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Pathways to employment  
for South and North  
Sudanese Communities  
Resettled in South Australia

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Implications for policy,  
programs and research

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November 2012

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## Acknowledgements

This project was funded by the University of South Australia's (UniSA) Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences Division Research Performance Fund (DRPF). Additional funding was provided by the University of South Australia's Centre for Sleep Research. The researchers would like to thank UniSA for their support.

The success of this research is a direct result of the efforts of a large group of individuals. The researchers would like to acknowledge the following people for their support, advice and comments: main stakeholders including Unions, Centrelink, Department of Immigration And Citizenship (DIAC), Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relation (DEEWR), Migrant Resource Centre (MRCSA), ARAjobs and other job service networks, Australian Refugee Association (ARA), Multicultural Communities Council of SA (MCCSA) and African Communities Council of SA (ACCSA), participants from the Sudanese community in Adelaide, and others.

The researchers are grateful to the advice and input provided by the Steering Committee consisting of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), Multicultural SA (MCSA), Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relation (DEEWR), Centrelink, Arajobs, Migrant Resource Centre of SA (MRCSA), National Workers' Union (NWU), and South Australian Police (SAPOL) and the insights provided by the participants.

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACE	Adult Community Education
AEI-NOOSR	Australian Education International – National Office of Overseas Skilled Recognition
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program
ASDOT	Assessment Subsidy for Overseas Trained Professionals Program
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
CEP	Country Education Profiles
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DFEEST	Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DIISRTE	Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education
DRPF	Division Research Performance Fund
DSCP	Diversity and Social Cohesion Program
HSS	Humanitarian Settlement Services
JSA	Job Services Australia
MCSA	Multicultural SA
MRCSA	Migrant Resource Centre of South Australia
NES	National Employment Standards
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NWU	National Workers' Union
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
OQU	Overseas Qualification Units
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RSL	Returned and Services League
SAPOL	South Australian Police
SPLA/M	Sudanese People's Liberation Army/Movement
SRS	Skills Recognition Service
TAFESA	Technical and Further Education South Australia
WELL	Workplace English Language Literacy
WHS	Work Health and Safety

Please note: We have used the term 'work health and safety (WHS)' interchangeably with 'occupational health and safety (OHS)' to reflect the changes in terminology that come from the national harmonisation of legislation and the Model Work Health and Safety Act 2012.

## 1. Background

On 8th October 2010 at the Sudanese Community office in South Australia, a meeting took place between leaders and elders of the Sudanese Community and some mainstream service providers and government institutions including the South Australia Police, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), Multicultural SA, and Relationships Australia. They were meeting specifically to discuss an incident among Sudanese young people on the 4th October 2010 which resulted in a brawl, injuries and hospitalisation of four young Sudanese people in Adelaide. The meeting identified several issues that were considered to be the underlying causes of the young people's unacceptable behaviour, including: a lack of employment and employment pathways for young Sudanese, a lack of role models in the Sudanese Community for young people to follow, as well as the lack of resources and opportunities for potential role models to be emulated in the community.

In the meeting both members of the Sudanese Community in unison with industry representatives acknowledged the multifaceted nature of the challenges facing members of the Sudanese Community in their resettlement process in Australia. They agreed that addressing those challenges requires a combination of strategies, resources and solutions from different organisations. They also recognised the need to conduct a study to investigate employment difficulties and explore employment pathways, workplace relations and occupational health and safety (OHS) issues for members of the Sudanese Community that might impact on their capacity to find and or stay in jobs.

With the employment and OHS issues acknowledged and recognised, the management of the Sudanese Community Association of Australia SA Branch gained the support of a group of experienced qualitative researchers from the UniSA, Centre for Sleep Research-Human Factors Group. On the 28th September 2011, the Sudanese Community association delegated Dr James Lino Lejukole, the then manager of the Sudanese community settlement service programs at the time to hold an initial meeting with the researchers: Dr Sophie Rainbird, Dr Danielle Every and Associate Professor Verna Blewett. That meeting laid the foundation for the inception of this pilot research project. The researchers placed particular emphasis on developing a research agenda that was led by the Sudanese Community, given that the concerns and discussions outlined above were driven by the Community.

This pilot research project was funded by UniSA through the Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences Division Research Performance Fund (DRPF). Additional funding was provided by the University of South Australia's Centre for Sleep

Research. This project was devised as a pilot project and the findings outlined below were to ascertain the extent of employment issues and to determine the potential need and benefits for a larger more in-depth project in the future.

### **1.1 Identifying the research agenda**

During initial discussions with the Sudanese community, the researchers realised that Sudanese workers were likely to be new to OHS concepts and therefore less likely to report incidents or injuries. As new to the concept, they may also have a low perception of risk and low participation in developing control measures. It was also noted that Sudanese workers may experience more pressure in the workplace as they face language and cultural challenges. They may be new to the workforce due to their previous lack of opportunity to work. These features tend to create conflicting perceptions of what constitute risk and OHS issues in the work environment which could potentially lead to injuries and loss of jobs. Arguably, these factors are more likely to influence their ability to stay in a job and thrive in South Australia. These factors may potentially undermine South Australia's targets of increasing employment, population and multiculturalism (Government of South Australia 1997). Thus, creating a safe work environment in diverse workplaces could be a challenge to employers as well as employees.

There are gaps in the literature on the key challenges for employment, OHS and perceptions of real and potential risk in workplaces by culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in comparison to employers. Such an evidence-based research as Westoby (2008) suggests has the potential to lead to positive outcomes for both the Sudanese Community in particular and for mainstream Australian society in general. Thus far there has been no research carried out on OHS amongst Australian communities of Sudanese in particular and Africans in general.

The issues outlined here are not exclusive to the Sudanese community; they are also experienced by other refugee communities in Australia that are unfamiliar with Australia's workplace relations, have difficulty obtaining employment relevant to skill and or gaining the relevant information and knowledge with regards to OHS.

### **1.2 Impacts on this project**

After the inception of this study, there were changes in Sudan, in the Sudanese community in South Australia, and in the research team, each of which had repercussions for the organisation of this research.

For many years there has been considerable political unrest in Sudan. A referendum was held between 9<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> January 2011 on whether Southern

Sudan should remain a part of a unitary Sudan or become an independent state. The referendum was one of the consequences of the 2005 Naivasha Agreement between the Khartoum central government and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army/ Movement (SPLA/SPLM). Following the referendum the political split became a reality with the Republic of Sudan becoming two separate republics: the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of Sudan.

Following the split of the Sudan into two republics some members of the Sudanese community in South Australia believed this split should be reflected in the organisation of the Sudanese Community in South Australia. This marked the end of the Sudanese Community Association of Australia—SA Branch in August 2011. It split into two competing South Sudanese community organisations in addition to one Sudanese community association for North Sudanese in South Australia. Although the new leadership of the Sudanese communities in South Australia were informed of the study and invited to participate in the study and be members of the Steering Committee, this change reduced the involvement of some key Sudanese participants in this research.

### **1.3 Distinction between refugees, asylum seekers and migrants**

During data collection, participants drew our attention to the importance of making the distinction between refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. Often potential employers and organisations are unfamiliar with these distinctions and under which category Sudanese arrivals have entered Australia. Understanding this distinction may make it easier for businesses and potential employers to consider employing members of the Sudanese community. These distinctions are explained below.

Australia is currently one of the major resettlement countries for refugees and migrants. DIAC (formerly DIMIA) (2004) indicated that over 620,000 refugees and displaced people have resettled in Australia over the last 50 years. Hence, it is important to distinguish between the concepts; “refugee” “asylum seeker” and “migrant”.

#### **1.3.1 Refugees**

The 1951 United Nations Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees define a “refugee” as:

*a person owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of particular group or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him/herself to the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his/her former habitual residence as a result of such events, is*

*unable or owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (NPC. in Jupp 1994: 8).*

It is recognised that refugees are products of persistent and generalised violence, civil strikes or wars, persecution, famine, marginalising and repressive regimes. The Sudanese refugees resettled in Australia are a product of these experiences. These experiences have combined to force them to flee their country of birth in search of protection and safety elsewhere, including in Australia. But notwithstanding these experiences, refugees' movement has become a socio-economic, geo-political and global issue of great concern. In many countries there is a lack of trust in the sincerity of refugees such that their enduring quest for safety and protection has often been conceived as merely fortune seeking by many receiving countries. Needless to say, such attitudes make resettlement all the more difficult.

### **1.3.2 Asylum seekers**

On the other hand, an asylum seeker is a person (mainly unrecognised refugee) who has left his/her country of birth to a first (mostly neighbouring) country and then seeks recognition as a refugee and resettlement elsewhere. Resettlement may be sought elsewhere because the first country where refugee status is sought is not a signatory to international laws/treaties that safeguard and ensure protection of refugees, or it may be due to other reasons. An asylum seeker may leave their home country and travel to a multiple countries to seek refugee status and protection and may enter these countries with or without appropriate documentation. Lack of documentation may not be a matter of choice, particularly if the asylum seeker's persecutors are their own government. This makes it harder, or indeed impossible, for them to obtain appropriate valid travel documents from their home country's authorities. Thus it is not uncommon for asylum seekers to travel on forged documents or bypass regular migration channels and arrive without papers.

### **1.3.3 Migrants**

A migrant is a person who makes a choice to leave their country of birth to move to another country for economic reasons, to seek a better life, or to join family members. A migrant is likely to have a good understanding of the country they have chosen to emigrate to. A migrant has the opportunity to plan from their departure from their country of birth before making final decision whether to leave or stay. They have time to make that decision, to pack valuable belongings and to farewell family and friends before they leave, and can return to their country of origin at any chosen time. Refugees and asylum seekers do not have this luxury as it is often too dangerous to return to their homeland.



#### ***1.3.4 The Sudanese community***

Members of the Sudanese community have arrived in Australia as humanitarian entrants; as refugees. Their visas grant them permanent residency, with work rights and all the social support that Australians are entitled to. They are eligible to apply for citizenship after four years residence in Australia.

## 2. Method

This section briefly describes the research method and data analysis.

### 2.1 Steering Committee

A Steering Committee was formed to support this research project. It comprised representative from the Sudanese Community and representatives from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), Multicultural SA (MCSA), Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relation (DEEWR), Centrelink, Arajobs, Migrant Resource Centre of SA (MRCSA), National Workers' Union (NWU), and South Australian Police (SAPOL).

This research project was approved by both the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee and Central Queensland University's Human Research Ethics Committee. Confidentiality and credibility were key in this research process and all participants were asked to give informed consent for their involvement.

We used two main forms of data collection in this research: interviews, and a large group meeting process called the Future Inquiry workshop. The purpose of the interviews was to establish the employment and OHS issues for members of the Sudanese communities and for industry. The Future Inquiry workshop was an opportunity to present the interview findings to the Sudanese community and stakeholder industries, and use the findings as a starting point to focus on developing actionable steps to address some of these issues in the future. These methods are described in more detail below.

### 2.2 Interviews

Between July and December 2011 interviews were carried out with members of the Sudanese community and service providers. Our target was 20 participants from the Sudanese community and 15 service providers and employers

#### 2.2.1 Interviews in the Sudanese community

Interviews were carried out with 20 Sudanese community members. These included in-depth discussions on themes focusing on employment history, previous work experience outside of Australia, employment challenges/barriers in Australia, OHS and workplace relations, skills recognition etc.

Of the interviewees, 13 were male and seven were female, while their average time in Australia was 6 years. They were aged between 18 and 50 years. All but two of

the interviewees held a qualification: seven had or were completing a university degree; three had not completed year 12 but had gained a certificate or diploma. English language skills were variable: four assessed their English language as fair, while many felt they had good English. 4 participants were unemployed, 13 have worked in their current job for over 1 year and some having been employed for 6 years.

### **2.2.2 Interviews with service providers**

We were able to interview 11 service providers to get an understanding of the current status of Sudanese employment and issues pertaining to members of the Sudanese community and employment agencies, businesses and NGOs. During the interviews, the major challenge was the unwillingness of employers to engage and participate in the study due to reported time constraints.

### **2.2.3 Data analysis**

Interviews were analysed using a manual process of reviewing and tabulating all interview notes and recordings to identify key themes and conceptual groupings (Huberman and Miles, 1994; Strauss, 1987).

## **2.3 Future Inquiry Workshop**

The Future Inquiry workshop (Blewett and Shaw 2008) is a large group, participative design process that aims to have “the whole system” in the room and to find common ground amongst the stakeholders in the development of a desired future. It is used to develop action plans for interventions in organisations and the community. In this research the workshop was used to present our findings from the interviews to the Sudanese community and stakeholder industry representatives, and then use the findings as a starting point to focus on developing actionable steps to address some of the identified issues. Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

The workshop was conducted with a four-step, goal-oriented process as follows:

1. **The past** — We addressed the past through a short, formal presentation of the literature on the topic, and preliminary research findings, in order to answer the question, “What do we know about the topic already?”
2. **The present** — We asked participants to work in stakeholder groups to identify what works now and what doesn’t work now in relation to the topic of the workshop.
3. **The future** — Having heard and discussed the past and examined the present as stakeholders and as a plenary group, we turned the attention to the future. We asked participants to imagine an ideal future concerning the topic under consideration.

4. **Getting to the future** — The whole group discussed the areas of ‘common ground’ from the day’s work to determine what they commonly want and what they would be prepared to work towards. They developed clear strategies for action. We saw commitment by participants to strategies that had not previously been a consideration, and the formation of new alliances.

The workshop was designed to engage the diverse stakeholder groups, which represented ‘the whole system’, in identifying pathways to employment for the South Australian Sudanese Community. The outcomes of the workshop form part of the data for this research project and are included as an Appendix to this report.

### ***2.3.1 Participants in the Future Inquiry workshop***

Sixty-four participants were invited from the Sudanese community, state and federal government, job service providers, businesses, refugee support organisations, education and unions. Of this number, 42 agreed to attend and 32 participated on the day.

Some of the challenges included engaging businesses, the union sector and a key government agency to attend. For example, the absence of a key representative from one particular government agency and the lack of representation of employers who are the leading employers of Sudanese people in skilled jobs restricted the deliberations of the workshop. These people play major roles in shaping employment pathways and recruitment of employees respectively. There was also difficulty in determining how to encourage members of the Sudanese Communities (South and North) to attend; particularly key Sudanese leaders. This may have been due to the relatively recent split in the Sudanese Community Associations discussed above. The absence of stakeholders from the community and industry was noted with concern by some participants of the Future Inquiry workshop. Strategies for engaging key players in the future research were the subject of much discussion amongst the researchers and stakeholders both during and following the Future Inquiry workshop. These deliberations will be an important contribution to the design of future research.

Although our findings from the workshop would have been strengthened by additional representation from employers and the community, there were useful actionable outcomes from the day. The findings of the workshop for each of the project topics are summarised in the next section.

## 3. Findings

This section presents the findings from the interviews and the Future Inquiry workshop.

The interviews with members of the Sudanese community and service providers in conjunction with the Future Inquiry workshop raised the following 10 issues and these are discussed below in no particular order:

1. Unemployment and underemployment
2. Language issues
3. Networking
4. Small business support
5. Cultural (mis)understandings in the workplace
6. Qualifications skills recognition
7. Work Health and Safety (WHS)
8. Workers' rights

### 3.1 Unemployment and underemployment

Unemployment and underemployment are discussed here in relation to five issues:

1. Social impacts
2. International context
3. Australian context
4. Sudanese community context
5. Integration

They are discussed in detail below.

#### 3.1.1 Social Impacts

Unemployment significantly interferes with Sudanese settlement and integration processes and therefore their future lives in Australia. According to Hugo (2011:22), the extent of engagement in the Australian 'workforce is an important determinant of their ability to earn an income, purchase services and engage in other dimensions of society'. Unemployment brings with it a range of uncertainties in life including, whether one will be able to support a family in Australia, provide support to those remaining overseas, and to support themselves in their retirement. As one participant explained:

*...most members of Sudanese community are unemployed and are worried that if they remain unemployed for long time, old aged or retirement aged will find them without any saved and property to depend on when they become aged and frail in Australia.*

It is often the case that the reasons for unemployment and underemployment among refugees are lack of English language skills and qualifications. However, there are a number of Sudanese in South Australia who are proficient in English, with qualifications acquired either overseas or in Australia who are either unemployed or who work outside their area of training or profession. This work is often as a contract, casual and/or part-time labourer. As one participant stated, English was not the leading factor for their unemployment:

*The problem is not only English alone, there are many things like discrimination, no work experience in Australia, unrecognised previous qualifications and skills and many others.*

Underemployment especially for those with qualifications and skills, tends to create a sense demeaned self-actualisation or fulfilment and thwarts the realisation of their potential and the expectations they held for working in their profession. However for some Sudanese, low-skilled employment at least mitigates some of the concerns outlined above, as one participant confirmed:

*Yes, I am happy because with the money I get from the work, I can help myself, my children and other family members.*

### **3.1.2 International context**

The underemployment and mismatch between work and qualifications and/or skills that Sudanese encountered has been confirmed in a study on employment opportunities and challenges among three refugee groups (black Africans - Sudanese inclusive, ex-Yugoslavs and refugees from the Middle East) and recent humanitarian entrants in Australia (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2006). Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2006: 203) have indicated that these humanitarian entrants are concentrated in labour market niches such as aged care, cleaning services, taxi driving, meat processing, security, and building. Similarly Martin (2006) has shown that apart from the building industry, these employment niches are situated in the 'secondary labour market' comprising low-paid and low-status jobs that locals tend to avoid.

### **3.1.3 Australian context**

Hugo (2011: 23) found that refugees are more likely to be unemployed than other migrants due to a number of barriers including: low English proficiency; limited qualifications; lack of opportunities, networks and work experience; limited knowledge of the Australian workforce; and misinformation about employment opportunities; and mental health issues. Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2006) further identified a number of inter-related mechanisms and reasons by which recent refugees in Australia have been relegated to undesirable jobs. These include: non-recognition of qualifications; and discrimination by employers on the basis of cultural differences and on race. These are regarded as systemic barriers to refugees' employment in Australia (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury 2006:221). These

barriers, in addition to lack of mainstream social networks to assist refugees in their job search efforts, have arguably contributed to their inability to find jobs. In turn this has led to loss of occupational status among humanitarian entrants. As Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2006: 203-204) have shown, this has created a segmented labour market in which racially and culturally visible migrants are more likely to secure employment in low-level, unskilled positions regardless of the skills, qualifications and experience they possess. As one Sudanese participant claimed:

*Australian employers don't think they can be transferable and use in Australia, so they don't recognised or accept them.*

However, working in such positions makes a positive contribution to the Australian economy by reducing low-skill labour shortfalls. It also meets the need of Sudanese refugees to gain employment.

The disadvantaged unemployment status of Sudanese refugees compared to non-refugee Australians has been well documented by McAllister et al (1995). Their study claimed that past and present institutionalised or structural barriers have functioned to reduce opportunities for refugees and other migrant groups to find jobs in Australia (see also Doerington & Piore, 1972; Dickens & Lang 1088; Castles & Miller 2003; and Flatau & Lewis 1991).

In the Future Inquiry workshop, it was suggested that a register of refugees with skills and qualifications be established on entry to Australia and to identify states and national labour shortages so any reported labour shortage could be matched with the refugees' skill register. This suggestion reflects the concern that the skills of the Sudanese community are currently underutilised and more needs to be done to ensure that skilled Sudanese are able to find work in their profession.

SRS offers services to support newly arrived migrants and refugees to get recognition and skilled work in South Australia. It helps with a 'comparative assessment' of skills and qualifications gained overseas against the Australian Qualifications Framework by reviewing any trade skills, educational and academic qualifications gained overseas. As some occupations and professions require registration, licences or membership of a professional association, SRS refers refugees and migrants to professional associations for registration, membership and licensing.

### **3.1.4 Sudanese community context**

Despite the prevalence of unemployment and underemployment in the Sudanese communities (Torezani, Colic-Peisker & Fozdar 2007: 11), Australia has been enjoying a period of economic affluence and a low unemployment rate (less than 5 per cent). Alongside this, Australia has been experiencing a significant skilled and unskilled labour shortage. But regardless of this, both skilled and unskilled Sudanese refugees have the highest unemployment and under employment rates in Australia (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2006: 203-6). Similarly, evidence from census

and other unemployment figures show that humanitarian-stream entrants, along with indigenous Australians, were the categories that have gained least from the benefits of Australia's low unemployment rate (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury 2006:206; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury 2007: 11).

Some participants reported that Sudanese cultural differences and expectations (compared with Australian mainstream culture) contributed to some members in their community failing to be successful in job interviews. Those participants noted that Sudanese job interview candidates tend not to talk well of themselves during job interviews. In the Sudanese culture talking well of oneself is associated with bigheadedness, talking down others or boasting and is regarded negatively. In the Australian culture not 'selling oneself' could be interpreted as lack of confidence by interviewers. For instance, one participant pointed out that:

*I know Australians will say you have to sell yourself when in job interviews, but that isn't in our culture because we don't talk good of ourselves, it is the other people; family, friends and relatives who will talk good of you, if you speak good and is proud or praise yourself, people will say you are a bad person, you are big-headed and socially that would be counter-productive. But in Australia you have to praise yourself to others which I am not comfortable doing it for myself. (Sudanese Participant)*

This has been reported as one of the reasons that led to many Sudanese being eliminated from job recruitment.

On the whole, JSA's are not prepared for the complex socio-cultural issues that are associated with refugee entry into the Australian work force and so issues such as these remain unaddressed. A more focussed approach to preparing for job interviews and preparation for entry into the Australian workplace could be provided early on in the settlement phase as part of the AMEP training. This could be further supported at a later stage in the settlement process by employment consultants through the SRS.

### **3.1.5 Integration**

Lejukole (2009) found that there is a general belief among Sudanese that unemployment and underemployment impedes their ability and capacity to resettle and integrate with ease into Australia society. This concurs with Torezani, Colic-Peisker & Fozdar's (2008: 38) assertion that finding satisfactory jobs is the crux of successful settlement for refugees. These authors defined having a satisfactory job or employment as "securing a job appropriate to one's qualifications, skills and work experience". The authors argued that refugee integration into the job market is slower and less successful than that of migrants. They blamed unemployment not only on lack of English language and skills, but also on problems of 'visibility' of some refugees and lack of local 'networks'.



Another issue noted by participants in the Future Inquiry workshop that was said to contribute to unemployment among migrants and refugees, including Sudanese refugees resettled in Australia, was their reluctance to move to regional areas where employment opportunities may exist. However, participants also noted that refugees' reluctance to move to regional areas could be due to the fact that regional employment requires specific skills that they may not have. In common with mainstream Australians, Sudanese refugees may consider regional areas to be less satisfactory than urban areas because of the perceived lack of services (such as childcare, health care, better schools etc.) in regional areas in comparison to urban areas. This perceived view of regional areas' lack of better services could be due to lack of available information among refugees about regional areas and the services, facilities/amenities they offer.

### **3.2 Language issues**

Problems associated with the acquisition of the English language were discussed during interviews and the Future Inquiry workshop. These include:

1. The benefits of English language acquisition
2. One in a multitude of issues
3. Supporting English in the workplace

They are discussed in detail below.

#### **3.2.1 *The benefits of English language acquisition***

It is understandable that English proficiency is crucial to getting employment in Australia. Lack of English proficiency creates problems in communication during job interviews, writing resumes (it has been reported that in some instances generic resumes have been used for every advertised job), job applications, addressing selection criteria, report writing, reading and understanding work and OHS instructions. Indeed one participant stated:

*Yes, I have problems because I don't write and read English well and if you don't do these, you cannot write report or communicate verbally well at work, understand job instructions and hard to make a claim against any injustice done to you at work by others. (Sudanese Participant)*

#### **3.2.2 *One in a multitude of issues***

However, even though lack of English is blamed as a key reason for refugees' unemployment and underemployment in Australia, Torezani et al (2008: 148) show that even refugees with tertiary qualifications and good English proficiency have found it hard to find a job. They suggest that this is because they are regarded as outsiders who are racially visible and culturally distinct from white western English

speakers. This concurs with our findings from our interviews and the Future Inquiry workshop. People recognised that getting employment in Australia is not contingent only on Sudanese acquisition of English proficiency. There is a range of other, complex factors including: lack of employment-related networks, employers' attitudes towards certain cultural groups; different accents (Essed 1991; Shih 2002; Rydgren 2004); and [African] refugee's perceived attitudes toward work and time. Importantly, as they are new to the Australian job market, most candidates lack the ability to foresee what employers want from those they wish to employ.

*No, somehow but it is not the only factor, others like lack of skills, experiences and racism counts also much. The problem is not only English alone, there are many things like discrimination, no work experience in Australia, unrecognised previous qualifications and skills and many others, including attitudes of employers towards other cultural groups like Africans or Sudanese that is influenced by media representation of these cultural groups.* (Sudanese Participant)

As the participant above suggests, the Sudanese often experience discrimination when attempting to enter the Australian workforce and this can be a greater obstacle to overcome in comparison to other migrants who may not be as visibly different.

### **3.2.3 Supporting English in the workplace**

*They encourage me to ask questions for the things that I couldn't know or could not be sure of especially when writing report because English is not my first language, they normally proof read my report and make necessary grammatical errors.* (Sudanese Participant)

In the Future Inquiry workshop, participants suggested there should be widespread incorporation of workplace English language into Adult English migrant and literacy programs. This could also be a feature of TAFE and other short specialised courses e.g. certificates II and III in aged care, retail and customer services. It was also suggested that for old people who cannot pick up English easily, once employed they are likely to learn English on the job. Acquisition of workplace English language is likely to expand employment opportunities for Sudanese.

There are two programs available through DFEEST that can support English language training in the workplace. Employers can access funding to provide English language tuition tailored to their workplace for employees through *Skills in the Work Place* program. Additionally, Sudanese workers can receive English language training to assist them in the workplace through a DFEEST *Skills for All* training provider. However, Sudanese participants did not refer to these services, suggesting that there is little knowledge and uptake of services that could

significantly support members of the Sudanese community to increase their employability.

### 3.3 Networking

The importance of networking was raised in the interviews and in the Future Inquiry workshop in relation to:

1. Intra- and Inter-networks
2. Volunteering
3. Extending cross-cultural understanding

They are discussed in detail below.

#### 3.3.1 Intra- and Inter-networks

Networks in the broader Australian society are a crucial way of developing social, economic and civic contributions (Hugo 2011:50). Most Sudanese interview participants reported that they lack social networks (social capital) outside their community. It is worth noting that gaining employment may help others within the Sudanese communities because once employed, people can recommend individuals to employers in their networks. But when unemployed, intra-community networks are of little help with respect to employment as one participant explained:

[Connections within the Sudanese community are] *not helpful in terms of helping me find jobs as they also struggle to find work for themselves.*  
(Sudanese Participant)

It is well recognised in the literature that lack of social capital hinders information channels that can ease access to employment or to other resources and services (McSpadden 1987; Shih 2002; Rydgren 2004; Putnam 2000; Fernandez-Kelly and Schauflyer 1994: 670). Thus, it could be implied that those factors have collaborated with other barriers to edge members of the Sudanese Community into the periphery of the Australian job market. However, it is worth noting that social networking is nourished by the use of English language, which in turn tends to generate the conditions necessary to the development of and maturity of social relations between members of the Sudanese community and mainstream Australians.

Consequently, Sudanese refugees often need considerable networks and practical help if they are to find jobs and integrate with relative ease in Australian job market and into the society that most now call their new home. Networks and practical support do impact positively on their ability to find jobs and they also consolidate the process of socialisation with mainstream Australians. One participant explained

how his connection to a person outside of the Sudanese community assisted him to find a job:

*The one Australian friend told me about the job advert and told me to apply, I put him as one of my referees and he supported me by providing good comments about me so because of that I got the job. (Sudanese Participant)*

These could also influence Sudanese socio-economic outcomes in their resettlement processes. This is supported by Morawska's (2001) study of Poles and Russians in Philadelphia which indicated that Poles and Russians with limited human capital, i.e. those with language and other cultural barriers, were likely to rely on their ethnic networks and support systems. This translated into lack of employment because their networks were limited to their own communities. Maintaining one's ethnic networks and support is socially essential. However, getting employed through those ethnic networks depends on how well one's particular ethnic group has become entrenched in the social realm of their new society and how that translates into employability of other ethnic members.

### **3.3.2 Volunteering**

Previous research tells us that people from refugee backgrounds make a substantial economic and social contribution to Australia through their capacity as volunteers (Hugo 2011:217). Volunteering provides refugees with the opportunity to gain work experience, confidence and participate in the broader community (Hugo 2011:46-47). Members of the Sudanese community are active volunteers, particularly in refugee support organisations, where they have some familiarity with settlement processes. This often means that the small number of refugee settlement organisations in Adelaide can be overwhelmed with volunteers:

*there are no employment and volunteering opportunities for people in the Sudanese community who want to do volunteering [...] those organisations could at times be flooded up with volunteers and cannot absorb everyone from the community who wants to do volunteering. (Sudanese Participant)*

Encouraging volunteering in non-refugee charities by members of the Sudanese community may provide pathways to English acquisition, work experience and ultimately employment.

### **3.3.3 Extending cross-cultural understanding**

During the Future Inquiry workshop, it was noted by refugee support groups that the Sudanese are well organised within their community but they need to extend those skills to better improve their involvement with the broader Australian community. The Sudanese Community Associations may need to formalise links and hold dialogue with the broader Australian community. An important step towards

achieving this may be putting effort into improving the media image of the Sudanese with positive stories (outcomes) of Sudanese success. This could include the ordination of the first Sudanese woman Uniting Church minister in Australia, and Sudanese students graduating from Year 12, TAFE and Universities and so forth. Such stories of success and achievement could foster and create positive attitudes towards Sudanese and promote the formation of networks between Sudanese and mainstream Australians.

Networks can act as mechanism for sharing information about job vacancies through community channels such as meetings and words of mouth. As indicated earlier however, this is influenced by the extent of the socio-economic web of networks an ethnic group may have, for relying on one's own ethnic networks may not expand one's chances of employment. This has also been asserted by Torezani et al (2008:138) whose study on Bosnian refugees showed that reliance on extended family and on ethnic networks in securing jobs led to an extraordinary occupational downgrading among Bosnians refugees and to being channelled into low-skilled jobs (Colic-Peisker & Waxman, 2005). However, on the other hand, Torezani et al (2008) argued that poor employment outcomes among refugees needs to be placed in the context of institutional racism and interpersonal factors. The authors further emphasise that being "visibly different" in a setting that is predominately white and English-speaking as in Australia, renders refugees susceptible to prejudice. It could be argued that the existence of prejudice or discrimination and racism could be concealed in the explanation that refugees do not easily find jobs because they lack Australian work experience as well as to lack of recognition of their overseas qualifications (Torezani, Colic-Peisker & Fozdar 2008:139). These have been shown as some of the main barriers for refugees to find jobs in Australia.

### **3.4 Small business support**

An outcome of the deliberations of the Future Inquiry workshop was to seek avenues for support for start-up companies by Sudanese entrepreneurs.

*Lobby state and federal governments to fund activities geared towards job creation in the Sudanese community like encouraging training in trade skill and giving small business loans with low interest for people wanting to establish their own businesses. (Outcome of Future Inquiry workshop)*

People from refugee backgrounds are more likely to have entrepreneurial potential than other migrants (Hugo 2011: 38). There are a number of Sudanese, especially women, who reported possessing entrepreneurial skills in small business but who lack financial capital or support. One participant suggested that there be more support in the provision of a "business loan to Sudanese interested to do their own

business". Another participant was aware that the skills they had acquired before coming to Australia could be put to use in a small business context but felt that they were unable to fund it:

*[My former skills] could be useful but I don't have the capital to put them into use here in Australia. (Sudanese Participant)*

Members of the Sudanese Community with entrepreneurial skills often find it difficult to borrow loans for business because they do not have collateral, as a result providing such loans could be seen as high risk. Thus, we find that there is a need, and a market demand, for small-business low-interest rate loans.

However, there are services available that provide training and support to assist Sudanese entrepreneurs to build their business. DFEEST's *Skills for All* can provide access to small business management training, while Business SA and Business Enterprise Centres can provide business support. However, these services need to be communicated to the Sudanese community in a culturally appropriate way to avoid cultural misunderstanding of the term 'business'. Members of the Sudanese community are likely to understand this term to mean the trading of goods and services rather than to refer to a service that can provide information and training. Consequently, it is vital for these services to be communicated in an appropriate way to ensure that Sudanese who wish to start their own business can receive the support that they require.

### **3.5 Cultural (mis)understandings in the workplace**

The findings indicated that employers and fellow employees had limitations in their cultural understanding of the Sudanese. We also found a lack of understanding of workplace culture by some Sudanese workers. These cultural misunderstandings are significant to Sudanese gaining and retaining employment. Some of these issues are:

- Media influences
- The Australian workplace culture
- Sudanese in the workplace
- Cross-cultural awareness

The workshop participants argued that more must be done to change the perceptions and attitudes of employers. They suggested a number of strategies, including government-funded incentives for employers to increase the diversity of workers in their workplace.

#### **3.5.1 Media influences**

Some participants from the Sudanese community have blamed the attitudes of some employers for their unemployment problem. Others have blamed it on some

media outlets and individual portrayals of Sudanese as violent, traumatised and as a people who fail to integrate into Australian society. Participants suggested these things do influence employers' attitudes and discourage them from employing Sudanese.

*...employers need to be educated because some are unwilling to employ Africans and refugees in particular because of the horrible stories we hear in the media about refugees. The media often portray them as law breaker and ill-fated, helpless and useless people who offer nothing but only need assistance in all forms. It is perception from what media reports that influences employers' attitudes towards employing refugee (Sudanese participant)*

*Some Australian employers' views of Sudanese don't help much in my opinion, to me it looks like they are not very willing to employ Sudanese due to the negative media portrayal of Sudanese in the recent past as violence and as failures to integrate into Australian society. (Service provider)*

So the picture becomes complex: employers perceived Sudanese as outsiders; there is lack of recognition of their overseas qualifications, skills and experience; and jobs offered are often not commensurate with qualifications, skills and experience. These features of Sudanese employment are significant barriers to members of the Sudanese community gaining stable and meaningful employment in Australia. It represents a loss for Australian society, too, as the potential that members of the Sudanese community bring to Australia is not used effectively.

This phenomenon is not only present in Australia. Valtonen (2001 & 2004) described lack of language proficiency of the host society as a mechanism in the labour market that worked to exclude refugees and migrants in the Finnish job market. Tomei (2003) argued that categorisation of other cultural groups as 'visible' or 'culturally different' is a new way of expressing racism. It tends to hinder the creation of important relationships between those described as 'visible' or 'culturally different' and those who are not; that is, it works against refugees building social capital. This has the potential to thwart the establishment of mutual recognition and trust between refugees and their hosts. Some employers emphasise the idea of cultural homogeneity in the workplace as being based on shared values and understanding of issues relevant to workplace and process (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury 2006:223). Therefore, emphasis on these could disadvantage those groups that are visibly and culturally different when competing in the same job markets. If employers assess potential employees on how they would fit into a predominantly white workplace, then white English-speaking Australians are likely to have greater employment success.

### **3.5.2 The Australian workplace culture – understanding the workplace**

Our interviews and the Future Inquiry workshop generated some key thoughts on how Sudanese with Australian employment experience view the workplace. As might be expected, there were positive and negative comments, but overall it seems that members of the Sudanese community have variable understanding of what it is to work in an Australian workplace, while Australian employers have varying capacity to accept their cultural differences and assist Sudanese workers to fit in at the workplace.

*Yes, [leave] was granted because my supervisor understands well my tradition and culture. (Sudanese Participant)*

*I trust some [colleagues] and not others like those who have negative perception about black people and their abilities to work well. (Sudanese Participant)*

*Don't fully understand Australian workplace culture, I am still learning the slang many Australians use in workplace. (Sudanese Participant)*

*Being the only African working in the company, I am not always involved in some meetings held by the manager in the company so I don't know what those meetings were about. (Sudanese Participant)*

*Sudanese are very resilient and committed workers in their work but most don't get the opportunity to demonstrate their capability on job because they are not given the chance to try by Australian employers both in the private and public sectors. (Service provider)*

*...effort should be made to educate employers/companies about Sudanese and what they can deliver when they employ them. (Service provider)*

*Provide information about Australian workplace (Sudanese Participant)*

There is a clear need for information for Australian employers about Sudanese, and for Sudanese employees about working in the Australian working environment to enable them to fit in and work effectively. Sudanese job seekers can participate in programs such as the ACE program to increase their skills and employability. In regional areas Sudanese job seekers can access pre-employment programs that are funded by SA Works Regional networks. These programs would play a vital role in assisting Sudanese job seekers to gain a better understanding of the Australian work force prior to searching and securing employment. However, Sudanese participants did not refer to these programs and an increase in uptake of these programs would require a communication strategy to ensure program information is circulated throughout the Sudanese community.



### 3.5.3 Sudanese in the workplace – functioning in a workplace

Employers and service providers whom we interviewed or who participated in the Future Inquiry workshop, brought to the table their experience and knowledge of Sudanese people working in Australian workplaces:

*...there is difficulty with Sudanese boys in regards to anger management, some are so reactive in their workplaces and due to that they don't create and maintain good relationships with employers, supervisors and workmates and stay in job longer. (Service provider)*

*I would make them understand that lunch break is as important as work itself because it refreshes and energises the body to function well and accomplishes work tasks. (Service provider)*

*I have seen some can work for the whole day without going for a lunch break and that by itself could be an OHS issue because the body gets stressed or fatigue will set in. (Service provider)*

*Inform them that they shouldn't consider and conclude that anything they are not happy with is racism, but to let them know that if their employers are racists, they would have not employed them in the first place and the fact that they were employed means that the company is not racist. (Service provider)*

*Positive: Sudanese have demonstrated a desire to gain employment and improve their options in Australia. (Service provider)*

*I have found the Sudanese community to be "laid back" and this may impact on opportunities. (Service provider)*

*They are some who once employed, they aren't punctual in their jobs, they aren't fully aware that is it important to inform employment prior they absent themselves from work or when they know that they will arrived to work late due to some circumstances and to be honest about this. (Service provider)*

These comments reinforce the need for cross-cultural awareness training for Australian employers and employees, as well as for Sudanese employees or potential employees.

It could be argued that a person who is culturally sensitive is aware that there could be differences between their culture and another person's and that unless these differences are appreciated, they could affect their relationship and the way they communicate with each other. Cultural awareness training modules would offer the appreciation that could enable employers and employees to be free from prejudices and perceptions about 'other' cultures. This is likely to promote tolerance and respect for diversity in the workplace given that workplaces are

becoming increasingly diverse, with people from many different cultures (Annan 2004).

### **3.5.4 Cross-cultural awareness training for employers**

The perceptions and descriptions of the Sudanese at work, cited above, underpin the need for cross-cultural awareness training about Sudanese culture and their refugee experiences to potential employers and industry groups. This would have the effect of giving them not only an appreciation of Sudanese culture and their refugee experiences, but also their potential and reliability as employees.

*Teach employers to employ people based on capability rather than where they come from or their skin colour.*

*(Service Provider)*

Cultural awareness training is intended to offer appreciation, awareness and acceptance of others' culture. Training for potential employers is essential because as Tamis (1994) indicated, some Australians view their society as Anglophone, white and culturally British. This view could significantly influence negative perceptions towards migrants and refugee groups.

Participants in this research agreed that cultural awareness training is likely to eliminate or reduce negative perceptions towards migrants and refugees who came to Australia from distinctive cultural groups. They considered that negative perceptions about members of the Sudanese community could be reduced or eliminated by the creation of innovation cultural awareness training modules that could be made available to potential employers and employment service providers.

*Inform Australian employers about Sudanese and their culture and Sudanese to be educated about what Australian workplace is like so that they understand it. (Sudanese Participant)*

*...employers to be willing to learn and understand Sudanese basic cultures. (Sudanese Participant)*

*There is also need for a scheme to be put in place to educate Australian employers generally about refugees because there are misconceptions about refugees and as a result some employments are unwillingness to recruit them for work. (Service provider)*

We think that it is crucial for the Sudanese community associations to act as a unified voice for members of the Sudanese community in South Australia. Being able to do this would be likely to significantly improve their capacity to have a positive impact for the Sudanese community. Together they could seek support and funding for the development and delivery of cross-cultural awareness training modules. The modules would specifically target potential employers and industry groups and employment service providers who work with Sudanese job seekers.

The focus would be on increasing awareness of Sudanese cultural issues, their refugee experiences, the potential impact of these features on individuals' ability to work effectively, and how these features could be used as a strength rather than seen as a weakness. Funding could be sought from DIAC's Diversity and Social Cohesion Program (DSCP)<sup>1</sup> to develop user-friendly information and programs about Sudanese cultures for Australian work places.

### **3.5.6 Cross-cultural awareness training for Sudanese employees**

It was clear from both the interviews and the Future Inquiry workshop that the Sudanese community require greater information about the range of training and employment possibilities available as well as a greater understanding of the Australian workplace environment. There are some excellent mainstream employment training programs in place, but we found that many participants were unaware of their availability or how to access them, while service providers did not realise that that this information was not common knowledge.

It is particularly important that potential employees from the Sudanese community understand matters of occupational health and safety, industrial relations, workers' rights and how Australians work.

*Using Sudanese community and agencies' support for Sudanese access training which should include workplace, workers' rights, industrial relations, unions, and grievance procedures (Sudanese participant)*

As this participant suggests, the provision of such training with the support of the Sudanese community is one way to ensure a greater reach.

The ability to adjust to the Australian workplace culture and work environment, to work productively in a culture other than one's own and to develop good workplace relationships, is critical to employment success; employers expect their employees to adjust and fit well in into their workplace and to accept and adapt to their workplace culture. As this participant attests:

*Sudanese [need] to attend workplace training sessions as much as possible so that they can improve their understanding of Australian workplace culture. (Sudanese participant)*

Participation in workplace training is one way that Sudanese employees can become more involved in their workplace. Indeed building knowledge also builds confidence as an Australian employee. Feeling confident through having a positive attitude toward work is vital for retaining employment according to one service provider:

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/delivering-assistance/government-programs/dscp/dscp-grants.htm>

*positive attitudes towards work and workmates i.e. be friendly to make life easy at workplace and to instead work hard to create impression of being worthy on the job and to be creative and have strong self-esteem (Service provider)*

Some Sudanese employees who are mindful of being perceived as 'different' may experience difficulty in managing their reaction to discrimination in the workplace. One service provider pointed reported the:

*Inability of some to tolerate different personalities and actions they them as deemed discriminatory at workplace- anger management is lacking with some and is an issue and other actions e.g. not to spit the dummy even if one feel discriminated against but to react positively instead and follow workplace procedures regulating such behaviours in work place.(Service provider)*

Consequently, it is crucial that Sudanese workers are supported through the provision of training around workers' rights (see page 35), as well as training that will assist them in understanding and managing relationships in the workplace. This training needs to occur early on in the settlement phase as part of the AMEP training and incorporated into additional English language programs.

### **3.6 Qualification and skills recognition**

Many members of the Sudanese community have had their education interrupted due to the conflicts they have experienced in their home country. Many have had difficulty accessing education and gaining work experience so they experience difficulty accessing employment (Hugo, 2011b:163). Despite these prevalent disruptions, there are a number of skilled members of the Sudanese community in South Australia. During the interviews one Sudanese participant stated: "I can apply and utilise [my skills] in most work settings". This person is an example of an exception within a community where skills are under-utilised, skills and qualifications are unrecognised, and work is often low-skilled and low-paid as a result. In this section we outline a number of inter-related issues:

- Underutilisation of skills;
- Streamlining skills recognition;
- Negotiating the system; and
- employment service provider support.

#### **3.6.1 Underutilisation of skills**

Unemployment and underemployment in the Sudanese community is exacerbated by a lack of recognition of overseas qualifications and skills. There is a prevailing stereotype that refugees are overwhelmingly under-skilled, however it is more accurate that a large proportion of refugees have skills and qualifications that are

largely underutilised with ‘a significant mis-match between skills and occupation’ (Hugo 2011: 28). This underutilisation of skills has been confirmed in this study, as participants explained:

*...some people have brought skills from Africa including skills in building, carpentry and farm skills which unfortunately are not accepted in Australia. Australians employers only look to Europe, to the Americans and Asia from skilled workers but not Africa. (Sudanese participant)*

*...for old people of working age, studying English would not be productive but availing them opportunities in their former trades (building, carpentry, farming etc.) and observing them into those kind of work because they know how to do them well rather sending them to study English. (Sudanese participant)*

The solution proposed by participants in this research is that systems need to be established to provide recognition of prior learning, identification of gaps in knowledge and training appropriate to their needs (English language training being not necessarily the priority).

*Assess their qualifications and find the gaps in them and then provide them training options so that they can retrain in their former trades. (Sudanese participant)*

*The assessment criterion for overseas skills and qualifications should be flexible, gaps in knowledge in overseas skills and qualifications should be identified and to be filled through training aiming at filling those gaps so that people with overseas skills and qualifications can fully benefit from Australian job market. (Sudanese participant)*

### **3.6.2 Streamlining skills recognition**

Currently it is difficult for Sudanese refugees with overseas qualifications, skills and experiences to make a successful transition into Australian job market and to work in areas of their professions.

*To recognise overseas qualifications and the skills that Sudanese have got, [...] give them job as trials-internship to work under experienced professional to acquire Australian work experience. (Sudanese participant)*

Most Sudanese with overseas qualifications, skills and experience who are employed work as casual or unskilled workers in jobs unrelated to their previous training or fields of studies/training because employers do not recognise their overseas credentials (Lejukole, 2009).

Australian Education International – National Office of Overseas Skilled Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) provide support to Overseas Qualification Units (OQU) across Australia. In South Australia the OQU is DFEEST’s Skills Recognition Service (SRS).

The SRS provide information, advocacy and Support through occupational advice, referral to assessing authorities, professional associations and employment related programs. SRS may refer job seekers to Trades Recognition, Skills for Funded training and RPL, or to undertake gap training. According to Skills SA, five Sudanese have registered with SRS over the past two years. It is possible that this low uptake may be the result of differing expectations of the service, as it is common that when good services are discovered, their details are quickly circulated throughout the Sudanese community, increasing participation rates. Anecdotally, we were told by one member of the Sudanese community that when enquiring into the services provided by the SRS, he was told that they were only able to assist with recognition of qualifications, assistance in writing his CV, introductory workshops on information about understanding job advertisements and job interview techniques. He recounted to us that this support was inadequate for his needs.

Further investigations are needed to ascertain why there is such a low uptake of SRS; whether the services provided by SRS are adequate or not well understood leading to a lack of referrals by refugee support organisations and why SRS remains uncommunicated throughout the Sudanese community.

Many skilled Sudanese require their qualifications recognised by professional associations before they can begin working in their field of expertise. These professional associations may make use of AEI-NOOSR's overseas qualifications recognition tool Country Education Profiles (CEP) Online. However, these professional associations are the decision makers for the recognition of the overseas qualification. We were informed by members of the Sudanese community that they believed that in many cases CEP may indicate that their overseas qualifications were transferrable but the professional association, in applying additional assessment policies and processes, did not grant recognition of their skills. Often there is an assumption by service providers that inadequate English language is the underlying obstruction to professional recognition. However, skilled Sudanese are likely to have levels of English that do not require further English language training. Therefore, what remains is a sense of confusion and frustration within the Sudanese community as to the underlying reason behind their failure to gain professional recognition.

Lejukole's (2009:31) study of the settlement experiences of Southern Sudanese refugees resettled in South Australia found that most of his research participants blamed their unemployment and underemployment on what they perceived as protectionist attitudes on the part of Australian employers and professional associations which have erected stringent structural barriers to prevent them from practicing their skills in their specialties. Those participants have also claimed that professional associations have placed severe demands on those wanting to retrain and that there has been no government support in form of subsidies to help them meet those demands.

Participants made no mention of the Career Development Centres and career advisors available through DFEEST, or of the Assessment Subsidy for Overseas Trained Professionals Program (ASDOT) which is funded by AEI-NOOSR in conjunction with the Department of Human Services which provides financial assistance for costs associated with skills assessment. Sudanese refugees may be slipping through the system due to limited awareness of the employment and skills support available.

Concerns in relation to skill recognition of Sudanese professionals were shared by service providers:

*I fear there could be institutionalised discrimination of refugees on the pretext that their qualifications and skills are inadequate and not up to Australian standard which seems to re-enforce barriers that impede refugees' access to employment in Australia. (Service provider)*

This service provider gave the example of a number of Sudanese whose African qualifications were not accepted by a professional association in South Australia and did not:

*offer clear information and support regarding what the association want to be done or how it would help nor did it made referral to who else could provide help. As a result they have abandoned their careers (Service provider)*

What is clear in the comment above, is that service providers are not referring to SRS where career guidance can be provided to investigate alternative work pathways that makes use of their skills. SRS argue that service providers must refer skilled Sudanese to ensure that the SRS can assist them in investigating alternative work pathways that makes use of their skills. Additionally, there may be an issue with Sudanese expectations to find work that utilises their skills, not being met by skills and employment services such as SRS and JSA's. Further research may determine whether this is the case and what steps can be taken to address the needs of skilled Sudanese.

While professional associations have relevant tools for assessing overseas qualifications, participants reported barriers in practical overseas skills and experience assessment, alongside assessment of documented qualifications, to determine individuals' ability, capacity and confidence in performing tasks in their profession. Participants were unaware of mentorship or internship programs to support them to make a smooth transition to their profession in the skilled job market in Australia.

*For those Sudanese who have qualifications, there qualification should be recognised by government and professional unions. (Sudanese participant)*

*To recognise overseas qualifications and the skills that Sudanese have got, stop or relax a bit the English test put in place by professional associations and if possible give them job as trials-internship to work under experienced professionals to acquire Australian work experience. (Sudanese participant)*

*Strategies to overcome these issues or barrier in my views are: 1) Improved processes to recognise overseas qualifications (reduce timeframe for results); (Sudanese participant)*

*Fair assessment and recognition system of overseas qualifications, experiences and skills and provide chance for Sudanese to try them for the current assessment and overseas qualification recognition regimes are not favouring Sudanese and other refugees and migrants. (Sudanese participant)*

Participants in the Future Inquiry workshop suggested that a collaborative form of practical skills assessment could be developed and applied to Sudanese refugees. This again highlights that the SRS and *Skills for All* services remain unknown by the Sudanese community and supporting agencies.

### **3.6.3 Negotiating the system**

It is crucial that the members of the Sudanese community gain a greater knowledge of how to access training, mentoring and internship opportunities so that their potential for gaining employment can be increased. During the Future Inquiry workshop it became clear that there is lack of information about trade schools and trade skills in the Sudanese community and resulting employment prospects. This need to provide trade school information was also reflected in the interviews:

*[need to]provide additional support in terms of finding and choosing trade and finding apprenticeships in their trades of training. (Sudanese participant)*

Another Sudanese participant agreed:

*[need to]provide information about University and TAFE courses and Trade qualifications to members of the Sudanese community as there is a lack or misunderstand of these in the Sudanese community (Sudanese participant)*

There is also a lack of information about the availability of, and access to age-friendly mentoring, internship or apprenticeship programs. As one Sudanese participant suggested:

*Offer work experiences or internships opportunities for Sudanese and government to fund age friendly apprenticeship for Sudanese who want to go into trade studies but are above 25 years of age so that industries*



*that offer apprenticeships can accept Sudanese in that age category.  
(Sudanese participant)*

While another Sudanese participant called for the creation of:

*a mentoring program for Sudanese adult and young people in jobs that have skills, experiences and qualifications or in jobs that they would like to do. (Sudanese participant)*

Sudanese communities who have settled in regional areas may apply to Skills SA for mentoring support through SA Works Regional Networks and the RDA once a case has been submitted and a program developed and funded. However, this kind of support needs to be made available more broadly to the Sudanese community in metropolitan Adelaide.

Creating awareness about the availability and access to age-friendly mentoring, internship or apprenticeship programs in various trades, potential employment prospects and offer of financial incentives for industry accepting interns or apprentices over 25 years old is crucial to the members of the Sudanese community to know so that they can make informed decisions.

Equally, there is lack of guidance in choosing careers and or courses/trainings.

*Teach Sudanese about better career choices when embark of studies or training and how they can form networks outside their communities to widen their chances of getting jobs through those formed networks  
(Sudanese participant)*

A number of Sudanese do embark on courses/training with no or limited understanding of Australian job market and potential employment opportunities once they completed their courses or training.

Sudanese participants did not refer to the services provided by DFEEST or where they could access information about TAFE, trade training, mentoring, support programs and career advice, indicating that they were not accessing services that may provide them with greater assistance. Further research into the extent of knowledge and uptake of these services will be necessary in order to ascertain how information about employment and skills services may be better disseminated into the Sudanese community.

For instance, information sessions provided in collaboration with the Sudanese community may be one way that information about SRS and Skills for All, as well as Traineeship and Apprenticeship services can be communicated. These could be provided in a similar way to forthcoming information sessions in regional areas to promote SRS Regional Outreach program to skilled migrants. Additionally, a formal referral process needs to be developed by SRS in partnership with refugee support services to encourage them to refer their skilled clients. For these services to operate effectively in the Sudanese community, SRS must hold discussions with the

Sudanese community to communicate how their services may best be provided based on the needs of skilled members of the community.

### **3.6.4 Employment service provider support**

Lack of specialised and institutional support for those with overseas qualifications and skills has exacerbated unemployment and underemployment among members of the Sudanese community resettled in Australia. Like any other refugees resettled in Australia, Sudanese refugees have high expectations that the Australian government would fully support them in the area of employment through its contracted Job Services Australia provider.

Refugees perceived employment service providers to offer job training that would increase their opportunity of finding jobs and of developing social networks. Such support should improve their chances of finding jobs that match their overseas qualifications, skills and experience. Nonetheless, this has not been the case. Instead, Sudanese participants reported being encouraged by employment service providers to learn specific job search skills that are only tailored to low skilled and low paid jobs:

*No, I am not convinced that [employment service provider] will find me job in areas of my liking, they are fond of referring people to factory which I don't like. (Sudanese participant)*

*They are not well equipped to support or find work for people who have qualifications from University or specialised trade from TAFE. (Sudanese participant)*

As mentioned earlier, skilled Sudanese must be informed of SRS and communication and trust needs to be developed between the Sudanese community and SRS to ensure that their needs are met. SRS state that they can provide assistance by liaising with the job service provider and advising them to support their client in accessing training that will ensure that their specific skills are utilised. However, anecdotal evidence from the Sudanese community tells us that SRS communicates a smaller and less active role than this to the Sudanese community (see page 28).

Many skilled and qualified Sudanese are categorised by Job Services Australia as stream 1, or 'work ready'. As mentioned earlier, often there is an assumption that English is a barrier for all Sudanese refugees, but for many skilled Sudanese this is not the case. However, as new arrivals they do require greater support for negotiating the Australian job market. Categorised as stream 1 means that they do not receive the same intensive support as those who are less skilled and have greater personal and vocational barriers (streams 2, 3 and 4) to securing employment. Torezani et al (2008) found that the employment service providers contracted by the Australian Government provided insufficient support for refugees with overseas qualifications, skills and experience. Indeed, research indicates that

lack of specialty knowledge among the employment service providers for qualified and skilled job seekers has contributed to limiting refugees' and migrants' ability to acquire professional jobs in Australia (Torezani, Colic-Peisker & Fozdar 2008: 140-141, citing Lee 2002). This has been echoed by Liebig (2007) and Constable et al (2004) who reported that some downward job mobility among refugees is being facilitated by employment service providers because their priority is to find paid work of any kind for refugees. Sudanese like many other refugees are likely to be guided into low skilled, low paying casual work (Hugo 2011b:162).

Whilst refugee specific employment service providers are more successful in securing employment for Sudanese and are highly regarded in the Sudanese community, their focus remains on assistance into low-skilled employment. In this case, these skilled Sudanese do not access the services of SRS as discussed earlier. Consequently the needs of skilled and qualified members of the Sudanese community are overlooked.

Scull (2001) proposed the establishment of an employer liaison/job placement program for the purpose of improving refugees' job outcomes in areas of their professional training. As Scull indicates, this would create entry-level jobs for refugees in their professions (2001:53). Although this recommendation was made over ten years ago, there has been limited movement to make this happen. The need for such a system remains urgent.

Further research incorporating a case studies approach is required to review the servicing of Sudanese refugees by Job Service Australia. By doing so, it will be possible to ascertain whether reports that we have heard of inappropriate client servicing are an accurate reflection of what is occurring, or whether Sudanese clients hold unrealistic expectations or incorrect knowledge of the services provided by Job Service Australia.

### **3.7 Work Health and Safety (WHS)**

Lack of knowledge about the management of WHS in Australia is a significant issue for Sudanese refugees at work, and also for their employers. We have separated this out for special mention because of the high incidence of injuries (often unreported to the employer) that have occurred in this group. Amongst the Sudanese participants in our research seven out of 20 reported to us that they had been injured while at work, but only four of these reported the injury immediately. One participant did not think their injury was severe enough (until it became more painful) while another two participants reported being fearful that they would lose their jobs if they reporting their injury. Participants indicated that they have not reported workplace injuries because of limited understanding of: WHS; workers' rights; comprehension of compensation claims and procedures; and the extent of their injuries and consequences of those injuries in their future lives. This lack of

knowledge has led to under-reporting of injuries and no or poor compensation claims for work-related injuries for those injured at work.

### **3.7.1 WHS law**

WHS is about protecting the safety, health and welfare of people engaged in work or employment. South Australia (and Australia more widely) has legislation that aims to protect people's health and safety at work through the provision of safe and healthy work environments and systems of work (Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986). Our legislation defines the responsibilities of employers, employees and others in ensuring health and safety at work. The objects of the Act include:

- to secure the health, safety and welfare of persons at work
- to eliminate, at their source, risks to the health, safety and welfare of persons at work
- to protect the public against risks to health or safety arising out of or in connection with the activities of persons at work or the use or operation of various types of plant
- to involve employees and employers in issues affecting occupational health, safety and welfare
- to encourage registered associations to take a constructive role in promoting improvements in occupational health, safety and welfare practices and assisting employers and employees to achieve a healthier and safer working environment.<sup>2</sup>

### **3.7.2 Perception of risk**

WHS is about the management of the risk of exposure to danger or hazards. It is about balancing exposures to the potential consequences of the exposure and the likelihood that the consequences will be realised. It focuses on the possibility of injury, illness, death, or damage to property. Employers and workers have responsibilities in the management of WHS, and workplaces have formal systems to ensure that the workplace is healthy and safe. Part of these system will be about ensuring that people in the workplace are aware of the risks they face and how these are managed. As Douglas (2009) indicates, there are many inconsistent and ambiguous meanings attached to "risk" that could lead to confusion due to different perceptions. These need to be taken into consideration by employers. For employers with Sudanese employees, training in their WHS systems and procedures is imperative.

*In my workplace, workers are taught how to be and keep themselves and others safe from injuries. Injuries from machines, hazards, tools, oily and wet floors etc. (Sudanese Participant)*

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.safework.sa.gov.au/show\\_page.jsp?id=2474](http://www.safework.sa.gov.au/show_page.jsp?id=2474)

As stated earlier, the concept of WHS practices and procedures was new to most Sudanese participants; they indicate being unaware of them prior to resettling in Australia.

*I worked in Sudan but didn't hear and was not aware of OHS, I learned it in Australia when I was in TAFE. (Sudanese Participant)*

*OHS is a new concept and practice for me and to many Sudanese, I have work for several years in Sudan and in refugee camp in Kenya and I have not hear about this. In those work I used common sense to keep myself and other safe at work, there are not laid down procedures and policies on this. (Sudanese Participant)*

As new to the concept of WHS, Sudanese may also have a low perception of risk and low participation in developing control measures in their workplace. Unfamiliarity with WHS therefore presents challenges for both employers and employees. Sudanese employees may have a limited understanding and appreciation of risk, while employers may operate on the assumption that Sudanese employees have the same level of knowledge as other Australian employees. Despite their reported limited understanding of WHS and worker's rights, most managers and supervisors whose staff include Sudanese have described them as resilient and committed workers such that in some instances, they tend to forgo lunch breaks in favour of work. This could however be a potential WHS risk as long hours spent working could lead to stress and body fatigue.

### **3.7.3 Fear of reporting of hazards and incidents**

Sudanese may not report hazards in the workplace because they do not recognise them as such. They may not report work-related injuries or illnesses because they do not understand WHS systems, or they may be fearful of the consequences of reporting.

*I don't report minor injuries because supervisor may think that it is a result of being careless at work and that could report into bad feelings about me. (Sudanese Participant)*

*Most of us Sudanese also don't know our rights as employees, we think the employer is the bossy, is everything and he/he can do anything including dismissing workers any time so that when they are injured at work when it is not serious, they don't tell anyone, they hide it. (Sudanese Participant)*

There is limited knowledge of the association between an injury and the incident leading to the injury may impact on reporting (Gravel et al 2009). Ironically, even if members of the Sudanese community in South Australia do understand these

relationships, research indicates that they are rarely helped to return to work but are likely to be dismissed instead (Gravel et al 2009).

*...fear that I will be fired for being careless workers. So I just endured the pain when working. (Sudanese participant)*

Unfortunately, their fears may be well founded, which would exacerbate the problem, but reporting may have a positive outcome:

*Yes, reported to supervisor at the time, we filled in forms together and no barriers when completing the form. (Sudanese participant)*

Sudanese workers may experience pressure in the workplace as they face language and cultural challenges and this pressure could have OHS implications. They may be new to the workplace routines due to their previous lack of opportunities and exposure to work and may experience racism at work.

*We Africans have a problem, even if we do things well in our jobs, they discriminate against us, some supervisors are racist and other workmates too, in my case they some bully me and push or force me to do the most difficult and dangerous jobs. Things have been done to me like that but I fear to report to management, (Sudanese participant)*

Fear of reporting workplace injuries could also lead to under reporting or lack of it as well as claim of injury compensation.

*Because they don't regularly monitor equipment, tools and don't carry safety proof often. They don't replace worn out equipment or tools promptly when reported to them or them they break down. (Sudanese participant)*

According to Maier and Reinke (2002) and Guthrie and Quinlan (2005), fear of reporting injuries and of claiming compensation is attributed to the fear of being finalised after reporting and claiming compensation for work-related injuries or illnesses. Other barriers to reporting work-related injuries and OHS claims among migrant and generally among refugee workers were due to their inability to argue their claim when contested by employers (Stunin & Boden 2004; Kirsh & McKee, 2003) because they lack the knowledge of their rights and employers' responsibilities for their employees.

Worker Unions have an important role in assisting Sudanese refugees at work. Where a workplace has elected health and safety representatives, Sudanese workers may be given appropriate assistance as this employee demonstrates:

*There are many in the community who live and work in such fear like mine, but when I become a member of the SA workers trade union, I have become aware of my rights as worker and my employer's duty and responsibility towards me and that fear is gone. If injured I can now report it without fear. (Sudanese participant)*

Sudanese tend to have poor knowledge of Australian workplace laws or National Employment Standards (NES) including the minimum workplace entitlements, and procedures for complaints. Unions can play significant role in assisting Sudanese understand these entitlements through the dissemination of relevant information. Knowledge of workplace rights can alleviate instances where Sudanese employees have encountered poor working conditions (Fair Work Ombudsman 2012).

#### **3.7.4 Language problems**

Most participants emphasised that their unfamiliarity with the concept of OHS practices and procedures was further complicated by their inability to understand English language as it related to work and OHS instructions. OHS legislation requires that instruction and training be provided in the first language of employees where this is appropriate and practicable (Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986, Section 19(3) (c)). However such training and instruction was not the experience of Sudanese participants in this research.

*[workplace doesn't have a good OHS] because there are all written in English and not in any other language. (Sudanese participant)*

Under-reporting or not reporting work-related injuries could occur when injured migrant or refugee workers are expected to write and fill out complex forms in English. This requires them to understand not only English, but also the organisation's and government's bureaucracy and formalities. These processes could be too difficult for Sudanese workers and may scare them from reporting any work-related injuries and sicknesses due to their limited English language skills (Gravel et al 2009).

#### **3.7.5 Intervention**

The factors discussed in this section are likely to influence Sudanese workers' ability to stay in their jobs and thrive in South Australia. Thus, lack of OHS awareness, training, and English language potentially undermines South Australia's capacity to reach the target of increasing employment, population and multiculturalism (Government of South Australia 1997).

Intervention strategies, including the provision of information aimed at enriching members of the Sudanese community's comprehension of the risks of work, knowledge of OHS practices and procedures, and how to prevent workplace injuries is pivotal.

### **3.8 Workers' rights**

Not all Sudanese workers are unfairly treated, and we received reports from participants about good and fair working conditions,

*Yes, I'm treated fairly because I receive same number of case allocations as my colleagues, I am afforded same opportunities and I am given positive feedback on a regular basis including during annual appraisal. (Sudanese participant)*

Another Sudanese participant pointed to the supportive and effective environment of their workplace where they were forming positive relationships with their work colleagues:

*Yes, it is the policy of the organisation to support one another, asking for support from management and workmates is encouraged because of that I am comfortable seeking support from them. (Sudanese participant)*

However, it is easy for some employers to abuse the lack of knowledge and understanding of workers' rights that Sudanese workers may have. Sudanese participants reported experiencing difficulty in gaining permission for the leave that they were entitled to:

*each time I ask for leave, I wasn't granted the leave for the last 3 years in my work which I feel is very unfair. If others can, why not myself and I was not given any good reason other than "we need you in the job". (Sudanese participant)*

Participants also told us of instances of bullying and discrimination in the workplace:

*I don't ask my supervisor because they will swear at me and called me names which are the things that I don't want. (Sudanese participant)*

*Because of calling me in workplace as "African" and not by my name, this creates differences between them and me which is not a health relationship in workplace. (Sudanese participant)*

Obviously, this makes it difficult to build good workplace relationships when such discriminatory behaviour is not addressed. However, Sudanese participants also told us of instances where reports of discrimination were not taken seriously by management:

*I tried to get management to know that I don't like being bullied and being pushed around but management isn't interested in what I say so such behaviour still occur and now I keep to myself and do my work as well as I could. (Sudanese participant)*

Attempts to silence workers are symptomatic of broader workplace issues:

*Because of the "don't ask and don't tell policy" in the company, employees have little to discuss in relation to work issues. (Sudanese participant)*



Sudanese workers, like other workers will find it difficult to form strong workplace relationships with their colleagues when the workplace culture is toxic and there is no knowledge of the kind of assistance that unions can provide.

Where Sudanese workers are discriminated against there needs to be an effective method in place whereby they can be informed of their rights. There also needs to be a continual education program available to the Sudanese community to inform them of their worker's rights and the role that the unions can play in assisting workers understand their rights at work and encouraging workers to join a union. Equally, unions need to understand the value in having Sudanese industrial officers who are able to reach members of their community.

As a new and emerging community in Australia and new to the Australian workplace, most Sudanese participants were not fully aware about the value and the role of unions in helping them understand their rights at work. Indeed, most Sudanese participants did not understand that unions could act on their behalf if they believe that they have been unfairly treated by their employer. There were some Sudanese participants who were not members of unions for fear of losing their jobs:

*No, I am not [a member of a union]. And I don't know about them. The policy of the company doesn't like its workers to get involved in union activities as a result all workers are not members of any workers union. (Sudanese participant)*

*No, I am not [a member of a union] because when management knows that employee are members of workers union, the employee can be fired indirectly. (Sudanese participant)*

It is clear that Sudanese employees need to be better informed about the role of the union, the right of a worker to join a union, and that a worker cannot be dismissed because of this membership. It is essential for unions to encourage members of the Sudanese community to join a union. This could be achieved by explaining the role and value of unions. Unions could also encourage some members of Sudanese community to become industrial officers and to get involved in negotiations between Sudanese workers and their workplace.

Most refugees, including Sudanese who resettled in Australia, came from countries that do not have proper mechanisms for the protection of workers and their rights. Sudanese resettled in Australia therefore need to be provided with information about their rights in workplace. This information needs to be interactive (visual and audio) and when possible should be provided in the languages they understand best. This could be provided through educative workshops about fair work and workers' rights (see [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au)). The information needs to be designed in such a way that it enables them to understand how to balance the demands of

their employers in order for the workplace to be more productive and competitive, with workers' rights and basic conditions (<http://www.fairwork.gov.au>). It needs to cover information about their obligations as workers and the obligations of their employers.

The provision of such information could be facilitated by a Sudanese community empowerment group as identified during the Future Inquiry workshop. Indeed, developing a Sudanese community education program, within which information about workplace rights could be incorporated was also an outcome of the Future Inquiry workshop.

## 4. Conclusion

Evident in the analysis of the experiences and views of Sudanese participants and service providers indicate that there are varying understandings of employment and OHS issues. It was also clear that information regarding employment training and programs that are well circulated in mainstream communities have not received equal exposure within the Sudanese community. Nonetheless, Sudanese participants described many of the issues they faced and held well thought out ideas as to how some of these issues might be addressed. The issue, it seems, is the lack of an avenue whereby the community may pursue these issues. However, it was clear during the Future Inquiry workshop that both representatives of the Sudanese community and service providers were keen to collaborate in order to address some of the issues raised. Consequently, what we see here are some of the first small steps along the pathway to employment.

The interview and Future Inquiry workshop data has lead us to a number of suggested options for addressing the finding of this research. Many of them have been collaboratively acquired through this qualitative data collection process. The suggested options are outline in the following section.

## 5. Suggested options

The table presented below offers some options for addressing the findings of this report. These suggested options are outlined below in no particular order.

	Suggested options	Actions	Expected outcomes
5.1 WELL Program	Flexible learning of the English language for Sudanese (refugee and humanitarian entrants) by: incorporating workplace English language and literacy (WELL) program into the adult migrant English language program	<p>Sudanese community Association to establish a working relationship/partnership with DIISRTE and institutions providing adult migrant English language program to incorporate workplace English language and literacy (WELL) program into their curriculum.</p> <p>Sudanese community to connect with DIISTRE to seek funding for the provision of workplace English language and literacy (WELL) program for its members.</p>	<p>Acquisition of WELL through need-based learning would increase Sudanese competency, self-esteem and participation in job market.</p> <p>Eliminates or reduces communication challenges between employers and their Sudanese employees and foster better understanding of work and OHS instructions. This has the potential to increase productivity with declining workplace injuries.</p>

	Suggested options	Actions	Expected outcomes
5.2 Increase the 510 hours of English language	Provide an increase in English language training and settlement assistance for refugees where needed.	<p>Increase 510 hours and the general the delivery of settlement services from five years of residence in Australia by assessing individual needs for such service instead of limiting it to specific hours and duration of residence in Australia.</p> <p>Change the funding restriction for delivery of English language service for refugees and humanitarian entrants.</p> <p>Sudanese community association to establish a working relationship/partnership with relevant authorities or institutions providing AMEP and seek funding from ACE and access to Skills for All funded English courses.</p>	<p>A higher level of language acquisition will provide better employment outcomes.</p> <p>Reduces communication challenges between employers and their Sudanese employees and foster better understanding of work and OHS instructions.</p>
5.3 Volunteering	Develop pathways into work through broader volunteering/workplace experience opportunities.	Work with Volunteering SA to establish networks between the Sudanese community and organisations that can provide members of the Sudanese community volunteering opportunities. These opportunities must be beyond refugee support organisations.	
5.4 Social Networks	Cultivate links between Sudanese community associations and SA Government bodies including Skills Recognition Service, NGO's, community groups and businesses through forums and meetings (outlined in 5.8 below) that have the potential and ability to link them to potential employers.	Most members of the Sudanese community have their networks within their community. These networks are not so effective in channelling their members to finding jobs. Sudanese community associations in collaboration with a Sudanese employment liaison officer (role to be created see 5.8 below) to create activities that could promote interactions and linkages with mainstream Australians, NGO, government institutions, industries and job	<p>This could expend networking outside the Sudanese community as well as channels of access to information about available jobs from individual who could act as job referees.</p> <p>These could lead to increase chances of employment opportunities in Sudanese community.</p>

	Suggested options	Actions	Expected outcomes
		<p>services providers in SA. Formalise links/dialogues between members of the Sudanese community and mainstream Australians, NGO, government institutions, industries and job services providers in SA through invitations to community forums, social and cultural events, and by distribution of positives stories from the Sudanese community through newsletters (e.g. the New dawn) and other media outlets.</p>	
5.5 Cross-cultural awareness training	<p>Provide cross-cultural awareness training about Sudanese culture, their refugee experiences and settlement challenges in Australia to potential employers and industries.</p>	<p>Sudanese community associations to seek funding from DIAC's Diversity and Social Cohesion Program (DSCP) to develop user-friendly information and programs about Sudanese cultures for Australian work places.</p> <p>Identification of potential employers by collaborating with Safework SA, Business SA and other relevant organisations (industries, organisations, institutions etc) to whom the cross-cultural awareness training would be delivered. Information to be provided to businesses in regional areas through the Regional Development Authorities and the SA Works Regional Networks.</p> <p>Sudanese community to collaborate with ARA in the delivery of cultural awareness programs aimed at assisting work places meet their legal obligation to develop and deliver a Workplace Diversity Program.</p>	<p>Appreciation of Sudanese culture, refugee experiences and settlement challenges in Australia.</p> <p>Change some employers' negative perception against employing Sudanese workers to employing Sudanese.</p> <p>Enhances better understanding of how cultural value orientations impact on people's behaviour at workplace. This would breakdown cultural barriers, prejudices and stereotyping against Sudanese.</p> <p>Potential employers would develop cross-cultural skills and competence which allow understanding of cultural barriers leading to increased acceptance of Sudanese in the job market and in</p>

	Suggested options	Actions	Expected outcomes
			workplace.  Enables workplace to function more effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. This can also ease interactions and communication in workplace.
5.6 Employment and Career Information Directorate	Provide a directorate of employment and career training, services and support in a clear and accessible way for the Sudanese community.	This directorate should provide information on employment and career training and services that are available in each local council area. This directorate should be provided in different Sudanese languages and provided to all members of the community. The directorate should clearly state the kinds of services available, what they do, and how they can assist Sudanese. DFEEST and DEEWR to support the Sudanese community in the development of the directorate.	Increase uptake of services, allow Sudanese to access appropriate training and seek support. This will empower Sudanese to make informed decisions about what kind of support they can utilise and the direction of their future career.
5.7 Promote the community	Promote the successes and achievements of the Sudanese community through a number of different strategies.	Different approaches may include a forum, dialogue with potential employer, associations, unions, job services, local government authorities (councils), media, MPs (state and Federal), and schools and other relevant stakeholders.  Seek funding to establish a monthly or bi-monthly newsletter (magazine) that covers positives Sudanese achievement or success stories. Distribution of positive stories from the Sudanese community to Australian mainstream through local press, monthly or bi-monthly magazine, local radios, newsletters, and social media. Establishment of a website that provide information about Sudanese culture, their refugee	Change negative perceptions and attitudes against employment of Sudanese to positive perceptions and attitudes towards employing Sudanese.  Increases awareness of Sudanese cultural issues and their refugee experiences. This includes provision of innovative techniques and strategies to addressing barriers to employment for Sudanese.

	Suggested options	Actions	Expected outcomes
		<p>experiences and for making accessible information about skills and qualifications that members of the Sudanese community possess for potential employers to access and make contacts.</p> <p>Promote the success of the Sudanese community to the wider Australian community through media stories, festivities and develop formal links with Australian associations (eg RSL). Identify funding sources and seek fund for the development and maintenance of the website.</p> <p>Recruit volunteers/paid web administrator.</p> <p>Upload the cross-cultural awareness training modules on the website for potential employers and job network service providers to access.</p>	
5.8 Career guidance, employer liaison	<p>Provide employment and career guidance through forums and information, training targeted at Sudanese job seekers.</p> <p>Create the position of a Sudanese employment liaison officer who can disseminate information about existing services such as DEEWR's job guide and my future web site, Australian Government Job and Skills Expo, DFEEST Career Development Centres, Career advisors, SRS and other relevant information.</p>	<p>DEEWR to support a JSA service provider appointing a specific officer to assist Sudanese job seekers.</p> <p>Sudanese employment liaison officer to organise focus groups forums and seminars with Sudanese students about services including SRS and career development centres, courses, training and employment prospects.</p> <p>Sudanese employment liaison officer to establish community education engagement program through invitation of careers advisors (from Universities, TAFESA, DEEWR, Trade school etc) to provide valuable</p>	<p>Members of the Sudanese community would make informed decisions/choices about their career choices and courses/trainings that they would like to study while being mindful of potential employments prospects in those careers, courses/trainings they want to undertake.</p> <p>Foster better understanding of career pathways, course and training, access, requirements and subsequent employment prospects.</p>



	Suggested options	Actions	Expected outcomes
		<p>information to young people and their parents in the Sudanese Community about careers and or courses/trainings choices and employment prospects.</p> <p>Sudanese employment liaison officer to organise training for members of the Sudanese community in techniques to assist them in a job interview. This training must be culturally specific.</p> <p>During initial settlement and in the transition period post HSS, Sudanese community members to be provided with information and contact details of Career Development Services.</p> <p>Formal referral process of skilled Sudanese to SRS to be established in collaboration with refugee service providers and JSA's.</p>	
5.9 Small business support	Support members of the Sudanese community in establishing small businesses.	<p>BEC Networks, Business Advisory Service and Business SA to provide training for the Sudanese community in how to establish small businesses.</p> <p>These services also incorporated into the Employment and Career Information Directorate.</p> <p>These services to collaborate with the Sudanese community to promote their services in a culturally appropriate manner.</p>	<p>Creates self-employment and increases access to income in the Sudanese community.</p> <p>Establishment of functional small business like restaurants, hairdressing, retails etc would foster better understanding of Sudanese culture and their acceptance by mainstream Australians.</p>
5.10 Skills and recognition services (SRS)	SRS to collaborate with the Sudanese community to develop information sessions and referral processes to inform skilled Sudanese, refugee support organisations and JSA's about Skilled Recognition	<p>Research to be carried out to establish why Sudanese refugees are not accessing SRS services.</p> <p>SRS to ensure services meet the needs of skilled Sudanese by holding discussions with the</p>	<p>Allows smooth transition of Sudanese with overseas skills, qualifications and experiences to Australian job market and workplace</p>

	Suggested options	Actions	Expected outcomes
	Services	<p>community.</p> <p>SRS establish a formal referral process with refugee support organisations.</p> <p>SRS to actively promote these services throughout the Sudanese community.</p>	environment.
5.11 Workers' rights and OHS	Provision of community education on workers' rights and occupational health and safety (OHS) to members of the Sudanese community.	<p>Incorporation of workers' rights and OHS into Adult Migrants English curricula.</p> <p>Sudanese community and unions to work together to consider collaborative opportunities - particularly in having Sudanese industrial officers who are able to reach members of their community</p> <p>Provision of information about workers' rights and OHS to be provided through JSA's.</p> <p>Seek funding for provision of community education about workers' rights and OHS issues in the Sudanese community.</p> <p>Conduct further research into determining the association between an injury and the incident leading to the injury and how this may impact on reporting.</p>	Empowerment of members of the Sudanese community through awareness of workers' rights and OHS issues. This would foster better relationships between Sudanese employees and their employers and could lead to reduction in workplace injuries among members of the Sudanese community.

	Suggested options	Actions	Expected outcomes
5.12 Establish a reference group	There is a need to establish a well-structured reference group to advocate for employment and related issues/challenges in the Sudanese community.	<p>Members of Sudanese community to establish reference group that will identify employment and related issues/challenges and to strategise how these could be addressed. Set achievable goals.</p> <p>Initiate engagement with DFEEST, DEEWR, DIISTRE, Business SA, Job Services Australia and Professional associations in order to advocate for Sudanese employment, to coordinate and develop resources for members of the Sudanese community.</p>	<p>Gives Sudanese community a unified voice by advocating for employment and related issues on behalf of the community.</p> <p>Lead to increase members of the Sudanese participant in employment.</p>
5.13 Collaborate with JSA's and Government services	The Sudanese community Associations in South Australia to explore ways to work collaboratively with JSA's and Government services such as DFEEST, SRS, Skills SA, DEEWR.	<p>Sudanese community associations, supported by ARA, MRCSA and other refugee support organisations to collaborate with Job Services Australia providers in SA and other job networks with regard to creating employment pathways for members of their community and addressing employment issues. DEEWR to support the Sudanese community in making collaborative connections with Job Service Australia providers in SA.</p> <p>DFEEST and JSAs to collaborate with the Sudanese community in the provision of information about work opportunities and living conditions in regional areas of Australia.</p>	Increase employment prospects in the Sudanese community.

	Suggested options	Actions	Expected outcomes
5.14 Employer liaison/job placement program	Establish an employer liaison, job placement and mentoring program for Sudanese with overseas or Australian acquired qualifications and skills	DEEWR to support this program through a JSA appointing a Sudanese employment liaison officer with the support of professional associations and the Sudanese community. Once established, this program will provide mentoring systems to support smooth transition into the workplace, including individualised work experience in their professions. The program will advocate for members of Sudanese community with qualifications and skilled by directly liaising with potential employers and professional associations. DFEEST's SA Works Regional networks to assist Sudanese access work experience and mentoring in rural areas.	This will enable the smooth transition of Sudanese with qualifications and skills into entry-level jobs in areas of their professional training.
5.15 Further research	Conduct further research to determine the extent of Sudanese job seekers' knowledge about current employment services and programs and a case study research approach to review the servicing of Sudanese refugees by Job Service Australia.	Further research into the extent of knowledge and uptake of employment services and programs will be necessary in order to ascertain how information about employment and skills services may be better disseminated into the Sudanese community. Further research incorporating a case studies approach is required to review the servicing of Sudanese refugees by Job Service Australia. By doing so, it will be possible to ascertain whether reports that we have heard of inappropriate client servicing are an accurate reflection of what is occurring, or whether Sudanese clients hold unrealistic expectations or incorrect knowledge of the services provided by Job Service Australia.	Gaps between service delivery and Sudanese job seeker access can be identified.  Employment programs and services can be better targeted to address the needs of Sudanese job seekers.



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