th July, 1.30 - 4pm

Henna is a beautiful and versatile medium that lends itself to be used in various ways, not only in its traditional role of adorning the body. Join Henna artist, Idil Abdullahi, as she looks at contemporary ways to extend the use of henna as a medium to other surfaces such as watercolour paper. Cost: \$15 Bookings Essential.

Image courtesy of Mahmoud AbuQtmah

Fairfield City Museum & Gallery Open: Tues - Sat 10am - 4pm FREE ADMISSION Cnr: The Horsley Dr & Oxford St, Smithfield NSW 2164  
[www.livingmuseum.com.au](http://www.livingmuseum.com.au) | Phone: 02 9609 3993 | Fax: 02 9757 4357 | Email: [museumgallery@fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au](mailto:museumgallery@fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au)



## **Community Choirs with Opera Australia and the Sydney Opera House**

[http://opera.org.au/whatson/community/community\\_choirs\\_2012](http://opera.org.au/whatson/community/community_choirs_2012)

## **The Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe (BHALT)**

Performances at Riverside Theatre (9-18 May 2013) and Belvoir St. Theatre (15 August-15 September 2013)

<http://www.startts.org.au/media/BHALT.jpg>

### **Press**

Belvoir Theatre

<http://belvoir.com.au/productions/the-baulkham-hills-african-ladies-troupe/>

Love, laughter and resilience- The Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe  
9-18 May 2013 @Riverside

<http://riversideparramatta.com.au/show/the-baulkham-hills-african-ladies-troupe/>

### **SBS TV News**

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2013/04/25/african-refugees-turn-trauma-theatre>



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ABC TV News, AM Radio piece and Online

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-04-20/refugee-women-dance-group/4640116>

The Wire <http://www.thewire.org.au/storyDetail.aspx?ID=10300>

SBS African Radio

<http://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/african/highlight/page/id/264786/t/Baulkham-Hills-African-Ladies-Troupe/in/english>

Facebook [www.facebook.com/TheBaulkhamHillsAfricanLadiesTroupe](http://www.facebook.com/TheBaulkhamHillsAfricanLadiesTroupe)

Twitter @LadiesTroupe



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### ***Dance Africa Dance 2012 program***

#### **Masta One and Dovi Dovi**

New and original hip hop mixes from this new collaboration of Sydney siders from South Sudanese and Sierra Leonean heritage, providing the foyer entertainment.

**1. South Sudanese Women's choir**

Traditional and new music composed by group members. Singing, with some simple choreography facilitated by the DIH Project Officer.

**2. Afro-Contemporary Youth Dance Group**

The first performance by a newly-established, inclusive group of African youth (which the CCDP Officer assisted in recruiting). Performance choreographed by Lucky Lartey.

**3. Project Bantu - Capoeira Angola group**

Choreographed by Mestre Roxinho

*Performers:* Mestre Roxinho, Chiara Ridolfi, Cabramatta High School students, Liverpool Boys High School students

*Instruments:* Berimbau, Pandeiro, Agogo, Reco-reco and Atabaque

Project Bantu is a socio-cultural program that introduces the Afro-Brazilian art form of Capoeira Angola to young people at risk. The project combines the healing potential of musical and physical expression to provide a range of social and learning outcomes. Project Bantu's association with STARTTS aims to empower young people by giving them confidence in their ability to succeed and face the challenges of life.

**4. My story: Limanya, Sierra Leone Cultural Performance Group, 'Limanya'**

Traditional cultural dance and song with accompanying short documentary film, choreographed and produced with the assistance of professional choreographer Francois Awad.

**5. Walking Project**

Artists selected through an audition process for this paid performance contemporary dance piece, choreographed by professional artist Martin Del Amo.

**6. Africa United**

A short works by a professional performance group, choreographed and performed by Lucky Lartey especially for Dance Africa Dance. Devised and performed in collaboration with Fode Mane (Dancer and Drummer), Yacou Mbaye (Drummer and Dancer), Kenneth Tusubira (Dancer and Guitarist) and Goddy Anesu (Acrobatic and Dancer).



## ***Dance Africa Dance 2013 Program***

Dance Africa Dance premiered at Riverside Theatres in 2012 featuring the many African artists and groups supported through the STARTTS (NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors) Community Cultural Development and Dancing in Harmony Programs.

Dance Africa Dance was established as a unique platform to showcase the talents of emergent artists and performers that STARTTS works with on a regular basis. In its second year Dance Africa Dance continues to be a unique expression of the vibrancy and diversity of African cultures, which are at the same time firmly rooted in the Australian cultural landscape.

Ranging from high energy drumming of Burundian youth, to a minimalist solo choreographed by Martin Del Amo, to krumping, hip hop and original routines by celebrated dancer and choreographer Patrick 'Lucky' Lartey, through to video pieces commissioned specifically for the show - Dance Africa Dance 2013 is set to be a one of a kind entertainment experience for audiences.

This year sees an emphasis on solo pieces reflecting the further creative and professional development of performers and visual artists that STARTTS has supported through the project. The earnest devotion of the performers to their arts is evident.

### **Welcome to Country: Uncle Des**

Uncle Des is a local Aboriginal elder who is closely associated with STARTTS. He is currently collaborating on various projects including exploring potential for an initiative creating connection to land and country with South Sudanese youth.

### **1. Aussie Paddle Hunting Group**

Straddling ritual and performance, Aussie Paddle Hunting Group is an emergent group with its roots in Sierra Leone. They are in the process of re-contextualising their practice for presentation to the uninitiated, whilst keeping true to their all-male 'private' performance traditions.

STARTTS Liaison: Hamed Turray

### **2. Sierra Leone Cultural Performance Group- 'Limanya'**

Limanya - meaning to be steadfast is the new name of this gathering of women. This inter-generational group has provided a sphere of expression for many of its members to grow and explore other creative pursuits in the arts world including dance, theatre and film. Ever changing and evolving, the group remains steadfast in the practice and maintenance of cultural dance and song rooted in the traditions of Sierra Leone. This year the group will welcome the Dance Africa Dance audience and lead them into the theatre to enjoy the 2013 showcase.

STARTTS Liaison: Stephanie Adam

### **3. Resilience in the Narratives of War: South Sudanese Women's Performance Group**

The Dinka speaking Bor women emanate strength and resilience as they celebrate cultural practice through song and dance. Their original lyrics convey the joy they felt as South Sudan was declared independent, and their belief that blood shed during the many years of conflict was not in vain. Their united voices transcend language barriers to share their message with all audiences. Follow the call and response as they lead you into the Lennox Theatre.

STARTTS Coordination: Stephanie Adam

The South Sudanese Women's Performance Group have been meeting regularly in preparation to record a CD and DVD. Their original works will document their shared history demonstrating their resilience and preserving cultural practice in a format.



#### **4. St Marys Street Dancing and Krumping**

A newly formed dance troupe initiated by western Sydney hip hop artist Masta One as a means of creating opportunity for creative expression and social connection for St Marys based youth. High energy with a side serve of 'swag,' the fusion of hip hop, contemporary and traditional African movement reflects their emergent identities influenced by South Sudanese traditions in an Australian context. The fun and entertaining piece is sure to delight the audience.

Choreographer: Lucky Lartey

Group Leader: Abaker Athum aka Masta One

STARTTS Coordination: Stephanie Adam

STARTTS originally auspiced a Magnetic Places grant administered by Penrith Council to support the group but is continuing to offer financial support and project coordination in recognition the continued and growing level of interest and positive community cultural development outcomes.

#### **5. *Emptiness of Grief*: Dance Solo, Susan Abau**

The juxtaposition of controlled movement and well timed pause convey the intense and intricate emotions associated with loss. The notion of struggle between 'going back' and moving on is poignant. Susan has dedicated the piece to her Dad, her Uncle and her baby sister.

Choreographic mentor: Annalouise Paul

Music: *Prayer* by Circles of Rhythm

Susan Abau is of South Sudanese heritage and one of the original members of Afro Contemporary Youth Dance (ACYD) which formed in 2012. She featured in the *Walking Project* dance piece by Martin del Amo in the Dance Africa Dance 2012 showcase and recently progressed through the first heat to the finals in the Fast and Fresh 2013 Youth Dance Festival performing her original *Emptiness of Grief* piece. The work was developed with the choreographic mentorship of Annalouise Paul through choreographic workshops coordinated by STARTTS.

#### **6. *Imprint*: Short Film, Hawanatu Bangura**

Hawanatu - Hawa and Banchelam Assefa - Babsy featured in the *Walking Project* dance piece by Martin del Amo in Dance Africa Dance 2012. They have since collaborated to create *Imprint*. Hawanatu Bangura is a storyteller and a filmmaker based in Sydney, Australia. She has written and directed four short films including *Alhaji*, *Not Good Enough*, *Money Tree* and her recent dance film *Imprint*.

#### **7. *Is it Michael?* : Dance Solo, Oboya Oboya**

This tongue in cheek pieces fuses contemporary and old school hip hop moves with accompanying live dialogue. Part dance, part comedy, this piece is sure to entertain and get you wondering 'wait, is it Michael?'

Choreographic Mentor: Annalouise Paul

Music: *Untitled*, Circle of Rhythm

Oboya Oboya is one of the original members of Afro Contemporary Youth Dance which formed in 2012. He featured in the *Walking Project* dance piece by Martin del Amo in the Dance Africa dance 2012 showcase and recently had his *Is it Michael?* piece accepted into the Fast and Fresh 2013 Youth Dance Festival.

#### **8. *Sisterhood***

A performance group of 3 sisters originally from Congo. This piece reflects the identity, journey and spirit of these young women as they share a unique mix of their Congolese and contemporary culture.

Choreography, Direction, Music and Video: Francois Awad

STARTTS Liason: Jiva Parthipan and Hamed Turray

Bio

Francois Awad was born in Sydney, Australia. He has produced, directed and choreographed film and television productions for Warner Brothers, Fox, Colt Music and Obvious Records (UK). His theatre credits include creative and production positions for Cirqu du Soleil's *Alegria*, Disney's *The Lion King* and more. Artistic Director of Streaming Dance Theatre Company, Director of the Musical Theatre Program and McDonald Performing Arts College and Director of the Dance Intensity training program which toured directors and choreographers from International musical theatre, ballet and contemporary dance companies. Francois' teaching credits include Pineapple Dance Studios London, Studio Harmonic Paris and Sydney Dance Company Studios.



**9. *The Unfortunate Brilliance of Lesley Pascale*: Film - Lazare**

Lazare is a young film-maker and fashion designer. He will be launching his fashion label 'Rom&zarus' Autumn collection in 2014. Film credits include Gamer and Seethrough.

Dance Film workshops mentorship: Vanessa Deng

**10. *Dancing in an Almost classical mode* – working title**

Martin worked with a group of dancers on *The Walking Project* at Riverside 2013. Abuzar was one of them. Following on from that engagement the two decided to collaborate to create a solo for Dance Africa Dance 2013 with idiosyncratic movement that is engaging and thought provoking.

Choreographed by Martin Del Amo with the dancer.

Music: Young Mozart (*Hip-Hop Prayer* and *A Different Moonlight*)

**Bio**

Martin del Amo is a Sydney based choreographer and dancer. He is best known for his full-length solos, fusing idiosyncratic movement and intimate storytelling. In recent years, Martin has extended his practice to creating groups works and solos for others including *Anatomy of an Afternoon* (Opera House, 2012 Sydney Festival) and *Mountains Never Meet* (Riverside Theatres, 2011). Martin was nominated for a Helpmann Award (2012) and two Australian Dance Awards (2010 and 2005). His work has toured nationally and internationally (Uk, Japan, Brazil).

**11. VIDEO EXCERPT**

*'How to watch youtube video in a public auditorium whilst not breaking the law'*

**12. Afro Contemporary Youth Dance (ACYD)**

This playful piece has an overt soccer theme with the Afro Contemporary genre the vehicle for its delivery. The style fusion is a well recognised signature of choreographer Lucky Lartey who has worked with ACYD once more for their second Dance Africa Dance showcase in 2013.

STARTTS Coordination: Stephanie Adam

The Afro contemporary Youth Dance (ACYD) association emerged from the Dancing in Harmony Project, a STARTTS initiative aimed at increasing the connections within African communities and between African communities and the broader Australian community. A highlight for the year includes winning first prize at Auburns Africultures Festival. The prize included a tour of Sony Music Studios where they met Timomatic and Jessica Mauboy.

**13. ABA Crew**

ABA stands for Africa, Burma and Afghanistan - the young men first met at the STARTTS April camp and started to dance together.

Music: New Dougie by Cali Swag Distic; ABA music player (compilation) ican transform ya, lollipop by lil wayne, S 550, play hard work hard; Set it off by Timomatic.

Choreographed by Belinda Lemair in partnership with the participants

Belinda Lemair is a specialist dance and drama teacher who has "a passion for the next generation of young artists and creating a platform where we can explore natural gifts

STARTTS coordination: Dianne Jacobus - Youth Community Development Project Officer, STARTTS, Coffs harbour.

**14. *Meeting Point: Dance solo by Lucky Lartey***

*Meeting Point* is an exploration about the internal workings of the dancer and whether all that happens inside oneself when dancing actually appears on the surface of the body or if there is even more going on inside.

Hence this work uses two dancers to explore the inner workings of one dancer as they navigate through movement, space, feeling and bodily sensations. Using an Afro-contemporary dance style *Meeting Point* offers a unique insight into what can happen when two bodies represent the inner workings of one.

Choreographer and Dancer: Lucky Lartey

Musician: Kenneth Tusubira

Lucky Lartey is an accomplished dancer and choreographer born and trained in Ghana. He is one of Australia's most dynamic West African performers and is well known for his versatile and high energy dance style. Lucky





has more than 15 years of dance training in traditional African dance, Afro-contemporary and contemporary dance. He received an award this year at the Celebration of African Australians at Parliament House in Canberra. Lucky is the director of Lucky African Dance which promotes African culture in Australia through drum and dance performances and workshops.

#### **15. Rafiki Connection**

'The Rafiki Connection' perform traditional dancing and drumming from Burundi that is vibrant and uplifting. The young men who live in Coffs Harbour originate from Burundi, Rafiki Connection allows them to retain and respect traditional culture and share it with the broader community. Dancing and drumming are an integral part of Burundi culture with the instruments made from the trunk of a tree with cowskin on top. Group members are "all from families with no fathers - we are for each other what we miss without our fathers."

Performers: DieuDonne Ininahazwe, Gervais Minani, Ignas Gasengayire, Jacques Ndizeye, Joseph Majambere, Jean Paul Ndayiragije, Felix Sinzinkayo,

Coordination: Dianne Jacobus, Youth Community Development Project Officer, STARTTS Coffs harbour in association with Gai Newman.

