

HANTI SIDRA ONE GLOBAL FAMILY

REPORT FROM AFRICA 2018



**Introducing a new kind
of library in Eritrea**

Mission accomplished in two countries

WHEN Stephanie and I left for Eritrea and South Sudan in February 2018, we were carrying a lot of baggage, both literally and figuratively.

We decided to switch our normal routine and go to Eritrea first, mainly because of the baggage. We were carrying an entire library with millions of books, documents, learning materials, videos, graphics, and much more.

It was all crammed into one hard drive--about the size of a box of chocolates. In addition we had 10 tablets, 10 headphones, a router, and an assortment of cords, cables, plugs, adapters, power bars, and instruction manuals.

There were numerous hurdles along the way. We had to keep the equipment safe from damage, which meant it all went with our carry on baggage. And we had to pass through the scrutiny of security checks at six different airports. The only damage was a cracked screen on one of the tablets.

The destination was the library and computer lab at St. Joseph's School in Keren, Eritrea. We had been volunteering at, and supporting, this school for many years. We had sent a container load of books and I had taught a computer class there back in the 1990s. Our good friends, Char and Bob Deslippe of Victoria, had volunteered at St. Joseph's in 1999-2000. They had a special spot in their hearts for the library there and had worked to reorganize it.

So when they made a large donation a couple of years ago, we decided that, in their honor, we would introduce a state of the art electronic library that works like the internet but doesn't need the internet--ideal country like Eritrea.

The work went well. With great help, especially from Brother Andom, assistant headmaster at St. Joseph's, and technicians Haben and Jackie, the system was installed, the computers prepared, a network set up, and plans made to provide the service to Santa Anna School across the street. Now two more schools are asking for the e-library.

In South Sudan, our goal was to see as much as possible of our friends and the projects we are supporting in a short time. We spent considerable time with William Kolong Pioth, our South Sudanese colleague, and his family.

Our other great pleasure was to meet again with the wonderful women in the women's livelihood project. Their vegetable gardens are flourishing and there are now many more of them. Their children are better fed and their example is being followed by others.

In both Eritrea and South Sudan, positive things are happening. ♦

Dennis Schroeder

COVER PICTURE

Students at St. Joseph's School learn to navigate around the eGranary digital library.

Who we are; what we are trying to do

It all started in 1992, when we, Stephanie and Dennis Schroeder, visited Eritrea, a land in the Horn of Africa devastated by three decades of war and frequent droughts. Fighting had ended just a few months before we arrived there.

Our initial search was for a small orphanage where we could sponsor all of the children. We found it at St. Joseph's School in Keren. We also found people in Canada who shared our interest in developing friendships with Eritreans and assisting them in their struggle to create better lives for themselves and their children.

Our group began as the B.C. branch of the *Eritrean Relief Association in Canada* in 1992. In 1994, we became *ERRA-BC*, a non-profit society incorporated in B.C. and registered with Canada Revenue Agency as a

HANTI SIDRA means "One Family" in the Tigrinya language of Eritrea. It was the name given to a group of orphans we supported there. Since our supporters and beneficiaries of support live in many countries around the world, we are now truly "One Global Family".

charitable organization. In 2008, we changed our name to *Hanti Sidra One Global Family*.

During our 26 years of operation, we have spent more than \$1.7 million (see back page) on a variety of projects in Eritrea, South Sudan and elsewhere in the Horn of Africa. A summary of projects appears on these pages.

All of the above mentioned funds have been contributed by people who believe in the value of the work being done. None is from governments. All of the money donated goes directly to our colleagues who do the work we support in Eritrea and South Sudan.

We continue to visit Africa as often as possible to strengthen our ties of friendship and to observe the programs and projects we are supporting.

In Canada, we have been blessed to have committed support from many people. They volunteer their time and talents for fundraisers; they make generous financial contributions; they hold prayer sessions in times of crisis. Thank you. This work would not have been possible without your support. ♦

HANTI SIDRA ONE GLOBAL FAMILY

Board of Directors

Ghebremedhin Abbai
Asmeret Ghebremedhin
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Lynn Koett
Patricia Gale-MacDonald
Dennis Schroeder
Stephanie Schroeder

Active Volunteers

Dozens

Contributors

Hundreds

Email: hantisidra@gmail.com

ERITREA UPDATE

In January 2018, Hanti Sidra provided nearly C\$40,000 to the De la Salle Brothers and four orders of Catholic Sisters, to be used during the coming year. Some of the recipients (shown below) had already earmarked the funds for projects in February.

Santa Anna School

Operated in Keren by Santa Anna Sisters. Sr. Yodit Tesfagabir, Headmistress. Funding of US\$3,000 to be used for 25 new desks and at least 50 tablets.

Feledareb Clinic

Operated by Capuchin Sisters in village near Keren. Recipient: Sr. Pasqualina Himid. Funding of US\$3,000 to be used to assist needy families, students and single mothers in Feledareb area.

Milk from the clinic's farm is provided to the local community.



Children at the Daughters of Charity Kindergarten in Dekemhare.

Daughters of Charity

Through Sr. Lettemariam Mogos, funding of US\$3,000 will be used for a training workshop for 37 Kindergarten teachers and a project for women to produce and sell injera (a traditional food).

St. Joseph's School

Operated in Keren by De la Salle Brothers. Funding of US\$3,500 used to cover school fees for students from poor families. An additional US\$3,200 for electronic library system--see pages 6-7.

IRS Study Centre

Institute for Religious Studies operated in Asmara by De la Salle Brothers. Funding of US\$1,500 used to support study centre for students not able to study at home. Also available to students in the surrounding neighborhood.

Getting down to the most basic priorities

GIVEN the desperate conditions in South Sudan at the present time, our local partners there, Pan Aweil Development Agency (PADA), have decided to concentrate on the most basic of needs--food and peace. Projects related to food security are described on pages 8 and 9.

The major peace and reconciliation project is the Joint Border Peace Committee, coordinated by William Kolong Pioth, managing director of PADA. The JBPC is tasked with keeping the peace and facilitating trade along a stretch of the border between South Sudan and the Republic of Sudan. The committee has been remarkably successful in minimizing violence during the annual cattle migrations across the border.

However, in 2017 US AID, the major supporter of this project, stopped all funding for it. This happened just before the annual premigration conferences were to be held.

Kolong scrambled to find new sources of sup-

port. He was able to tap various UN agencies and even local chiefs and authorities for financial and in-kind support totalling 75% of the cost of the conferences. *Hanti Sidra One Global Family* provided the additional funding to allow the conferences to take place.

Now the concept of using peace conferences to resolve disputes related to land, cattle and other issues is expanding to include domestic conflicts. PADA has been awarded a contract to construct a court house and well where local disputes in the Aweil South area can be resolved. Construction of the courthouse has begun.

Goats and humans line up for water at a new solar powered water pump system installed by PADA near the border between Sudan and South Sudan. Water at this well will be accessed by seasonal migrants from the north.



St. Joseph's gets new electronic library

IN FEBRUARY 2018, St. Joseph's School in Keren, Eritrea made a giant leap into the digital world with the introduction of an electronic library.

The school is operated by the de la Salle Brothers of Eritrea and was founded almost 70 years ago. It has about 1,700 students from Grade 1 to 11 (for Grade 12, all students must go to National Service). It has consistently been one of the three top schools in the country based on results in national exams.

Graduates from the school now live in many parts of the world and they provide support for various projects at the school.

Hanti Sidra One Global Family has been involved with the school since the early 1990s when we supported a group of 81 war orphans (the original Hanti Sidra One Family) who were taken in by the school.

We began our support for the

St. Joseph's students get their first chance to try out the eGranary in the school's computer lab.



school's library back in those years by shipping a container load of books to them. This was certainly a big help but shipping books is very expensive and many books wear out or become out of date.

We decided we would try to provide the school with more current books, teaching resources and learning materials in a format that could be delivered easily and inexpensively. The solution was an electronic library that could work in a country where the internet and possibly the power supply are unreliable.

St. Joseph's School appeared to be a good place to start because it already had some facilities like a computer lab and some knowledgeable technicians are available. The power supply is now reasonably good and, thanks to the school's alumni, there is a solar powered backup system.

After doing some research, we selected the eGranary electronic library system produced by a non-profit group called the Widernet Project, based in North Carolina.

A granary is a place for storing grain. Hence the eGranary is a place where millions of "seeds of knowledge" are stored electronically.

The Widernet group have received permission to use millions of resources like books, journals and videos, such as Wikipedia and the Khan Academy, with resources from Grade One to college level, in maths, sciences, agriculture, engi

E-LIBRARY



Dennis introduces the eGranary to St. Joseph's School with a presentation to faculty and staff in the school's library area.

neering, medicine and much more. These have been sold to more than 500 schools, libraries, hospitals, and other organizations around the world.

The information comes in different formats. We chose an external hard drive holding 6 terabytes of information--easy to carry in hand luggage. It is attached to a server computer and information is accessed by laptops or tablets using a browser as the interface--just like the internet even though it isn't on line. Users can even create their own websites, available only on the local network.

Installation at St. Joseph's library went very smoothly. The technicians worked wonders in rendering all 30 computers in the lab useable and installing the eGranary browser software on them.

They also worked on a networking system to provide greater access to the data in the hard drive. The server and hard drive are located in the school library on the ground floor. The wireless network will "broadcast" to the computer lab on the third floor, and later, to the two teachers' staff rooms elsewhere in the school and also to Santa Anna School across the street.

Teachers and students at St. Joseph's School are thrilled to get this new learning resource. It brings a wealth of knowledge from around the world into their school, accessible even without the internet.

Now more schools in Eritrea are interested in getting the eGranary. Next in line are Hagaz Agro-Technical School and the Institute of Religious Studies, both also operated by the de la Salle Brothers. ♦

Food security: working for a solution

IN recent years there have been periodic stories about famine in South Sudan. This is not surprising when you consider the enormous numbers of people uprooted from their homes and deprived of the chance to grow their own food.

International agencies are constantly asking for food aid which sometimes is airdropped into particularly dangerous areas. This is clearly not a long-term answer to the problem of food shortages. Even in the short term, there are better alternatives.

In the long term, the food has to be produced in South Sudan. In most places, the land is fertile and water is plentiful. The country should be exporting food, not receiving food aid.

Hanti Sidra and its South Sudanese partner, Pan Aweil Development Agency (PADA) believe that the long term begins now. While

some areas are too unstable for people to grow food, other areas are relatively peaceful. One of those peaceful places is the area around Aweil in the northwestern part of the country.

PADA has been active in several ways to generate more food production in the Greater Aweil area. Under the leadership of William Kolong Pioth, its director, it began the Women's Livelihood Project in the Majok Adim area north of Aweil.

Women were given plots of land, seeds, gardening tools and access to water to grow vegetables during the dry season. The vegetables provided a more balanced and nutritious diet for their families and the surplus was sold in markets and to restaurants.

Now, some five years later, at least 1,000 households--including women, men and children-- have

Women in the livelihood project gather for a meeting under the trees.



AGRICULTURE PROJECTS



This woman is in a new livelihood group east of Aweil.

plots and are growing a variety of vegetables. They are also becoming increasingly self-sufficient, producing and selling seeds.

An offshoot group of internally displaced women from a nearby state has started a new group east of Aweil. Also, other NGOs are getting on the bandwagon. One agency started a program for students and bought all the seeds from our group of women.

When we visited Majok Adim in February 2018, we had a meeting with our women under the same grove of trees where we originally met to talk of the idea. It was heartwarming and encouraging to see how well-dressed many of these women are now, and how much

healthier their children appear.

Another PADA farming project is a collaboration with William Machok of the *Lost Boys Rebuilding South Sudan Foundation*.

Two years ago they got access to 32 hectares of land, hired local people and brought in two experienced farmers from Kenya to supervise the project. They produced 15 metric tonnes of sorghum, South Sudan's staple crop, along with some other crops. The sorghum was sold to the World Food Program (WFP) and the seeds were distributed to refugees and internally displaced people.

In 2017, PADA moved to a different location and greatly increased production, to 112 metric tonnes. After distributing to the workers and holding back for seeds for 2018, close to 90% of this output was sold to WFP, nearly 2,000 50kg bags.

In each of the past two years, the land cleared for cultivation was turned over to the local people after the first year.

For 2018, the plan is to move to a more permanent site not far from Aweil town, and increase production five-fold.

This domestic production of food is still just a small proportion of what is needed. But it is being replicated in some other areas and, like the Livelihood Project, the idea is catching on.

PADA pioneered another project a few years ago, organizing an agricultural fair in Aweil to showcase the produce of local farmers. That idea is also catching on. ♦

DONATIONS

Five ways you can make a donation

- Write a cheque or money order made out to *HANTI SIDRA FUND* and mail it to our address shown on the back page. You will receive an official tax receipt for any donation of \$20.00 or more. You can designate a specific project or direct your donation to Eritrea or South Sudan.
- Make a cash donation. Tax receipts are not normally issued. But if you put \$20.00 or more into one of our cash donation envelopes and fill out the required information on the envelope, you will be issued a tax receipt.
- Arrange with us to have monthly, quarterly or other regular contributions of a specified amount debited from your bank account. Provide us with a void cheque with your banking information and instructions on the amount and frequency of debits you would like us to make. You will receive one tax receipt at year-end for your total donations during the year.
- Make an electronic payment by setting up an Interac E-Transfer through your bank with an email notification sent to us at hantisidra@gmail.com. In a separate email, let us know the answer to your security question, as well as your mailing address, so we can mail your tax receipt to you.
- Make a donation by credit card through www.canadahelps.org. Search for "Hanti Sidra" and you will find a page with information about us and a place to make a donation. After you make your online donation, a cheque is forwarded to us. A tax receipt for the full amount of your donation is issued to you by CanadaHelps. Please be aware that they hold back a fee of about 5% of your donation from the amount remitted to us. ♦

Make a special event more special

Have you ever tried to find a gift for a person who doesn't need anything? Why not get a Hanti Sidra Gift Card? We offer a group of themed cards that allow you to make a donation of \$20.00 or a larger amount of your choice to one of our projects in Africa in the name of a friend or loved one. Since the time and materials for the production of the cards are donated, you receive a tax receipt for the full amount of your contribution. Most of the cards are made available at Christmas, but they can be used, and customized if necessary, for any occasion--birthdays, graduations, weddings, memoriams, etc. Contact us at hantisidra@gmail.com for more information or to order cards. ♦

ABOUT ERITREA AND SOUTH SUDAN

ERITREA AT A GLANCE

Location: Northeastern Africa.
Boundaries: Red Sea to the east, Sudan to the northwest, Ethiopia to the south, Djibouti to the southeast.
Total land area: 121,320 sq. km., roughly the size of England.
Coastline: 1,094 km. along Red Sea.
Climate: Hot and dry, especially in lowland areas. Frequent droughts.
Political history: Former Italian colony, federated with Ethiopia in 1952, and forcibly annexed by Ethiopia in 1962. Liberated from Ethiopia in 1991 after 30-year struggle. Renewed war with Ethiopia in 1998-2000. Issues not resolved.
Independence: May 24, 1993.
Population: About 5 million, 75% in rural areas. Many others abroad.
Religions: Most Orthodox Christian or Muslim. Some Catholics, Protestants, animists.
Languages: Tigrinya and Tigre (80%), and 7 other minorities.

SOUTH SUDAN AT A GLANCE

Location: Northeastern Africa.
Boundaries: Republic of Sudan to the north, Ethiopia to the east, Kenya, Uganda, Congo to the south, Central African Republic to the southwest.
Total land area: 620,000 sq. km., a bit smaller than Alberta or Texas.
Coastline: None.
Climate: Hot and humid, especially near rivers and marshlands. Plentiful rainfall, frequent flooding.
Political history: Former Anglo-Egyptian colony. Peace agreement with northern Sudan after 22-year civil war. Large scale internal fighting broke out in late 2013.
Independence: July 9, 2011.
Population: About 11 million, 90% in rural areas. Up to 2 million displaced by recent fighting.
Religions: Mostly Christians and traditional African beliefs.
Languages: multiple ethnic groups. Official language English.



How your contributions were used

ACCUMULATED REVENUES, EXPENDITURES & RESERVES SINCE OUR ESTABLISHMENT IN 1992 (\$C)

	2017	1992-2017
REVENUE		
Fundraisers	3,033.55	102,018.98
Charitable donations	53,692.40	1,075,342.58
Charitable bequests	-----	217,914.71
Gifts from organizations	3,500.00	282,004.14
Interest/other income	3,915.51	94,118.92
TOTAL	64,141.46	1,771,399.33
EXPENDITURES		
Eritrea		
One Family orphans	-----	223,461.38
Schools/Kindergartens	24,178.87	351,920.15
Comboni Community	4,332.57	104,929.57
Study centres/Students	1,980.00	70,721.35
Poor families/refugees/women	5,130.25	107,389.33
Clinics	4,332.57	67,367.59
Water development	-----	65,565.25
Container shipments	-----	18,323.50
South Sudan		
Water development	-----	141,572.62
Schools, infrastructure	-----	340,663.97
Health care, women, peace	24,433.65	143,158.23
Local partner support	11,779.57	40,257.22
Promotions/ Administration	13,106.23	36,177.19
TOTAL	89,273.71	1,711,507.35
RESERVES--FUTURE PROJECTS	(25,132.25)	59,891.98

JOIN THE FAMILY!

If you would like to support the good work being done in Eritrea or South Sudan, send a donation for any amount to:

**HANTI SIDRA ONE GLOBAL FAMILY
PO Box 20004, Sidney, BC V8L 5C9**

*See page 10 for more information about making a contribution.
Canada Revenue Agency registration #89016 9063 RR0001*