



SOUTH SUDANESE
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
IN VICTORIA INC

**South Sudanese
Community Association
in Victoria Inc.
ABN - 94824971634
PO BOX 377
TAYLORS LAKES VIC 3037**

Further Submission to Inquiry into Migrant Settlement Outcomes

To: Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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I note that we appeared before the Inquiry into Migrant Settlement Committee on 22 February 2017. The Committee asked the association to provide submissions with respect to gap year. I outlined the submission as follows:-

GAP YEAR

The idea of Gap year has been proposed by the Community Association because it allows young people aged from 14 to 25 an opportunity to go overseas in African Countries like Kenya or Uganda to undertake studies in boarding schools or technical colleges. These schools often are strictly controlled with high level of disciplining from the teachers.

The Parents or Guardians usually visit on the weekends or the students are allowed an opportunity over the weekends to go visit their families or relatives if any live locally.

The gap year will be left at the initiation of the concerned parents that their children are at risk of recidivism or being negatively influenced by other young people. It can also be recommended that the justice department or the law enforcement agency offer this as a diversionary program if the parents or relatives or guardians of the young person identify that there will be a likely benefit in sending young person for a gap year experience.

There will be a need to consult the South Sudanese community or South Sudanese sub-community leadership or any other not for profit community association that work with young people like the Centre for Multicultural Youth. There may be other agencies that work with newly arrived migrants or South Sudanese Community and these not for profit association have knowledge on how to reach out to the grassroots members of the community e.g. an organisation like Migrant Resource Centre in St Albans, Micare new Hope Foundation who have long term employed South Sudanese community members who are leaders in the community and have community's interest at heart.

The gap year should be a community led initiative but if however there is need to use other not for profit sector than it should be done so.

BENEFIT OF GAP YEAR

1. The gap year is a break away from any potential bad influence from other peers.
2. The tendency for recidivism is addressed by an early intervention.
3. The young person is reconnected with their community's values in an African setting overseas and disconnected from bad peer influence.
4. The young person sees the difference in lack of opportunities in Africa and learn to appreciate and embrace the opportunities readily available and afforded to them here in Australia.
5. The young person is brought up in a stricter African parenting in a boarding school as teachers will have stricter control and imparting strict discipline.
6. The young person will learn to embrace communal or egalitarian values live by their African Australians parents or guardians by ensuring that they respect the law and show respect for authorities and their community and wider Australian people who have taken them in as refugees or migrants and offered them a place to call home.

COSTS

The costs comprise of boarding school or day school fees, food, travel costs from Australia to Kenya or Uganda, uniform, etc.

The maximum costs for the whole gap year is about \$5,000 per young person per year. The average cost is \$3,000 excluding food and travel costs.

One model to fund this is either to allocate a grant for it or perhaps propose an ongoing study allowance subject to proof of enrolment at a school in Kenya or Uganda. This process can be controlled by the parents and the South Sudanese community or sub community leadership to avoid any opportunists who may perhaps take advantage and hijack the good intentions behind this process or reasoning.

COMMUNITY LED SELF DEPORTATION

The community at the moment is inundated with several young people whose visa have been cancelled. This of course though a good deterrence in itself, it is not the solution.

I have personally been involved in a community led patrols and have come across numerous young people who are highly aware of the deportation. There are many young people who are currently in jail whose visas have been cancelled and who have written statements about their self-predicament. Many of these young people point out many factors such as alcohol, isolation, lack of employment and mental health issues etc. as factors that have led them to recidivism. Some are simply young and stupid.

Although it is impacting that young people's world is crushed once their visas have been cancelled and now come a late realisation of their criminal behaviour at late notice, the act of deportation itself is not a solution and at the same time inhumane. This is because of the following reasons:-

1. The deterrence becomes imminent only to those who have or are being deported or have had their visas being appealed after cancellation and are on the verge of being removed from Australia. This cohort of young people will therefore not be impacted by the deterrence. The deterrence should rather be to the wider community or young people who are outside there at large causing problems or offending or starting to offend.
2. Young people whom we see offending today are young and stupid. They lack a sense of maturity to realise the consequence of their offending and criminal activities.
3. The young people are being deported to countries they have no clue or have never lived in. many of the young people committing offending today came to Australia as young as 2 years of age and above. All they know is Australia and no any other country.
4. The young person is being condemned to death indirectly. There are blood feud or ethnic blood feud in countries like South Sudan and these feuds knows no boundaries or who is innocent. The young people may be a victim of revenge of blood feud or ethnic war and may get caught in cross war or fire. This should weigh strongly on the decision makers in that they have to be able to live in knowing in their conscience that they have killed or send someone to their death.
5. Deportation is a permanent break up of families and those who have had their young sons or daughters deported will not settle. You punish the criminal only to end up punishing innocent mums and dads or relatives or guardians who brought their kids at the hope of providing them with better lives. This has huge impact on the remaining relatives here in Australia.
6. The community feels targeted because the deportations are only applied to the young people of ethnic backgrounds and recent migrants. This creates an argument of **US VS. THEM theory**. The aggrieved families mostly spend huge amount of money trying to appeal visa process that may or may not be successfully appeal to reinstate the cancelled visa.

This often drains other remaining relatives financially as they have to spend money to try keeping their loved young criminals in the country on the belief they will grow and be better people and give back to Australia.

RECOMMEDNATION

1. There is a need to implement the gap year experience.
2. There is a need to legislate a community led self-deportation so that the parents or relatives or the community or guardians can apply to the tribunals or courts to have the young person remove. The application should be fast track and a process be made easy for the State Police or Federal Police and passport office to issue passports or travel documents easily and to help remove or enforce the removal of young person. This self-deportation will mean young people who are at risk of recidivism or on the verge of offending are helped before accumulating criminal records which will either lead to long term imprisonment or deportation or becoming worthless members of the community.