

THE SOCIAL STUDIO

Annual Report 2012



CONTENTS

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| Message from the Chair | 5 |
| Message from the CEO | 6 |
| Overview | 9 |
| Highlights | 11 |
| Media | 21 |
| Facts and Stats | 22 |
| Staff and Board | 24 |
| Supporters | 27 |

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Farah Farouque

Completing our third year of operation, past infancy and taking first steps forward into the world of fashion and food, The Social Studio is entering a period of consolidation and review. While the giants of the retail industry and established fashion labels contend with the challenge of a national retail downturn, as an ethically based social enterprise we venture beyond the bottom line to judge our performance. Alongside our increasingly self-sustaining retail and hospitality operations, we are a growing training organisation equipping student participants with skills to find paid work in and outside the studio.

The Social Studio was born to address entrenched problems of unemployment, isolation and the difficulties accessing education and training faced by young adults from refugee backgrounds. The hurdles facing members of these new and emerging communities – most of our participants have cultural ties to Africa – remain deeply entrenched. We try to tackle this by tapping into a vibrant Australian youth culture through the universal language of fashion, design and food. Our engaging approach, above all, aims to profit the participants by cultivating their skills in clothing production, retail and hospitality via programs offered onsite in a retail space, café, and workshop in Collingwood. For some, but not all, there is also the incentive of a TAFE qualification at the end of their involvement.

In the past year, more than eighty people have been empowered by our programs. I'd like to congratulate them all for their individual success. Of course, such personal milestones could not occur without the small but committed nucleus of staff and volunteers who support the students. This effort is lead by a tireless CEO in Dr Grace McQuilten, who in her quiet way continues to provide inspiration to us all.

Our supporters range from university students to leading Australian business figures. From its conception, The Social Studio has reached beyond its modest funding and operations. We will continue to dream big as we forge ahead.

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Grace McQuilten

In the last year our focus at The Social Studio has been to enrich, develop and deepen our capacity and work in the context of our community. For us, this means working in a long-term capacity with all the wonderful people who engage in our school and enterprise, striving to create more jobs in retail, manufacturing, design and hospitality, improving the quality and breadth of our training programs, and providing a meaningful commitment to community development through mentoring, guidance and advice to other communities in the start-up of small businesses and social ventures.

Achievements this year include an expanded training curriculum that encompasses digital design technologies, graphic design, vocational training, ESL support and higher educational pathways within the Studio, in partnership with TAFE. We have extended our training to offer support to asylum seekers and have incorporated new training in financial literacy and conflict resolution to develop the leadership skills and capacity of our staff and students, so they can in turn share their skills and knowledge with their wider communities.

Our commitment to sharing knowledge, experience and resources with the wider community is reflected in our mentoring partnerships with the Twitch Women's Sewing Collective in Dandenong and The Social Outfit in Sydney, providing a high level of resources, time and support to their start-up and development. In addition to this we have provided advice, information and support to a number of other enterprises and start-ups locally and interstate. To make this support even more widely accessible we have undertaken research including a 2011 Churchill Fellowship to study international models of creative social enterprise, and we have collaborated with the University of Melbourne to examine the potential of the creative social enterprise model. The findings from these research projects have been made freely and publicly accessible.

Through this commitment to education, employment, research and community development, The Social Studio aims to have a "ripple-out" effect that can create impact and change across Australia, from a very local and focused nexus of activity in Collingwood, Melbourne.

You will see in the pages of this report a snapshot of our activities over the last year including fashion events, creative collaborations, media appearances, community development projects and more. All of these activities are directly linked to our central purpose to create meaningful and long-term social change for people from new and emerging migrant communities, and especially those who have experienced being a refugee prior to coming to Australia. At every step we aim to change public perceptions, create new opportunities and showcase the talents of our diverse and rich communities in Melbourne.

We have seen significant development and consolidation in The Social Studio fashion label, The Printing Studio, The Cutting Table and our fashion school. It has been a year of investing in our organisational capacity, and we look forward to seeing the results of this hard work in greater social impact and enterprise growth in 2013.

The extraordinary breadth and depth of activity over the last year is a testament to the hard work of our wonderful team. Congratulations to our staff, students, our Board, customers, supporters and volunteers for helping achieve such wonderful results! The experience of working with such a dynamic group of people and seeing the tangible impact of our work in creating social change is nothing short of incredible, and it is with pride and excitement that we embark on the next stage in our journey.



OVERVIEW

Over the last year we have had more than eighty people involved with The Social Studio, either studying, working, or attending our social programs regularly throughout the year. We have provided employment to thirty people from new and emerging migrant and refugee communities, and formal training to thirty five students.

9

SUPPORT SERVICES

We continue to offer a range of support services for our staff and students including a driving program, fortnightly financial counseling sessions & financial literacy workshops, referrals for housing, migration advice, professional mentoring and assistance with accessing further education and employment. In the last year more than eighty people participated in these support activities.

IMPACT

As part of an ongoing process of monitoring and evaluation, we conducted interviews with students and staff at the Studio to assess the impact of being connected to the Studio. All interviewees experienced positive change in their lives over the previous year. 85% said that The Social Studio had significantly influenced this positive change in their lives, and 15% said that The Social Studio had a small influence on this change in their lives. Positive change was most evident in the areas of educational outcomes (90%), employment (50%) and expanded social networks (50%).



FASHION SCHOOL

"I love working at The Social Studio – it's fantastic. I love everything – making all these clothes, the community...it's one big family!"

Helen Sheferaw – recent graduate and Manufacturing Employee

We have a creative and talented group of new students studying toward their Cert. III in Clothing Production. All the students have started to complete their own finished garments, and will soon begin the pattern making component of the course, where the students will begin to draft patterns of their own design. We are lucky to have a local artist, Helen Peake, working with the students each week in a fabric dyeing class. The students return with many colourful and uniquely dyed fabrics, of their own creation.

This year we introduced intensive ESL tuition for students and staff in need of extra support, which has been of great benefit to our training programs.

2011 graduate Salamawit Meckonen received a scholarship from The Social Studio to support her studies in the Diploma of Fashion at RMIT.

11

Congratulations to our 2012 Graduates

Achang Gout

Sukhbir Kang

Abuk Bol

Alek Nyok

Rania Deng

Rahel Kidus

Shazia Nasrat

Francess Sesay

Helen Sheferaw

Nyandeng Riak



TSS FASHION LABEL

12 The Social Studio was nominated as a 2012 finalist in the **Fashion Source Awards** in the UK for "Innovation: Fashion Design".

Our collection was featured on the catwalk as part of **Loreal Melbourne Fashion Festival - Penthouse Mouse** along with independent designers, where we showcased the capacities of The Printing Studio, our digital fabric printing studio.

We launched our Spring/Summer range as part of **Melbourne Spring Fashion Week 2012** at Federation Square, and the show was featured by Australian Associated Press (AAP).

In November 2011 we piloted **The Prahran Project**, a three month pop-up retail space that offered the local design community a boutique environment to sell their products, and offered training and employment in retail for young members of new and emerging migrant and refugee communities. The retail space stocked an eclectic range of local artists and designers who manufacture in Australia and work in the field of sustainable design, including The Social Studio, Greg Mann jewellery, Iphi sustainable fashion, Maryann Talia-Pau jewellery, A Name is a Label, Cat's Pyjamas and more.

In 2012 we developed a new retail partnership with **Swoon** in Hawthorne.

Our garments were shown on **The Circle** on Channel 10 as part of a segment promoting upcycling and sustainable design.

Nkechi, lead singer of up-and-coming soul band **Saskwatch**, is promoting the label as an ambassador for The Studio.

We participated in the **Melbourne Design Market** and were included in the 'Fairly Arty' sustainable design showcase at **Fed Square**.

We are currently implementing a new marketing strategy developed with the support of **The Village Agency**.

In partnership with design studio Assemble, we ran a successful **Indiegogo Crowdfunding Campaign** to raise \$17,000 to renovate our shop, with the support of over 100 individual donors. Renovations will be complete in early 2013.





THE CUTTING TABLE

Thanks to the leadership of our café manager Enza Adem, the café now hosts private functions and provides catering services for inner-city Melbourne and this has created greater employment opportunities in the café. Our monthly **African nights** have been very successful featuring live music, dance, traditional Eritrean & Ethiopian cuisine and the Ethiopian coffee ceremony.

The Cutting Table café now exhibits the artwork of local community members and our first exhibition showcased the work of artists at our neighbouring social enterprise The Ownership Project, including our own artist and manufacturing staff member, Helen Sheferew.

In 2011 we created a partnership with **William Angliss TAFE** to deliver the Certificate II in Kitchen Operations. The training is delivered in-house to replicate the successful model used in our fashion program. We have commenced a new course in 2012 that includes Certificate I in Vocational Preparation to enhance employment outcomes for graduates.

The café provided employment to ten people through the year and work experience placements to an additional eight people over the year.

We have introduced a new social program, **Craft & Coffee**, that enables people to come together in our café on Saturday mornings to pursue their own craft projects and to share their craft skills within the group. The program was initiated by Enza Adem.



THE PRINTING STUDIO

The set-up of The Printing Studio is complete and the facility is now primed and printing for local fashion designers and artists. We will be implementing a marketing strategy to develop this part of the enterprise in 2013.

17

Training has been a major focus of The Printing Studio this year, developing curriculum and piloting training programs in digital textile printing. A preliminary digital textile design project, Winter Florals, was completed by our fashion students as a way to introduce them to textile design, and to support increased computer literacy.

This developed into a pilot program for new students in digital textile printing. The aim of the course is to familiarise students with computer design programs and to demonstrate the potential application of digital print technologies.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

We participated in the Perry St Market, the Emerge Festival, Viva Victoria Festival and RISE Festival fashion parade.

We hosted a fun movie night at Cinema Nova with a screening of Melbourne filmmaker Genevieve Bailey's documentary *I am Eleven*, which brought together 150+ supporters to enjoy home-made goodies prepared by the café team of The Cutting Table, and raised \$3000 to support our fashion school.

The **Bespoken** newspaper started up again this year, showcasing creative writing, community news, fashion and artwork from our local communities. This has been supported by a number of great volunteers and staff at TSS.

The Social Outfit – Sydney

In 2012 we have provided mentoring, advice and assistance to a small group of Sydney-based community professionals who aim to replicate The Social Studio's own design, fashion and café social enterprise in Sydney. Known as 'The Social Outfit', this organisation hopes to reproduce the significant impacts, creativity and strength that The Social Studio continues to develop with Melbourne's refugee communities. The Social Studio was able to provide pivotal support to The Social Outfit over this year. Jackie Ruddock, who is leading the Sydney process, works closely with Grace and the Melbourne team to ensure that if the enterprise is successfully set up in Sydney, it is done with the same strong empowerment values at its core.



More can be found here:
<http://showtellshare.com/the-social-studio/>

Twitch Women's Sewing Collective

In 2012 The Social Studio mentored a group of South Sudanese women to create the Twitch Sewing Collective – a sewing training co-op in Dandenong. The group was initiated by one of our manufacturing trainees, Abuk Bol, who is a very active member of her community and wanted to share the opportunities she has gained at The Social Studio with women in her community.

The group secured a brand new shopfront in central Dandenong courtesy of a Grocon and Places Victoria program to incubate community enterprises in a new central Dandenong development. Grocon provided funding support to assist with fit-out, training costs and the purchase of industrial sewing equipment and shop supplies and the shop tenancy is rent-free until 2015. This is a major opportunity for the women and the first time they are running a program for themselves. Spotlight donated domestic sewing machines to get the program started. It's been a steep learning curve but the women are mastering the domestic machines quickly and will soon be able to tackle the industrial machines. They've started producing basic clothing and will be more adventurous in creating African-style clothing soon.

The program is supported by two volunteer teachers, eight women attend the classes and five women are on the coordinating committee. Aside from the mentor assistance from The Social Studio, the group receives administrative assistance from their community association, the Twitch Community Association. We will continue to provide advisory assistance to the group as they require. Congratulations to Abuk on overseeing the creation of the Twitch Women's Sewing Collective. Call in to visit their shop on 46-50 Walker St, Dandenong.

Conflict training project

This pilot training project addressed the challenging relationships young people from new and emerging communities face when coming into contact with criminal justice agencies and institutions in Australia. In partnership with Jay Jordens and David Nuol Vincent from A New Beginning & The Neighbourhood Justice Centre, we developed and delivered a conflict resolution training program for 15 people recruited through The Social Studio.

The training engaged young people in dialogue around individual and social building blocks of trust, respect and communication. These activities were related to the broader legal framework for conflict resolution, so that participants understood their rights and responsibilities, and had a better understanding of how to seek redress through criminal justice and legal organizations. The pilot project generated training materials and resources which can be used to train future cohorts, and the University of Melbourne conducted an independent evaluation of the training (including both the training approach and outcomes), which will be published and distributed to organizations interested in the model.

HIGHLIGHTS

Research Collaboration: Creative Social Enterprise

This project, a research collaboration between the University of Melbourne and The Social Studio, investigates how innovative models of entrepreneurial arts practice, including creative social enterprise, can provide tangible benefits for disadvantaged Australians. The first phase of this project, the results of which have been published in a recent University of Melbourne report, "Art, Money & Society: Private Funding, Public Benefit & Creative Social Enterprise." The research involved a literature review of the historical development of the relationship between art, money and society; a roundtable with industry stakeholders to examine how social benefit can be created through financial support of the arts; and several case studies of the creative social enterprise model, including The Social Studio in Australia. This research was supported through the Sidney Myer Fund & the Jack Brockhoff Churchill Fellowship.

We are now looking to expand the project to include entrepreneurial art projects from across Australia, and to study the particular indicators that enable success in this field, along with areas that need further support and resourcing.

Churchill Fellowship

In 2011, Grace McQuilten received a Churchill Fellowship to study creative social enterprise models around the world. Her journey in April/May included projects in Cambodia, Uganda, Ghana, the UK and USA. The findings from this research included in the University of Melbourne report.



MEDIA COVERAGE

"The best place to be, with wonderful people that help me achieve my goals, and learn new skills, thanking you all for your help."

Maklet, Fashion Student

Fashion & Street Culture

SBS Feast Magazine
The Age Cheap Eats
Good Café Guide
Dumbo Feather
Broadsheet
Three Thousand
Frankie Online
The Vine
Fashionising
Fashion Journal
Streets of Melbourne
Minx
Style Melbourne
Mad Kil
Mel: Hot or Not
Sisalla
Trendhunter
Wardrobe Wonderland
Ecouterre
Random Specific
Craft Victoria
Everguide

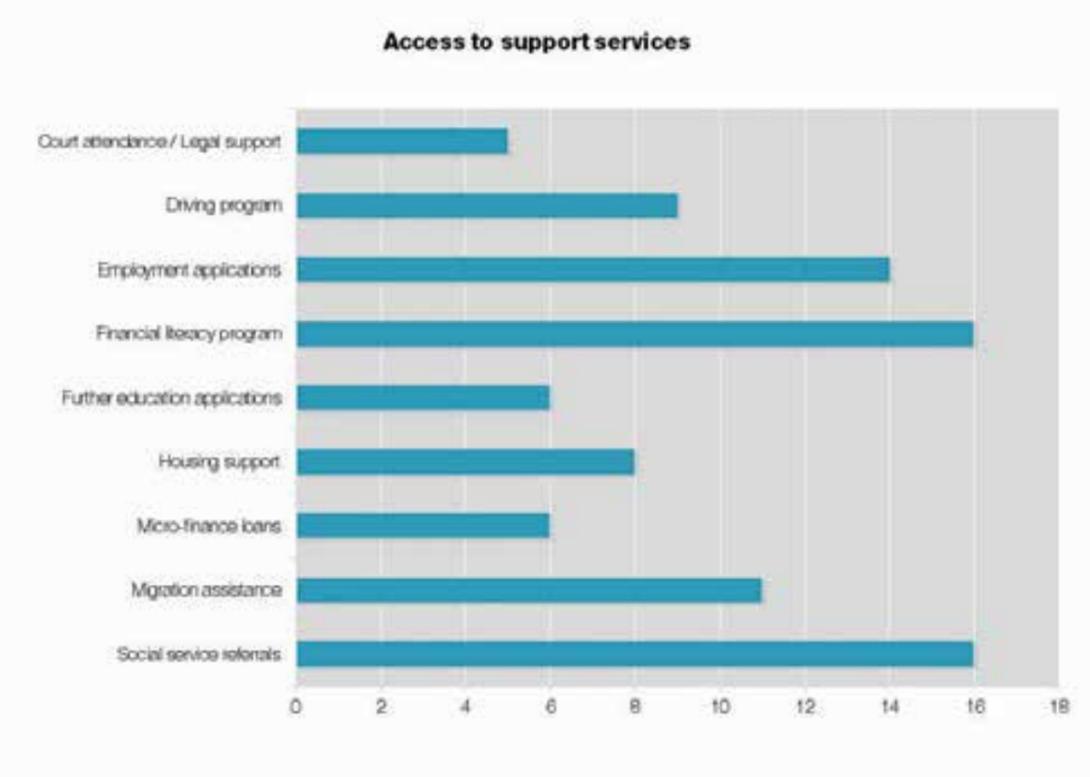
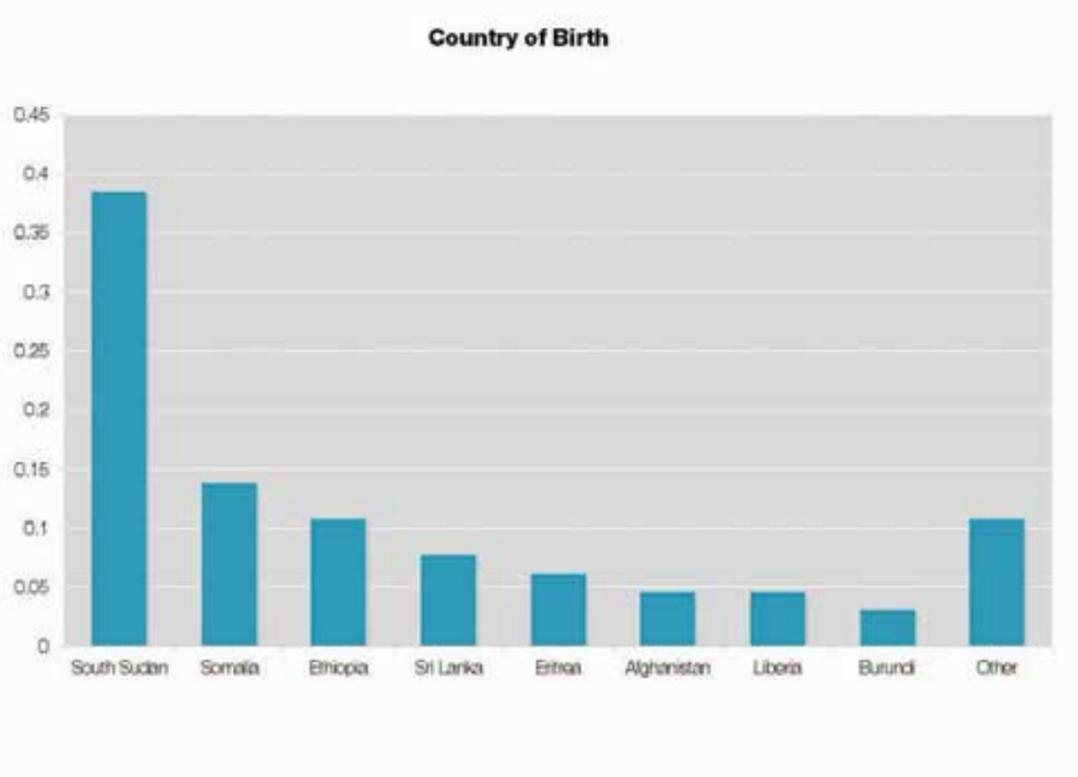
Radio, Newspaper, TV

SBS News
The Circle, Channel Ten
AAP Newswire
Sydney Morning Herald
The Age
North West FM
Triple RRR Radio
ABC Radio National

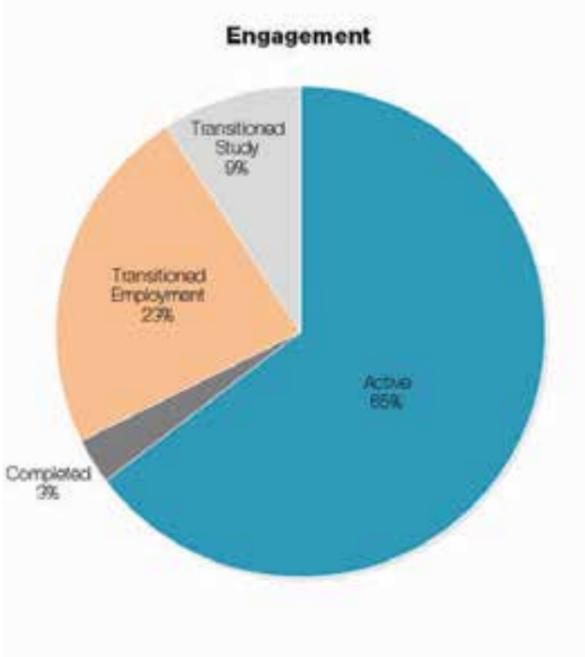
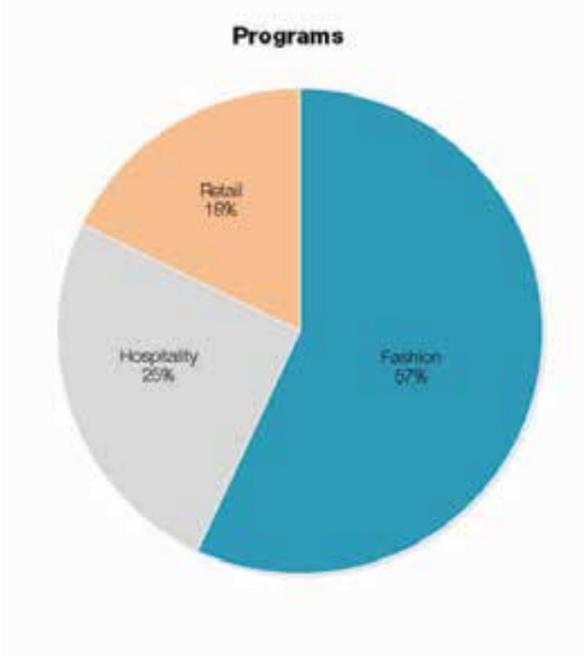
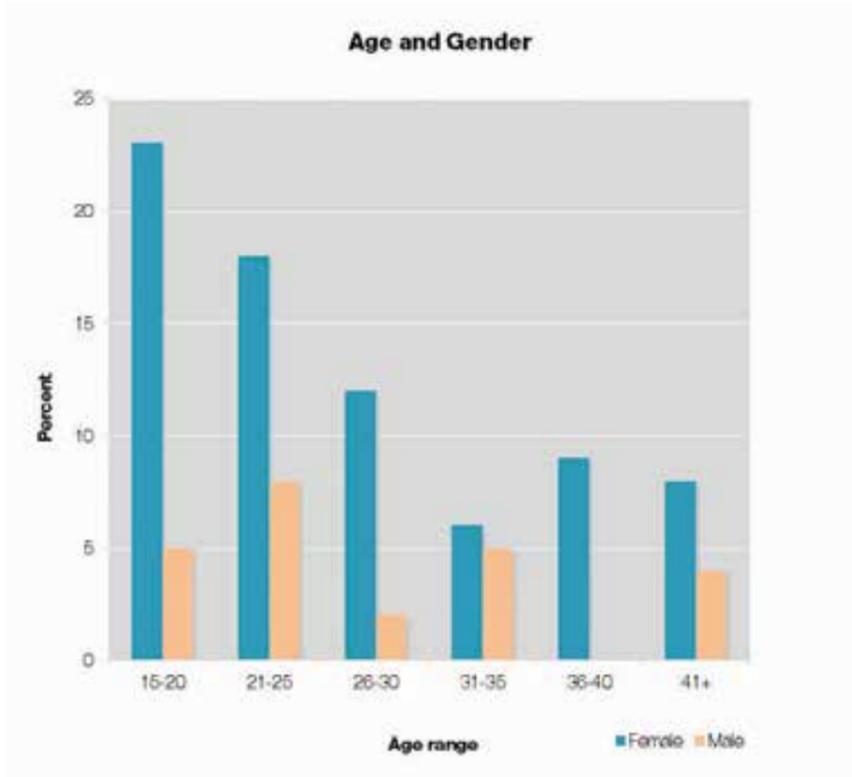
21

FACTS AND STATS

22



23



OUR STAFF

Staff

Listed alphabetically by first name

Café team

Alek Nyok, Almaz Gebru, Chantara Mol, Enza Adem, Francis Anjong, Korlu Zarwue, Mihret Kahsay, Mohamad Nazari, Mu Mu & Rose Kuol

Manufacturing team

Abuk Bol, Francess Sesay, Helen Sheferaw

Teaching team

Anna Loughnane, Azezu Yabio, Erin Santamaria Janelle Magee, Mathanarajan Sinnathanby, Nyssa Marrow, Ryan Euinton

Retail team

Andrea Phillipou, Angilina Garang, Assiya Hassan, Atong Joseph, Ayat Jama, Awen Kuol, Carrie Webster, Fatimata Kamara, Jehnet Kaya, Karl Sinlao, Ribka Tahir & Victoria Penrose

The Printing Studio

Anna Sassi & Milly Gamlin

Office team

Nicole Kuol & Trudy Hairs

Volunteers

Café

Padma, Gabby & Francois

Fashion

Anita, Claire, Fozia, Helen, Jodi, Katie, Lisa, Maximus Po, Stephanie, Tristan

Work experience

Amin, Demiray, Elagha, Ijlal, Israa, Maccuach, Mohammed, Nada, Natasha, Nala, Nikol, Reza, Tina

OUR BOARD

Board Members

Farah Farouque (Chair)

Farah was Law and Justice Editor at the Age newspaper until September this year. A journalist of longstanding, she recently moved to take a new role in the community sector as Senior Advisor for Public Affairs and Policy at the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

Tamara Veltre (Director)

Director of Ruby Patootie & Lulamae Clothing, two fashion labels in Melbourne. Tamara lends expertise in business, retail operations and fashion design.

Nyariak Nicole Kuol (Secretary)

Nyariak has a Diploma in Accounting and does our bookkeeping. Nicole has a keen interest in fashion and community development and is a prominent member of the local Sudanese-Australian community.

Raphael Kilpatrick (Public Officer)

A designer with an interest in architecture, interior design, graphic and web design. Raphael teaches at RMIT School of Design.

Enza Adem (Director)

Enza is a community leader from Eritrea who has a passion for design and hospitality and manages our café, The Cutting Table.

Grace McQuilten (Director)

Grace has an extensive background in community development with a focus on emerging communities. Grace is Honorary Fellow in the School of Culture and Communications at the University of Melbourne.

Khalid Osman (Director)

Khalid is a respected leader in the African community in Melbourne. Khalid brings strong expertise in OH&S and Governance and is the CEO of Victorian Vocational Volunteers.

Tristan Perry, Chartered Accountant (Consultant Accountant)

Tristan is a Manager at Dominion Private Clients and provides financial management oversight and accounting advice to The Social Studio.

"I feel alive at The Social Studio... Finally I've found my dream and what I want to do. I'm very excited at The Social Studio and I love everybody here. ... If you want to find your dream too, please come here and you will find it."

Benti, Fashion Student

THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Supporters

Baker Foundation

Bendigo Bank Foundation (Clifton Hill/Fitzroy)

Besen Foundation

City of Yarra

Collier Fund

Eureka Benevolent fund

George Hicks Foundation

Ian Potter Foundation

Perpetual Trust

RE Ross Trust

Readings Foundation

Sidney Myer Fund

Slingsby Foundation

Victorian Law Foundation

Pro Bono Support & Donations

27

Assemble Studio

Club21

Chris Christophorou

Dominion Private Clients

Dulux

Foundation House

Mimco

Mitre 10

Neighbourhood Justice Centre - Collingwood

RMIT School of Fashion

Scalzo Foods

Sportsgirl

William Angliss Hospitality

Brunswick Street Fabric Store



THE SOCIAL STUDIO

Buy our label, order our catering, make a tax deductible donation or simply learn more about our work at www.thesocialstudio.org