



Supporting Communities,
Strengthening Voices

East Web

PROJECT FACTS

South Sudanese Development Agency Youth Access Program

In 2006/2007, of the almost 4,000 humanitarian arrivals in Victoria, 30% were aged between 12 and 24 years old. Of these, 276 were from Sudan – almost a quarter of the intake of people in this age bracket. This increase reflects a clear need for services to address the resettlement needs of these young people (*Department of Immigration and Citizenship* <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/statistics/>).

According to the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI), the resettlement needs of young people are unique. They are required to “negotiate education and employment pathways (many with a history of disrupted or no formal education), a new language and culture, make new friends, and navigate unfamiliar and complex social systems (such as Centrelink, Australian laws, public transport), while also negotiating individual, family and community expectations” (*CMYI Information Sheet "Young People and Resettlement"* available at <http://www.cmyi.net.au>).

The South Sudanese Development Agency is using Basketball to meet these challenges – and the most important service of all – a place to have fun!

The Youth Access program is a twice weekly basketball training program for 50 Sudanese young people in Melbourne’s Eastern suburbs. At these twice weekly congregations, the organisers of the program invite representatives from service providers and government agencies to come along and provide information to the young people about what services are available to assist them with their resettlement. These services include tutoring programs, Centrelink, health services and the police.

According to program organiser Gatwech Kulung, “we know all about the benefits of sport for young people, about health and fitness, and about the ways sport helps young people to make friends and keep them out of trouble. But team sports also build trust, and this is the most important thing for young people from Sudan who have learnt not to trust anyone”.

Building trust in services means young people are much more likely to make use of them – and this will greatly ease their resettlement experience. Using sport as the forum for access to these services means many of the resettlement needs of young people are being met in the one place – a significant contribution to ensuring the development of happy, healthy communities.

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The EastWeb Fund

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