

RefugeeWeek 2021 v3

[Start of recorded material at 00:00:00]

Facilitator: Hello everyone. Welcome to this Author Talk with Dr William Abur. Before we get started, I'd like to just say, do an acknowledgement of country. Wyndham City Council recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Custodians of the lands on which Australia was founded. Council acknowledges the Wathaurong, Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation as the first Traditional Owners of the lands in which Wyndham City is being built. Council pays respects to the wisdom and diversity of past and present Elders. We share commitment to nurturing future generations of Elders in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce our guest tonight, we've got Dr William Abur with us. He is a researcher and lecturer in social work. He's researched a range of different areas. Some of these include refugee settlement, mental health, trauma, and youth and family wellbeing. He has also worked in secondary schools, community mental health and settlement services. Prior to coming to Australia as a refugee from Kenya, he worked in refugee camps as a counsellor and a manager for the counselling centre for seven years.

Dr Abur is the first speaker to share his story via a new community stories program, and we look forward to offering further talks later in the year. Welcome Dr William Abur.

Dr William Abur: Thank you, thank you, Dayle. I really appreciate the opportunity that you get me. Just in a few minutes, I will be asking the audience to bear with me so I can set up.

This week is the Refugee Week and I choose to do talk about my book which is also related with the refugees and it's about documenting the refugees' journey. Before I launch into this, the first thing that I wanted to do, I wanted to acknowledge the Wyndham City, especially the library community and the team that are working there, I wanted to pay, acknowledge their work and the support that they offer. Also, some of my friends who have done this work behind the scenes in term of promotion.

Having said that, I wanted to acknowledge the country and pay my respects to all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, the custodian of this land. I want to pay my respect to the Elders, past, present, and also the future generation.

So, if you look at the title of this book, you will face some question, why is it *A New Life*? Why would it be, you know, why did I choose that title to say *A New Life With Opportunities and Challenges*? Now, as I said, it is about refugees' journey, a journey of South Sudanese that migrate to Australia, and most of them were in refugee's camp.

They came to Australia and settled in Australia and begin their new life which is with opportunities. And opportunities such as education, opportunities such as work opportunities. Opportunities such as having a capacity or social engagement that you can be able to travel from place to place or from a state to state. I'm using this example for those who came through east Africa. Those who were in refugee's camp, they were confined in the camp, and they were not allowed to travel a lot, the way that we live here in Australia. If I wanted to go to Sydney, and of course before COVID-19, if I want to leave now to go to Sydney, if COVID-19 is not there, I would be able to go. That's where *The New Life With Opportunities* come from. You look at education aspect, you look at the freedom of movement. You look at the job opportunities that you can have. That can give you that privilege of setting your life and do what you want to do.

Now, the challenges part is well known for many of us who are in this forum and especially those who are keen to know what is happening with refugees or know what is happening with the settlement of South Sudanese. So, there are a lot of challenges that happen, especially with refugees or migrant from African community. That also includes things such as parenting, for example. Cultural shock, for example. Managing some of their expectation such as understanding the new way of living, the new life, the new system, navigating the system. It's quite challenging for somebody who just migrate from somewhere where the system is very different, the language is very different. And then you settle here, it is a lot of work for you to be able to navigate and learn from there. That's where this idea of title come from.

Now, I wanted to highlight to the audience to bring them back to the process of migration and resettlement. That process of migrations and resettlements is not an easy journey. It's a journey that involves making a tough decision whether have individual or a family to make a decision and to move to another country, to seek for a better life and opportunities as I mentioned. It also can be uncertainty for people when they move, while they are making those decisions, sometimes they are not aware where they are going to. Whether they are going to meet those opportunities that they are dreaming for, or whether they are going to have peace of mind that they are looking for, or whether it is going to turn out to be a different life in term of challenges.

So, if you look at, I'm talking about families and young people. Some families enjoy settling here. Some families, they find it very confronting. They find that really it is more difficult to parent their children, it is more difficult to have peace of mind, it is more difficult to meet some of their expectations, the expectation that they dreamed for. The things that they wanted to achieve become more difficult for them to reach because, either because of the language difficulties or either because of other barrier to their way of navigating or understanding the system of the country. That itself is something that people don't realise when they are making those decisions.

There are some people that can also, they are very much aware, they are

very much aware that yes, I am migrating to a new area, new country, that will require me to have a tolerance. That will require me to begin learning new things, a new language, a new way of doing things. Yes, I may have a cultural shock. Yes, I need to integrate my own way of understanding the system, the law.

And sometimes, yes, there are some prejudice that may come in, for example. The term, refugees, become a bigger issue that people, even if you live here for over 15 years or around 15 years, I begin to realise that some people don't like the term, being called refugees anymore. They are questioning, they are saying, how long am I going to be called refugee? Is it ... how does work in the media? Even somebody who is professional can be, and I hope that it can be described, oh, refugee and all that. Even if you have said, OK, I had enough time, I don't see myself being a refugee. I made a decision; I have accepted to be the citizen of this country. I don't need to be described as a refugee anymore. Those are the new ideas that are coming in that I'm hearing from the community, and I also am hearing from my own family.

If you were to ask me, what is this book about? So, to answer that question, is that this book provide some of the critical issues that the community, the South Sudanese community encountered during their journey of settlement within Australia. So, that book documents the story, the challenges of the community. It also documents the settlement issues, the settlement challenges that may also not, that are not only apply for South Sudanese community, they are also apply to the other community that are also come here as refugees. And I'm thinking about asylum seekers who are here. Some of them are going through hardship like the other people that were settling before. Yes, the issues of African communities are still there. They haven't gone away. We do have issues with young people; families are not settling well. And that can take time. It is a journey that cannot be addressed within a short time.

Now people are saying, well, you know people are committing these serious whatever crime or activity that are not, community is not pleased with. Is it something to do with their culture or where they come from? The community is saying, no, it's got nothing to do with their culture or where they come from. Most of these young people were born between, not in South Sudan, but they were born between different countries, I guess. In the refugee camp they have not really witnessed some of the difficulties that the parent might have witnessed.

They might have learned a new culture which is not the culture of their own parent or their own country. Yeah, there might be some influence there, but that is not, I'm hearing from the community that it is no, we need to be able to position ourselves clearly.

This book is valuable to the community members, to the community group. It is also valuable to the settlement workers, and valuable to the government, and to the council, to the policy makers. People who are working with these

communities that are, whether they are migrant, or you call them refugees community. This book document some of the insightful knowledge that can be so useful to you as a worker or a policymaker or somebody who is working in that space. Whether you are working with young people or families, you will be able to get this, some of the useful information in this book.

So, as I said, so I just wanted to give the overview of the book and just a quick information of what this book is and why it is important, and what the community can get out of it. So, there are two parts; I talk about employment, and I talk about participation in a sport. So, the engagement, the engagement of the community, whether people are engaged in a sport, or they are engaged in employment, those are the opportunities that are available for the community.

Now, if you are not engaged, if you are not participating in anything, in those areas, or are not connected, if you are not connected with the council activities, for example, then your settlement will be different to those individual or those families that are engaged or that are participating in those areas such as employment opportunity or somebody who take his children to participate in a sport. Or a young person who takes the opportunity to say, well, I need to be engaged in a sport.

And I use the example, thinking about some of the good players from South Sudanese. If you look at Majak Daw for example, Aliir Aliir for example. Australia loves, we love our sport. We love to see these young people engaging in a sport. So, the integration of Aliir Aliir and Mayark Dal is completely different from his peer, from his colleague, some of his colleagues, some of the members within his South Sudanese community. You would find that it is completely different, his integration is more higher than the other members of the community, or the other young people who used to say, "Well, I don't want to participate in a higher level, but I will just limit myself within South Sudanese community."

It's the same thing, you know. My connection with you guys who are in this forum, compared to the other member of South Sudanese who may not, who have not taken that opportunity to connect is very much different. This is where those opportunities come in. This is where you build your social capital. This is where you build your ... whether it's a psychological capital or physical capital, this is where you can get it.

And for heart of the community, my recommendation, I normally say, yes, refugees or people from refugees background need to be supported. They need to be supported by the whole community and especially at the council level, and also at different government level or neighbourhood or different organisation. They need to be welcome; they need to be given those opportunity of support and engage with them and give them that opportunity to connect with other things that they may not be able to connect. In that way, you would be able to do your job as a good citizen of this country, somebody who is building the society. Then you would actually have a very

good feeling at the end of the day, and you will be so proud.

I know this, I know this, a lot of people within Australia who supported young South Sudanese people, and those young South Sudanese people become successful or their family, they grow up and they are in a different level. Those people, the credit go to them, the credit goes to those people who were supporting them. It is a great opportunity to be able to support and to be able to assist as much as you can.

Now this time is, I call it the interview time. Yes, you may be able to ask questions online and they will be read out; or if you want to ask your question, whatever, you turn your mic on or you unmute yourself and ask question, it is totally fine with me. I normally believe that in such, the best way for people to learn is not about me talking over the people. It is about people ask the question. When you ask questions, the area that you are not too sure, whether it is a area of mental health, or area of employment, or area of the sport, or area of discrimination, for example, feel free to ask that question. These are the areas that I'm aware of, I may not know it all, but I'm actually aware of these in terms of my research. Feel free to put your question there, I mean, ask questions and Dayle will be able to facilitate that. With this, I wanted to stop here, and say thank you for listening to me.

Facilitator: Thanks, Dr Abur. So, you'll have to put your questions in the meeting chat, we can't put on our mics during this. We've got one question which is from Micah, and she said: You were talking about former refugees not wanting to be called refugees anymore, and I am curious whether you could give a rough idea of how soon/long after their arrival that a refugee would have made that mental shift for themselves? And is there a commonly preferred term like new resident or new settler or immigrant, that they prefer?

Dr William Abur: Great question, great question. Now, if somebody, a first step is when you migrate here, yes, you are given that, permanent resident, for example. When you are given a permanent residence, yes, there is a possibility people can still play the term there, the term for refugees, migrants. But once you are somebody accepted and say well, "I am a citizen of this country, I participate in the oaths of saying, yes, I will be able to do the right thing in this country", and sign that agreement, then I don't see myself being a refugee again. Or, I don't want to be described as a refugee when I'm actually a citizen of this country and I hold that paper, or the citizenship certificate and people are still describing me as a refugee. It's a bit disappointing and it's a bit annoying for some other people.

Yes, what is the best way of describing whether we say the emerging community, yes? You know, in term of, people who are working a policy space, yes, you are welcome to use those terms: emerging community, newly arrived community. Well, I don't know whether the South Sudanese are still being described as a newly arrived communities or community, or they are still be described, emerging community, or we use our beautiful term of multicultural communities. And we narrow down whatever is specific community that we want to see.

But we don't want to see this thing in the media, because media has been unfair. It has played unfair politics on the community and in different levels. So, and I give you example of some of the media saying that make the community feel disappointed, is that last year during the COVID-19, there was a report that was made by the former office holder for Abbott. And he said, "South Sudanese are the one spreading the COVID-19 in Victoria". By that time, when he made that comment, there was not any single person that has got COVID, that was having a COVID infection within South Sudanese community in Victoria, that we are aware. That is how the prejudice are. That is how it is. Somebody who worked in a very high level of the government should have done diligence work to put that in the media. It just, it's a simple thing, and that is my message to the media that they need to do a diligence work before putting the message out. Thank you.

Facilitator: Thank you for that. We've got a couple more questions. We've got Stephanie, Stefan, has asked, said, Thank you Dr William. A question for you: How common is intergenerational tension/conflict between parents and children, and would you partly attribute the justice involvement of some young people to this intergenerational disconnect?

Dr William Abur: Thank you, Stefan. Thank you very much, that's a great question. So, you ask a very good question, a question that I'm very passionate about. Yes, the intergenerational conflicts is one of the reason, one of the reason why we see young people in a juvenile detention, or in a youth justice system. Is because those young people are not taking the word or advice from the parent. They think that they are more, more knowledgeable with the system, with the Australian way of life, and therefore they are not able to consider the advice from the parent.

Now, there are two, I will say this in two parts. That is a issue of young people; but also, there is a issue, a very serious issue with parent as well, with families, if you like. So, most of the people forgot that they have migrated to this country and therefore their parenting style, the way that they were brought up, the way that my parent brought me up is completely different with the way that I'm going to bring up my children. So, the language way that my parent used when I was young person, is completely different with the language that I can use here.

My father, when we were brought up, yes, you could settle here, when South Sudanese settle here, you could find that some of the parent were having a bit of limited English, for example, they did not have access to the better education. And therefore, teenagers who have gone through the system, they speak well; in term of composing their message or communicating, they communicate well. And some of them find themselves being interpreters for their parent or reading the letters for their parent. And therefore, so that remove away the parenting responsibility or the power of the parent and the young people see themselves that, OK, you know, I'm able to advise you or to give you this information about the

system, and now you are telling me this; I'm not going to listen to you. That's where the tension is.

There is also that the parent projects their own trauma, their frustration, you know, based on what they have gone through, based on their life journey; they also project this on children, on the young people. And that caused the tension, that create the tension. So, you cannot lecture me about your, you know, whatever, your culture, the way that you were brought up. That does not work in a modern world. That is the message from young person. A young person will say, "Well you can't tell me that you can't go out, I have to go out with my friend. You can't tell me, that, oh you know, 'You come and do this or that'. I've got to do what I want to do."

Parent feel that they are completely disarmed. They don't have a responsibility. I mean, their responsibility has been taken away, because they find themselves that they have been threatened by either young people saying, "Well, if you don't, I'm going to report you to the system; I'm going to report you at the school; I'm going to, I can either call police for myself; Or I can, the Child Protection is going to come and question you." Those are the things that is scared the parent and because they have a very limited knowledge actually, so that has scared them and not to perform their job, you know, to look after young people.

And of course, they also project what I call their own frustration, their own trauma, their own whatever they have gone through, they project on young people, which is unfair at the same time. It is also unfair that young person is downplayed saying, "Well, I can't listen to you as a parent, so don't lecture me about your, the way that you were brought up. It is none of my business and I don't want to hear that."

So, Stefan, feel free to do follow up. I hope I have answered your question. I hope that I have given you some idea in term of the tension and thing that can contribute into the youth justice issues. Thank you.

Facilitator: Thank you. So, we've got another question from Swadi. Oh, and Stefan says, "Thank you Dr William, much appreciated." The question from Swadi is: There seems to be a lot of emphasis on engagement in sports. Why is this? Is it because of this country's emphasis on sport or a preference on part of the South Sudanese immigrants? What about engagement in other past times?

Dr William Abur: Swadi, you just, you just ask the question that I was having a conversation with my son last week. It's a very interesting question. So, most of the young people from South Sudanese including my own son play the basketball. And they enjoy, they see that is a area that they can compete, they can show their talent, they can show that – and most of them do have a dream of going to play, or joining the college in America, for example. You know, the basketball league, or whatever, you know, which is what is happening in America.

Now, that would be completely – I support the idea of the sport, because in my research when I did my research, I look at those young people that were engaged in the sport, and their level of understanding and connection with Australian society. And I find that their connection with Australian society was more better compared to those young people that are not either connected with Australian community, and they are not even either connected with their own South Sudanese community. And these are the young people, I call them, they form their small community; and their small community, for example, they may live in the – I mean, you know, get their accommodation, the group of young people come there, they gather there, they do what they want to do, they go out the park, they sit there, they do whatever they want to do. They enjoy, they've got nothing to do with South Sudanese activities, they've got nothing to do with Australian community activities. They may end up creating some activity that may cause problem for them where the police may come in and have some suspicions to say, "Well, we need to know what is happening here."

And sometime, young people are young people, they may end up drinking and fight there and cause a lot of problem. I think that part is, Stefan, will be so interesting to know. Those young people, I call them, they form their own small community. If you compare the young people who are engaged in a sport, and those young people who form their small community, and that may take – who are, they end up juvenile detention, you would understand why there is empathy in this sport.

Now, coming back to this, I'm somebody who is passionate about education, and I wanted young people to set their bar high in term of education. And I was having a conversation with my son to say, "Well, you know, let's talk about education; where did you set your bar high in term of education?" And he said, "Well, I wanted to be an athlete, that is an area that I am passionate about." I said, "Yes, I understand that is one area. But I don't want you to be able to have only that, the only option; I want you to think about some other option and set your bar high in that case. The only way that you can compete in this modern world, you've got to be able to set your bar high."

I went back and thought about, you know, the African American young people who are engaged in a sport. And although, you know, don't get me wrong, some of them do really do well, they really do well in term of working hard. And I realise that a sport is a hard work, it's not easy; you have to work hard. Compared to somebody who said, "Well, I need to focus on education, and then you know, do more reading and do more homework." And compared to somebody that has to attend a training all the time and you have to do a lot of physical work, it is a lot of work, it is a hard work. And I said, "Look, those young people in America, or here, they are doing a very tough job for them to get into that level."

And I didn't say this to my son, but I came to realise and question myself and say, well, was all these young people black American who are now become, you know, successful in this sport, if we were to look at their

backgrounds, the sport tend to be – well, most of the young people that are engaged in this area, they tend to be young people that are emerging from mostly disadvantaged communities or families and they have to work hard to go there. I never seen, I have not seen, and maybe correct me, I was thinking about some of the millionaire people whether they have really put their kid into the sport and work hard in the sport and be athlete or whatever, the higher level of the sport. Don't get me right - I mean don't get me wrong, the sport is a beautiful thing because we all need to go and do exercise in a modern world. It is something that is good for health, physical capital or even psychological capital, you can gain that through sport. And of course, if you are employed there, you can get financial capital, and of course you get your social capital through networking with a group.

Yes, your question is, has its place. Why is it only sport that we engage people in; why we don't think about other bigger ideas or bigger activities to engage young people? It is a question that I have thought about, and I thought about it, you know, with my own children. I haven't discussed this with the community, but I thought about it with my own children. And I don't want to be somebody that is engaging children; my young people are in a sport only, and not setting, you know, setting the bar on the other side. I want to be able to balance them, to set the bar high for both. So, that's how I see it. I hope I have answered your question.

Facilitator: Thank you. Swadi just said, “Thank you, Dr Abur, I understand better now, I was wondering about the creative arts, music, etcetera, but not to worry.”

We've got another question – we've got a few come in here – we've got our next question from Rhonda. She's asked: Could there be stronger mentoring programs for young people in Wyndham? And also are there, sorry, are there particular challenges in keeping young people from the South Sudanese community connected to education in Wyndham? What support do they need to keep them participating in all levels of education?

Dr William Abur: Great, thank you. The first thing, mentoring is a great idea, and it's something that I'm passionate about it. I want young people to be team up, whether they are team up with an individual person that can mentor them, that is a great way of helping a young person. So, if people are, put their hand up and say, “I'm ready to proceed and to help a young person and mentor a young person,” it is a great service to the community, and great service to the young person. So, I encourage people to be able to do the mentoring.

For example, I am one of the person that say, “I want to be able to mentor young people.” But sometime, you know, there are lack of resources that are also facing those individual that want to do the right thing, that want to support young people. They also need to be supported. So, that will be the question for public council, for example, if they want to set up the mentoring program that can support, give the resources to the mentees and mentors. But that will be the best way, they need to be supported. If people put their hand up, of course they need to be supported by the council, and

for them to be able to support young people as well. That's how I see it. Mentoring is a good thing and it's a, it has been, you know, it's something that has been done in many parts of the world, and especially in African communities, the mentoring is a bigger thing, they listen to the people that they know that there is something that they have to learn from.

Now, the difficulties, in term of education, in term of mentoring, the challenges that we face, and it is very common in any society, it's not only South Sudanese or migrant community. Now, the challenges is, any person who is, who find herself or himself as a disadvantaged person or a family, they are hard to be engaged. They don't have capacity to go and participate because they are overshadowed by whatever issues that they are facing, and therefore, they see whatever additional activities that they are going to do, they see it as a problem. And they don't want to engage. And that is a challenge that we are facing.

So, people may be, we may have a very wonderful program in Wyndham in term of mentoring or education, but you would also find that some people don't want to participate there, they don't want to engage there. Because they are highly vulnerable, or they are highly dysfunctional members of the community because of social issues that they are facing. When I say this, that includes even mental health, you know, mental health problem. So, those are the difficulties that we face.

So, those young people from disadvantaged families or communities, they see themselves, even just, you know, they don't have even a high level of having, ignoring, you a small comments at the school; that may be perceived that as a bullying or whatever. For someone to be able to say, well, it doesn't really apply to me and therefore I don't need to be bother about this. I need to focus on my work, I need to focus on what I want to achieve. That require you to have a high level of understanding and for you to be able to navigate that. And unfortunately, most of the young people who are in a vulnerable position, they don't have those skills; and therefore, they don't have capacity to participate in some of the activities that they need to engage to assist them. Thank you.

Facilitator: Thank you. We've got a couple more questions. I think it's Angela, she's under another name, so we've got: Thank you Dr Abur, I'm keen to hear some of your suggestions/recommendations on how governments or tiers can better support South Sudanese refugees. That was kind of just covered.

Dr William Abur: Yep.

Facilitator: So –

Dr William Abur: Yep, that's all right, that's OK, yeah.

Facilitator: We'll go to the next question, which is from Micah. Within the broad Australian sporting community, it is common for families to support their athletes by attending games and becoming involved in the club; is that

common for South Sudanese families of sporting teams?

Dr William Abur: Not really, not at all, not at all. I spent most of my time, most of my weekend, especially Saturday, I spend most of my time at Eagle Stadium because I live in Wyndham. And I have kids that play basketball, you know. So, my job on every Saturday is to spend time there. You know, I've got a young person that play in the morning around eight or nine; and then the other one, around 12 o'clock, the other one, sometime, one or two. So, I dedicate that time for my time to spend. But I don't see many parent from South Sudanese unfortunately. It's not, it's not to put the community down but it is something that I encourage the parent, I encourage the parent to be part of the sport, you know, club or sport journey for their young person if they want their young people to engage in a sport.

In that way, you know, many, many, many Australian families I have, they do come there, they enjoy. The grandparent, relative, parent, they come there and watch. You wouldn't go disappointed. When you see young person doing the right thing at the sport you would actually enjoy your time. I don't get bored when I go, you know, at Eagle Stadium. It's something that I enjoy, it become hobby for me that I spent that time and enjoy seeing my kids doing the right thing. Sometimes, yes, making a wrong choice in term of throwing the ball or not passing the ball or whatever; those are the things that can make the game more exciting.

So, yes, unfortunately, there's more work that needs to be done by the community leaders and by the family members, the parent, or people like me influential members. We need to be able to share this message to the community and encourage parent to support their young people through their journey when they are participating in a sport.

Facilitator: Thank you. Yeah, so Micah said, she wonders whether clubs need to be more welcoming, which is fair. I think every club would be different, really. And maybe they might be encouraged to assign some volunteers to show new families around. Yeah, so there's some good suggestions.

Dr William Abur: Good suggestion, Michael. It's ... club need to show leadership. You know, they have to show their leadership in the community. They need to be great role models for the community generally. And especially for the new families that are not too sure, that are not confident, that are still deciding; they are still saying, "Well, am I being welcome here?"

So, sport leaders, let's say team managers or coach or other people that are also involved in a club leadership, they need to be able to show this. And that is a good way of making the family that is, family welcome, and family confident to participate. By showing that, even just coming and say, "Yep." Have a conversation how the young person play, and have a conversation and has, "Is there anything that we need to do to support you, support young person, or do something that we can do." That's something the sport can do. The sport could not show, unfortunately, there are some people that are, they may show some behaviours that can be perceived as, the community

perceive as racist behaviour, for example, in there.

There was, this year, there was a young person that the club couldn't decide to put this young person from South Sudanese family, they decide to put this young person to the next level. Not because of his skill, being a competitor, but because the young person is tall and is perceived that, no, he is not playing in the right age. So, we need to put him up there. So, people have the conversation, the parent have conversation and coach, and they did not involve the family, and then they say, "Well you go there and go and play in that level, because you can't play in this level." The question was that the young person was questioned about his age, was asked "oh, can you show us your ID about your age, a young person produce it. Nobody that approached the family, nobody that approached people to say, "This is something that we wanted to know this." So, I came and learn about this through other person, other person that went and find out and have a chat with the young person. And the young person said, "Well, this is what happened." And that person said, "Why?" I was like, oh my god, this is – no, this is not right.

Yes, you can be put up based on your skill, based on your, you know, because there's no point if you have a good skill, there's no point in your playing in the lower team. So, you need to go up. But you can't be put up because of your size, because of your height. That is unfair, whoever made that. So, that's where I said the sport club need to show the leadership. Having said that though, I have also seen the great leaders in the sport area. I have seen a very huge improvement. I have seen people who are willing. They have that appetite. They really want to go extra mile. Good on them; that's a great work.

Some of these stories that we need to promote, I'm passionate about the Western Bulldog program. There was a young person this year that play, is a young person that I have worked with his family a few years ago. I support his family and he was really a vulnerable young person. But through the support of the club, support of the Western Bulldog, you wouldn't believe where that young person is now. He's a great man, grown up, people are – people who were supporting him, they were so proud and I was working his thing.

That's just example of what the leaders need to do, and good to the Western Bulldogs for doing that great service. It's not only for that young person, but the entire community.

Facilitator: Thank you, yeah. That's a bit of a ridiculous situation and I can attest as someone who actually plays football myself and is the tall person in the team. It doesn't, your height doesn't really matter if you don't have the skills, so you shouldn't be judged on that.

We've got another question here from Angela: In your book, do you cover the role of South Sudanese community leaders and community organisations in the positive settlement of, integration of the community?

Dr William Abur: Yes. I think I have page about the responsibility of the community, the responsibility of the community leaders. And I have page, you know, the partnership, the organisation working with the community. Now, I would, I may have not worded the way that I'm going to say; but I think the community leaders or influential members of the community, they also need to do their part. They also need to make a move. I don't think that it is helpful for them to say, "Well I wanted to live in my small block of these South Sudanese community, and I don't want to extend my network, and I don't want to engage in the next level, and I don't want to listen to the other part."

So, you should be able, you know, to get interact and learn, be ready to learn, and of course, be ready to share some ideas and take a responsibility. If we go wrong, we go wrong. Sorry, if you have gone wrong, so, it need to be corrected if there is, if you are gone wrong. You need to be able to accept the responsibility and make a correction there, rather than being defensive, for example. That's how I see it, that's where you can grow. You need to be able to take the sensitive feedback, rather than you reject totally whatever the information that you receive, you interpret it in a different way and that create sentiments in you or in the community.

I think we need to be able to have open mind and be willing to move and be willing to engage, you know, with a different community group with a different government organisation, with a different non-governmental organisation. We need to be able to engage. So, that is my message to the community. And community also need to take the responsibility to address some of the issues, you know, within, whether they are family issues, or they are community matters. They need to be able to address them, and say, "Hang on". And I give you an example here. If the young people are committing crime or doing a nasty activities, we need to see it as a community to say, "Hang on, where do we want to go from here; this is not what we came for. We came for a better opportunities. We did not come here to see young people being locked in." Why do we spend too much time on a negative, doing a negative activities that may end a young person or a person in a prison, for example?

So, that is a brave to me, this is a brave conversation that the community need to take and people need to accept and reflect on it, and learn from it, and move from it. And I say this to my family, too, my wife and my children, I say, "Well, whatever that happen to some of the families that we know, we don't need to take it for granted, and lap it up. We need to take it as a lesson for our life as well. We need to look at it and say, 'Well we need to learn something from here', and it's just what need to adjust." That's how we can improve the community. That's how we can integrate better. I hope I have answered the question? Yes, that's how I see it.

Facilitator: Thank you. We are getting to the end now, so we probably only have time for one more question, unfortunately there are two questions here. And Angela just said, "Thank you for the insightful response, yes you have

answered that question”, so that’s good. I’m going to have to go with Jasmine’s question that I’ve got here. Thank you, Dr Abur, for your talk. It was very insightful. My question is: do you think the second generation South Sudanese African teenagers settle well in Australia? If not, what are some of the works that still need to be done in supporting these teenagers?

Dr William Abur: Good question. I think, well, what need to be done? Yes, it come back to some of the mentoring programs for them. It may be – let me say this; I say this in a, respectfully to South Sudanese community and to people that work with South Sudanese community, and to the entire, you know, community that have sympathy with South Sudanese community, for example. I say this: if we don’t do something for these generations, that generations, their childrens, well, they will be disadvantaged, and their children will also be disadvantaged.

Something need to be done for the next generation to have a strong position. If we don’t think about it now, then the children that are growing up currently, in a dysfunctioning family, they are going to have their own family, and that their own family will also be dysfunctioning. That is how I see it. So, there is more work that need to be done. I think the thinking need to be put in here, and the thinking, people need to be willing, again, to accept; if you want to improve yourself, you need to be able to listen, you need to be able to receive goals, feedback, you know, painful feedback, and exciting feedback, if that is what you want to hear. You need to be able to receive the constructive feedback. And of course, those who are mentor, those who are support, they need to be able to get that and learn from it and give their life and move to the next one.

Yes, there is more work that need to be done. The support need to be done in term of putting young people in different programs that they enjoy, whether it is art – somebody mentioned art before – whether it is art, yes, that young person need to be supported and engaged in art. That can, in the next few years we can see different improvement there, whether it is young people that choose the sport pathway or education pathway, they need to be supported there.

And of course, journey is not ... any journey is painful. You know, when we grow up, you’ve got to, you also, you know there is some movement, there will be up and down. And that is something that needs to be shared with those young people to say, “Well, it is OK.” So, we may not get it, in the next few months or whatever, but we may be able to get it, so in the next few or whatever. So, that’s part of learning process. So, we need to be able to take that process gently and work consistently to support one another.

So, if we don’t do that, these young people, that is depend, or is asking question, or is looking after those young people in term of his research, their children will also be disadvantaged is something is not going to be, unless people need to do something. I hope I have answered that question.

Facilitator: Thank you. So, we’re now getting, we now have to finish up. Thank you

everyone for coming, and a big thank you to Dr William Abur for coming and giving this great talk with us and answering some of these questions. Yeah, so thanks for coming everyone, we've got some thank yous coming in from the guests, lots of ... Swadi said, "Thank you Dr William Abur, I find your approach is honest, down to earth, insightful, and caring." Which is great feedback to hear. And I agree.

Dr William Abur: Thank you.

Facilitator: Yeah, lots of thank yous. Anyway, thanks everyone for coming. Hopefully see you at some more of our community author talks, or stork community stories.

Dr William Abur: Yeah, thank you very much. I really enjoy, I hope I'm making the contribution into the society, and that is something that I want to do. I wanted to make you know, make my contribution as much as I could in this space, in the space that I'm able to share my ideas, my experience, my knowledge, with the community. I really appreciate people who use their time to participate here, it mean a lot for me, it's a great thing. Thank you. I hope all of us are, we want to do great things for the community. And for you, Dayle, thank you, and Micah, thank you very much for arranging this, managing this. And Kelly, Kelly, thank you very much, you know, for your work that you have done, the background work and you know set me up and of course, you know, we reach to this day. I hope I have done service today to the community or to the audience, thank you very much.

Facilitator: Yeah, thank you. I think you have done a great service today. Anyway, we'll see, well, not see, but hopefully we'll see some other people come through some future events; it was really great hearing from you today.

Dr William Abur: Great.

[End of recorded material at 01:04:18]