

# *Strengthening Families*

Toowoomba Multicultural Child Protection Project

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**pilot modules  
evaluation report**



## **Acronyms**

CAMS	Community Advocacy in the Multicultural Sector
DOCS	Department of Child Safety
FICT	Families in Cultural Transition
LAMP	Local Area Multicultural Partnership
QPASST	Queensland Program for Survivors of Torture and Trauma
SCADDA	Sudanese Community Association Darling Downs Australia
TASC	The Advocacy and Support Centre
TMCPP	Toowoomba Multicultural Child Protection Project
TRAMS	Toowoomba Refugee and Migrant Support

### ***Strengthening Families* Toowoomba Multicultural Child Protection Project Pilot Modules Evaluation Report**

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# Foreword

Sudanese families who have recently arrived in Australia experience parenting differently from other groups in the community in a number of important ways.

Sudanese families have a culture and practice around parenting that values parental roles played out within an extended family and kinship group. Adjusting to Australian norms of parenting, as well as changing roles within their own families since settlement here, have presented Sudanese parents with particular challenges. Family members are often not aware of the role of child protection and do not access the services available to them.

The *Strengthening Families* Pilot Modules Evaluation Report describes the outcomes of three pilot training modules in parenting education delivered to Toowoomba's Sudanese families during August and September 2008.

The modules, which took the form of workshops, enabled community agencies in Toowoomba to collectively and systematically address the issues that Sudanese parents face in bringing up their children in Australia. The evaluation of these pilot modules has created a resource that will help agencies and workshop facilitators in delivering parenting education to this community in the future.

The process of developing the *Strengthening Families* pilot modules has resulted in a wealth of ideas exchanged among agencies, Sudanese community representatives, and workshop facilitators and participants. *Strengthening Families* is part of the ongoing effort by the Sudanese community themselves in interpreting lifestyle and parenting information in terms they can understand and apply in their daily lives.

It is hoped that the evaluation report speaks with all our voices and gives readers new ideas, information and perspectives on parenting training for Sudanese families. Sudanese parents' courage, skill and humour as they face the challenges of bringing up children in a new home can also be seen here.

Many thanks to the facilitators and participants who generously made room for the evaluation process during the pilot workshops. A special thank you for their wisdom and guidance to the members of the Toowoomba Multicultural Child Protection Project, which helped shape the evaluation approach, and in particular to Maria O'Keefe and Abraham Mabior from the Department of Child Safety.

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# Executive summary

The overall finding of the evaluation of the pilot modules of the *Strengthening Families* Toowoomba Multicultural Child Protection Project (TCMPP) is that the modules successfully and effectively achieved the aim of reinforcing positive family functioning among Sudanese families, and giving space for Sudanese adults to share their parenting experiences in Australia and the Sudan.

The pilot modules also achieved a related and key aim of the Project, which was to help break down misunderstandings and misconceptions about child protection legislation and build closer relationships between the Sudanese community and family services.

These findings are evidenced in the strong attendance levels in all modules, and the active participation by Sudanese adults in the modules and the genuine engagement with their facilitators and the issues presented to them. Participants found the training relevant to their needs and the challenges they are facing. They reported that they felt involved with the content, that the presenters had done an 'excellent job' and that they would advise family members and friends to take part in future course offerings.

The workshop model proved to be an effective delivery method for adult learners with the varied educational backgrounds that are characteristic of the Sudanese community. The workshops were highly interactive, which allowed participants to explore the issues of parenting both with facilitators and among themselves.

For these participants, an important aspect of the workshops was the input from agencies with differing responsibilities in the area of family services delivery. This input gave participants an opportunity to discuss directly with workers the concerns they have with parenting and child safety, and the cultural and legal complexities they are dealing with as recent arrivals.

Participants reported that, for them, a key component of the modules' success was the space that was given for them to talk about their experiences in parenting in Australia in a group, and to compare these with their lives in the Sudan. This has helped them frame the changes they are experiencing in a more understandable way.

The strategies used by workshop organisers and facilitators to promote the modules in the target community and to recruit attendees, such as easy-to-attend information sessions, a variety of training venues, family-friendly timetabling, support with transport and on-site childcare amenities, resulted in a strong response from the community and consistently high attendance levels across all modules.

The teaching and learning strategies, supported by the use of interpreters, on the whole were appropriate for adults from a culturally and linguistically diverse community with wide ranging educational experiences. However, the differing literacy proficiencies across the groups show that in future there is a need for printed information materials relevant to the community that can be used by participants both inside and outside the training setting, and can act as a support to the discussion and question-and-answer training format.

The importance of gender-based space was demonstrated throughout the training, and a combination of women- and men-only, as well as mixed gender, sessions will

need to be continued in future workshops to ensure that all participants can contribute.

Most importantly, both the Sudanese community and the agencies present at the training have affirmed the need to work closely together to build on the success of the pilot program, and welcomed the importance given by Sudanese parents to attending future training.

In summary, the TCMPP Working Groups, with membership from a wide range of government and non-government agencies and the Sudanese community, and the training facilitators have designed and implemented a major pilot initiative, with the capacity to offer valued and effective parenting education for this community through further workshops.

## **Key findings**

### **Module development**

- The Department of Child Safety, the Department of Communities, the Toowoomba Police District and supporting agencies successfully introduced the TCMPP Project to the community, obtained community endorsement and refined the Project activities in line with community concerns and expectations
- The TCMPP Working Groups consulted effectively with the Sudanese community during module development, attending events such as church and community gatherings to promote cooperation and contact with community leaders, and involved Sudanese work trainees and spokespersons in attending TCMPP Working Groups meetings where module content was discussed.

### **Module delivery**

- Fifty-four Sudanese adults attended the three workshop modules.
- Facilitators effectively coordinated taxi buses and community transport, as well as childcare volunteers on site.
- Childcare is essential to ensuring attendance by members of families with under school-age children.
- All three modules started and finished on time.
- The course content in all three modules was focused, relevant and of interest to participants, with participants reporting that the right issues were being addressed and that they recognised the need for the information.
- The module timetabling, and the three-hour workshop duration, enabled parents to take and collect children to and from school before and after the session, as well as maintain attention and participation in discussions.
- On occasions, interpreters had to translate work-related terminology, acronyms, Australian words and concepts, not readily used in Sudanese families; however, it is unclear without an assessment process in the course whether participants understood these terms fully.
- In all three modules, some participants did not need an interpreter and preferred using English only.

- Having two interpreters, in Dinka and in Sudanese Arabic, in each module tended to hamper communication and slow down the exchange of information and ideas.
- The mix and balance of gender will continue to need consideration during the recruitment process; women's participation and their ability to have their voices heard need to be considered when men are the majority in a group.

### **Module content**

- The key perceptions of parenting, domestic violence, child safety and family services that participants brought to the modules were:
  - service providers want to break up families who had domestic problems, rather than keep them together
  - the community has deep concerns and fears about having children taken away by DOCS, especially when the children may have misunderstood the role of child protection
  - service providers believe the views of children and take a child's opinion as a reliable source of information
  - service providers intervene in what are seen as private family matters, in contrast with the culturally accepted practice that men, as the head of the family, control domestic disputes
  - while police intervention in domestic violence is supported, removing the perpetrator is not supported as part of the intervention
  - there is a strong desire to work out domestic violence issues in culturally accepted ways and find ways of working with the police in helping them deal with these issues
  - agencies do not always understand them as parents
  - the amount of information about families and parenting provided via government agencies is confusing.
- Facilitators were careful to stress in all workshop modules that participants had something valuable to contribute from their own cultural practices and were themselves good parents.
- The adult learning style most used was speaking and listening in group discussions, in response to questions and ideas posed by facilitators and participants.
- Being able to take home copies of the DVD *Raising children in Australia* and the CD *Every child is important*, in Arabic and Dinka, was welcomed by all participants.
- Although participants welcomed DVDs to take home, few paid full attention while they were being played during workshop sessions.
- Opening sessions in which participants discussed their total years of parenting were very popular and strengthened their sense of worth and competence as parents.
- Local agency brochures and materials handed out to participants were generally those written for mainstream, non-CALD populations.

- Two themes raised by participants that could be included more fully in module content are:
  - the lack of a working knowledge of Australian life and laws when dealing with concepts of freedom, responsibilities and boundaries as these are defined in the Australian context
  - new experiences and new customs can create conflict in a community.
- In the Youth module:
  - content in the ‘Parenting strategies’ session adapted from the Tripe P Parenting Program was difficult to understand and insufficiently interactive in the time allowed, and the session focused mainly on adult relationships and did not allow enough time to discuss problems parents had with their teenagers
  - the session ‘Legal age in Australia’ needed extra time for the content to be absorbed by participants and explored effectively
  - participants said that intergenerational cultural differences within their community had become a major issue for them, as young family members were adapting to the new Australian culture, while they still valued Sudanese ways of living. This issue needs more time allocated to it to explore the implications for culturally appropriate parenting.
- In the Cultural Transition and Gender Relations module, there was a disparity in male and female group members’ participation, and female participants generally remained silent during this module, which was attended mostly by men.

### **Participant evaluation**

- Participants were unanimous in saying they:
  - had enjoyed the workshops
  - wanted to learn more to support their families and their children
  - would tell other family members and their friends to attend further workshops.
- Participants expressed a particular interest in learning more about Australian parenting practices and how these compared with their own practices, particularly in relation to discipline.
- Two participants have made contact with an agency and gone on to seek counselling and family support.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that:

- 1 A consortium of agencies convenes to coordinate, promote and deliver a calendar of *Strengthening Families* workshops to meet the needs of men, women and youth in the Sudanese community and build on the successful pilot outcomes.
- 2 Attention be given to course content that involves youth input, and is suitable for youth participation, especially around areas of intergenerational conflict, dealing with stress and how to obtain help when required.

- 3 Sufficient time and attention be given in future workshops to the law in Australia as it relates to the consequences of domestic violence and parents failing to support their children in the manner the system requires.
- 4 Course facilitators provide interpreters with course materials before workshops are held and meet with them to identify and resolve any difficulties in understanding newly introduced terms.
- 5 Workshops use one interpreter in either Dinka or Sudanese Arabic, and recruitment be based on workshops being delivered in either English only, or with a Dinka or a Sudanese Arabic interpreter in attendance.
- 6 Recruitment of participants continue to use a personalised approach, such as inviting parents to morning tea information sessions at their children's school or visiting the parents in Sudanese community-friendly locations.
- 7 The Sudanese community's perceptions of service providers and their roles in relation to child protection and domestic violence be explicitly addressed in future workshops.
- 8 A folder of key information be written and developed with the support of the TCMPP Interagency to accompany the *Strengthening Families* modules and to give to workshop participants as a resource within the family. The folder would include information on:
  - the law in Australia relating to child safety and domestic violence
  - the roles of child safety officers, the police, the courts and the Sudanese Elders Committee
  - how and when to contact these agencies and groups for assistance
  - contact details of agencies offering support
  - the purpose and workings of the Protocol Agreement between the Sudanese community, the Toowoomba Police District and the Toowoomba North and South Child Safety Service Centres.
- 9 Regular dialogue among stakeholders be continued, to provide routine feedback and build a strong relationship among Sudanese elders, police and child protection in delivering future training for families in the Sudanese community, and in identifying emerging needs for training and support.



# *Strengthening Families Project*

## **1 Background**

*Strengthening Families*, the Toowoomba Multicultural Child Protection Project (TMCPP), aims to improve relations between the child protection system, the local Queensland police and the Sudanese community by increasing the skills and knowledge of departmental staff and non-government agencies in meeting the needs in the community.

TMCPP is a twelve-month project which began in late 2007 with funding from the Department of Child Safety and the Department of Communities.

The Project had a number of components, including:

- 1 negotiating the Toowoomba Multicultural Child Protection Protocol, an agreement between the Sudanese community, the Toowoomba Police District and Toowoomba North and South Child Safety Service Centres (the 'Protocol Agreement')
- 2 action research, through a TCMPP Working Group and the University of Southern Queensland, into Sudanese parenting styles in Australia
- 3 cultural competency training, including how and when to engage accredited interpreters, for child protection staff and workers in non-government agencies to better equip them to work with Sudanese families
- 4 designing and developing three pilot training programs, through the establishment of interagency working groups
- 5 developing parenting resources, in collaboration with the Sudanese community, that would enhance skills and knowledge of effective parenting strategies
- 6 putting the Sudanese community in contact with a broad range of local services who would be interested in providing ongoing parenting skills training in the years to come.

### **Pilot training programs**

Three pilot training programs were a key component of the Toowoomba Multicultural Child Protection Project.

The Project focused on developing these training programs with input from members of the Sudanese community.

The aims of the programs were to explore concepts of family and parenting in Australia and to reinforce positive family functioning. The programs were also intended to give space for Sudanese adults to share their parenting experiences in Australia, as well as in the Sudan.

## **2 Agency involvement**

In February 2008, the Department of Communities invited Toowoomba's community agencies to take part in facilitating the Toowoomba Multicultural Child Protection Project.

The TMCPP Interagency was established as a result and consisted of the following organisations:

- Bridgeworks
- Catholic Education Office
- Centacare
- Centenary Heights School
- Child Youth and Family Health, Toowoomba and Darling Downs Health Service District
- Child Care volunteers
- Child Safety Service Centre—North and South
- Community Advocacy in the Multicultural Sector (CAMS)
- Department of Communities
- Department of Education
- Domestic Violence Regional Services
- East Creek Neighbourhood Centre
- Harlaxton Neighbourhood Centre
- Kath Dickson Centre
- Legal Aid Queensland
- Lifeline Darling Downs
- Local Area Multicultural Partnership (LAMP)
- Mercy Family Services
- Queensland Health
- Queensland Police Service
- Queensland Program for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASST)
- School Based Youth Health Nurses
- Sudanese Community Association Darling Downs Australia (SCADDA)
- Spiritus Southern Queensland
- Sudanese Elders Committee
- Sudanese Women Affairs
- The Advocacy and Support Centre (TASC)
- Toowoomba Youth Service
- Toowoomba Refugee and Migrant Support (TRAMS).

The TMCPP also established four Working Groups, made up of representatives of the TCMPP Interagency. The role of the Working Groups was to develop and implement two of the Project's major components, the pilot training programs and the action research.

The four TCMPP Working Groups were:

- Child Rearing
- Youth
- Culture and Gender
- Action Research.

The Working Groups took services through the program, discussing levels of involvement and content and delivery methods, as well as identifying opportunities for strengthening the cultural competence of those involved.

The local Sudanese community had indicated a preference for dealing face to face with known services, but had acknowledged difficulties in developing closer relationships. Thus, strengthening these relationships and increasing the community's awareness of services and their roles became part of the Project's aims for the training program component.

### **3 Target group and module rationale**

Toowoomba's Sudanese population has settled in the region under Australia's refugee and humanitarian program. It is estimated that there are 1,000 to 1,200 Sudanese in the community, with approximately 53 per cent under the age of 18 years.<sup>1</sup>

The Sudanese in Toowoomba come from a multilingual country of 142 spoken languages.<sup>2</sup> Sudanese Arabic, a variety of Arabic that is unique to Sudan, is widely spoken, while the two major languages from southern Sudan are Dinka and Nuer.

The literacy rate of the Sudan is between 20 and 27 per cent.<sup>3</sup> In addition, many newly arrived migrants have not engaged in full time education, having spent numerous years living under difficult, temporary conditions in neighbouring countries and refugee camps awaiting acceptance to settle in Australia. Most Sudanese families in the Toowoomba area are from the southern regions of Sudan and families on average have four or more children.

From community input into the TCMPP Project via forums and discussion groups, a number of themes emerged about the experiences of Sudanese families following arrival in Australia and their interactions with family services. Most find it difficult to gain paid employment. Many find life very different from what they were accustomed to prior to arrival. Many are also struggling with rising accommodation costs, loan repayments and living expenses, as well as with the poor local transport infrastructure, which makes access to community services, education and training challenging.

There tends to be negative perceptions within the community of police and government agencies stemming from past experiences in Sudan. Families are also experiencing unexpected changes to family members' roles following the move into Australian life. Family stress is increasingly experienced as a factor leading to family breakdown.

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<sup>1</sup> Communication from Department of Communities

<sup>2,3</sup> *Sudan Watch Report 2007* at [www.sudanwatch.blogspot.com](http://www.sudanwatch.blogspot.com), accessed 15 September 2008

The Sudanese community has expressed concerns about these issues, framed in terms of families' immediate experiences and how these relate to the law. At TMCPP meetings, Sudanese representatives gave feedback that questions were being asked in the community around:

- what can the law do to a child
- what can families do when children will not listen to their parents
- why are younger people getting involved in crime.

Some agencies reported an increasing demand by Sudanese parents for support, as they were confused about their rights, roles and responsibilities as parents in Australia, and did not know how to deal with the new family problems they were encountering.

These issues, and the approaches needed to improve the Sudanese community's capacity to deal with them, as well as to strengthen relationships between the community and local services, informed the development of the training programs.

# Pilot modules

## 1 Developing the pilot modules

The TMCPP Working Groups met regularly over six months during 2008 to plan and develop the training programs.

The Working Groups reviewed elements from the Victorian and New South Wales modules for parenting education for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, including:

- the Families in Cultural Transition (FICT) training program, developed by NSW Health
- the DVD produced by the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture
- the Horn of Africa Communities Network *Raising children in Australia* (produced in eleven African languages)
- the DVD *Domestic violence – what you need to know* produced by domestic violence services.

From the beginning of the Project, the Sudanese Elders Committee had advised that their community had little, if any, knowledge of child protection and Queensland state legislation, and would like to maintain contact with the Department of Child Safety and the Queensland Police Service after the Project was finalised.

The Working Groups decided that the training programs would take the form of pilot modules. The Working Groups identified nine modules from within the FICT program which were applicable to the local Sudanese community. Three of these nine FICT modules were chosen to be adapted to suit local needs.

The Working Groups decided that a workshop format would be used, which could be delivered by agency workers and would suit the needs of adult learners. The teaching and learning strategies were to focus on visual and graphical resources, rather than text-based materials, to suit the literacy levels of the participants.

### Three pilot modules<sup>4</sup>

The three modules were designed to be piloted and evaluated prior to full implementation within the community. The modules focused on the following issues.

#### *Child Rearing and Family Functioning*

This workshop included the challenges faced by Sudanese parents in the Australian context, how Sudanese parents feel about parenting experiences after arrival here, and the recently negotiated protocol around child protection involving the Department of Child Safety, the Sudanese community in Toowoomba and the Queensland Police Service.

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix for module outlines

## *Youth*

This workshop covered issues related to becoming an adult in Australia, problems faced by young people maturing in Australia, talking to teenagers and defining adulthood.

## *Cultural Transition and Gender Relations*

This workshop discussed changing roles, family pressures and domestic violence, and how new situations create different pressures on families. (One key issue discussed in the development of this module was how best to define 'violence in the home'.)

## **Key messages**

Key child protection messages were included in all three modules, and the TMCPP Working Groups also ensured that the training brought participants into contact with a wide variety of information and community support services.

The TMCPP felt that if the pilot modules were to be successful, there would need to be a focus on breaking down misunderstandings and misconceptions about child protection legislation.

## **2 Using interpreters**

The Project funded the use of professional interpreters. In preparation for working with interpreters, the workshop facilitators received training from Margaret Bornhorst, a recognised multicultural trainer, on *Cross cultural skills in education* and *Working with professional interpreters*.

This training focused on the use of interpreters within a training context, and the cultural and linguistic information required in this environment, bringing the workshop facilitators to an acceptable level of awareness for delivering the pilot modules to the Sudanese community.

## **3 Recruiting participants**

The question of how best to recruit participants from the Sudanese community to attend each of the three modules was canvassed extensively in Project meetings. A number of strategies were adopted to help maximise the level of community participation, focusing on:

- promotional events with community members
- support from organisations in contact with the Sudanese community
- module timetabling
- childcare
- transport support.

A series of morning teas for Sudanese parents was held at their children's schools to recruit participants for the workshops. The support of the Queensland Program for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASST) and the Toowoomba Refugee and Migrant Support (TRAMS) was also enlisted in encouraging participation.

As many Sudanese parents have large families and have to attend to their children at the start of the school day, and generally could not be absent from the home for an extended period, it was decided to run the workshops between the hours of 11 am and 3 pm.

It was also decided to provide childcare on request. Volunteers were brought in for childcare support to help parents arriving with very young children.

A mix of community transport from known locations, and taxi vouchers for return travel, was arranged.

## **4 Delivering the pilot modules**

Each pilot module was delivered between August and September 2008, via a three-hour workshop, with interpreters.

The locations used for the three workshops were East Creek Neighbourhood Centre, Lifeline Darling Downs and Mercy Family Services.

The languages chosen for the pilot modules were Sudanese Arabic and Dinka.

Sudanese men and women in traineeship placements in East Creek Neighbourhood Centre and at Bridgeworks were invited to help the facilitators and interpreters introduce the evaluation session at the close of each workshop.

# Pilot modules evaluation

This section of the report describes the teaching and learning processes that occurred in each workshop as the modules were being delivered. It gives a record of the exchanges that took place among the workshop participants and between the participants and the workshop facilitators, in the delivery of each module.

Module outlines are available in the Appendix.

## Module 1 Child Rearing and Family Functioning

### 1 The group

Sixteen Sudanese adults, fourteen women and two men, were present on a weekday morning for the three-hour module delivered at East Creek Neighbourhood Centre.

Participants brought their children with them, who were supervised by childcare volunteers in a children's playground at the rear of the premises, an easy call away from the parents.

There were two workshop facilitators and two professional interpreters, in both Sudanese Arabic and Dinka, and the session began with participants being divided into their preferred language grouping, with an interpreter.

The facilitator began by circulating a framed picture of her own children, saying that parenting, although difficult, is a rewarding job. She then asked participants individually how many children they had and their ages. A tally was written up on a whiteboard. The group had a total of sixty-eight children (the average family size being 4.25 children) and most said their children were either infants or under ten years of age.

The facilitator said everyone present should recognise their skills and talents as parents and then outlined what would be covered in the three-hour workshop and how 'we can share our knowledge'.

### 2 Group rules

Group rules were discussed so that when information was shared within the group it would be respected by everyone present, and those speaking would be listened to without interruption. The facilitator then asked 'what other rules do we need' and a participant suggested that mobile phones be turned off.

### 3 Icebreaker exercise

The group shared things they liked about their families and some things they disliked. Responses included:

Mothers are very important for children.

Mothers and fathers working together.

When father and mother do things differently then the children are confused.

There are lots of challenges but children have difficulties and children need a chance to understand the culture.

#### **4 Raising children in Australia**

To introduce the DVD *Raising children in Australia*, the group were invited to select a language in which they wished to hear it being played. The group took several minutes to choose between Dinka, Arabic or English, and then chose Dinka. After five minutes of playing time, they then changed their minds and asked that the DVD be started again and played in English.

The women laughed at the beginning of the DVD when it showed men doing home chores, such as minding their children with their wives and helping with the grocery shopping. After a short while, the women participants stopped paying attention to the DVD and began talking quietly together, while one of the interpreters talked alone with a male participant.

The facilitator paused the DVD when it came to child protection (a cartoon image of a child protection officer visiting a home was seen on screen) and asked participants what they knew about the role of child protection. Replies included:

Children keep lying and the Department comes right away and says the children are at risk and the parents feel guilty. There is a total different way of bringing up children. You solve it in your own house in Sudan.

Child protection gets true and untrue information. They get it from the schools.

Why does child protection have a view that a child of six or seven knows about the truth. Children keep lying and it's misinformation.

When a child comes and asks many times for something and we can't give them this thing, then they ring the police.

We know in our culture how to bring them up. We don't beat or kill children and children are getting confused.

Sometimes we are confused by too much information coming from too many areas and when you start and grow up children the mothers are confused.

Africa way is to fight but settle the issue in the home, but now everybody is worrying but we hope our children will be different.

This is the way we were brought up but in the inner part of you, even if you fight, regardless of whatever, it is our mistake. Then what we should do will be culturally different.

#### **5 Child protection**

The facilitator acknowledged that those present were good parents and that everybody needed to work together, and said 'we need to discuss the difficulties we have with our children and we want to lower your fears about the Department. We need to know what laws there are in Australia and we can talk about our children's behaviour'.

The group were told some of the key things that were not allowed to happen when parenting children in Australia. They included: hitting, beating, punching, leaving children alone in a locked car, leaving children at home without supervision, withholding food as a punishment and telling a child hurtful things. The group also heard that the prime role of parents was to 'teach their children' and 'to provide children with good nutrition'.

Group members replied:

One thing I don't like is letting my child being taken away by another person.

We are happy to learn new things. Sometimes we do things. We are grieving when we hear our children are taken away.

When I was a child in the Sudan my father told my mother not to feed me and then told her that when she is good again she can have some food.

The facilitator replied to the last response that 'a one-off is okay but doing this continually is not good'.

A Sudanese person working for the local Department of Child Safety was introduced to the group, which were then given copies of the *Raising children in Australia* DVD as well as the Early Childhood Service brochure from the Toowoomba and Darling Downs Health Service District. The brochure included information on maternity home care, the early feeding clinic, early intervention parenting specialists, the new parent group, the developmental clinic for children up to four years of age, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

## **6 The Protocol Agreement**

A spokesperson from the Department of Child Safety outlined for participants the Protocol Agreement and described how the aims of the Agreement were to guide the interactions between the Department of Child Safety, the Toowoomba Police District and the Sudanese community in a culturally appropriate way.

From discussions with the twenty-six member Sudanese Elders Committee had emerged the realisation that there was a need for education on child safety issues with parents.

The speaker concluded 'today is the first day and we have a long way to go together, so please celebrate with us that today is the first day of a long relationship'.

## **7 Final comments**

Participants were asked what they liked about attending the workshop and replied:

The future is bright for us. Australia is a multicultural country, we feel involved.

Let's give thanks to the team and we know now you're not just about taking away the kids.

We learn to do well and to do different things.

The more you teach us about how to be good with kids the more we will practise it.

## **Module 2 Youth**

### **1 The group**

Twenty-six people attended the Youth pilot module on a weekday morning at Mercy Family Services. The group members agreed that most needed the interpreter to translate from English into Sudanese Arabic and that the other interpreter could help several group members in Dinka.

The session began with a welcome, and house rules and the workshop program were explained as well as the need to keep the workshop friendly and informal.

The facilitator explained that the workshop would examine the many different ways of bringing up children. Group members introduced themselves and gave their children's ages. Nearly all present spoke in English. Names and ages were written on the whiteboard. Amid applause, it was calculated that there were 749.5 years of collective family experience sitting in the room.

The facilitator said it was good to talk together about:

- what it means to become an adult in Australia
- different ways of talking with children as well as teenagers
- sharing worries we may have about teenagers
- sharing experiences and solutions.

### **2 Parent and child rights**

The group were told that both parents and children had rights in Australia, even if young people challenged their parents with behaviours that could make parents feel worn out, angry and threatened. The facilitator posed the question 'where do you stand' when children's rights are also important. She said 'rights are always important and that every participant in the room had rights although it was reasonable to set limits with children'. There was a loud clapping from the group when they were told 'parents and children all have rights'.

### **3 Becoming adults**

The group were asked how lives are divided into childhood and adulthood in the Sudan. Women in the group were eager to relate how they became an adult woman.

Between twelve and thirteen years of age, as soon as we are initiated we are trained into adult practices.

For our girls, when they become adults, the mother advises her when she is an adult. The mother is the role model and mentor and tells her daughter when she can no longer play with the boys. Also at sixteen years, both the mother and father have a mentoring role.

The facilitator asked 'what do children who are just becoming a man or a woman worry about' and a group member replied:

Children, they become stubborn. Sudanese like teaching their children life-skills and this is the point of conflict because they have to take on responsibilities. The difference is the types of skills you teach children becoming adults in Africa and Australia.

The facilitator then concluded 'you grew up in Sudan but your children have two feet in Australia and Africa. They face new social pressures. They are experiencing different things and the best of both worlds. They want to ask a lot of questions.'

#### **4 When cultures overlap**

The participants were very vocal in this session and asked the following questions, the first question accompanied by laughter among the group.

Something which is not clear. When the girl decides to get pregnant in Australia, why doesn't man marrying them? Why on and off relationships?

Why doesn't an Australian man marry Sudanese women? Aren't young men looking for relationship with Sudanese women?

When we talk about traditional ways in Sudan with boys and girls, there's nothing called 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend'. That's why we like our traditional ways

Our goal is to marry and raise children and Australian men don't bring [dowry] money.

During the lunch break, discussion took place among the women on the role of their daughters. The evaluator was told by two women that a good marriage would see US\$100,000 to \$150,000 pass between the male suitor and the bride's father: this payment placed a value on the woman's role as the man's prospective wife and the mother of his children.

#### **5 Parenting strategies**

The following parenting attributes (from the Triple P Parenting Program) were listed down one side of a whiteboard and interpreted. They were: be honest, polite and assertive (not aggressive or weak), reliable, gentle, fair, kind, positive and constructive, helpful and considerate, and quietly spoken, and respect other people's property and privacy.

The participants were asked to develop a few family rules and have a family meeting to discuss the rules within their homes. Then, using a series of examples, the facilitator talked about what happens when family rules are broken.

The group were asked to use direct conversation with their children, and when making clear and calm requests of their children to do something they should reinforce their requests with consequences for non-compliance. It was also stressed that it is important for both husband and wife to talk about any solutions.

Several examples were given on how the women present could enlist the help of their husbands in the home and the different parts the men could play in bringing up teenagers.

The group was silent during this segment of the module and did not comment on or respond to the suggestions for parenting strategies.

#### **6 Talking to teenagers**

The Parenting Helpline brochure was distributed to the group and various types of locally available support and workshops, for both parents and teenagers, were discussed.

At this point a consent form was passed among the group to sign, requesting their permission to be photographed as a group for promotional purposes.

## **7 Defining adulthood**

The facilitators distributed among the group laminated posters illustrated with cartoons of teenagers involved in social activities and 'risky' behaviours. Each poster illustrated a potential problem such as teenagers smoking in the home, kissing, and driving a car.

The participants were asked to find a group partner and, without the interpreter, discuss in their first language what they felt about the behaviours illustrated in each poster, and how they would deal with these behaviours.

The facilitator explained how teenagers copy their parents' behaviour

## **8 Legal age in Australia**

The following definitions of legal age were written on the board and then interpreted.

In Australia:

- at 16 years—you can have sex but it must be consensual, and you can leave home and receive independent Centrelink allowances
- at 17 years—you can get a driving licence
- at 18 years—you can get married (under 18 years requires a parent's permission), vote in elections, drink alcohol (it is illegal to drink alcohol in a park) and smoke cigarettes.

## **9 Final comments**

Two Sudanese work trainees asked the group how they felt about the day's workshop: did they find the information difficult or easy; what would they do differently; did the facilitators make things easy or confusing; and would they come again and invite along a family member or a friend.

Participants said the workshop was 'excellent and interesting' and that although 'some of it was hard' the presenters 'made it easy', that they 'wanted to learn more', and they 'liked being given the DVD in African languages' to take home.

When questioned about what they would do after the workshop they replied that they 'would let their friends know' about the Strengthening Families workshops. The group also asked for a handout on family rules.

## **Module 3 Cultural Transition and Gender Relations**

### **1 The group**

Twelve people from the Sudanese Elders Committee (ten men and two women) attended the three-hour workshop, Cultural Transition and Gender Relations, on a Saturday afternoon at Lifeline Darling Downs.

Six facilitators were present from the Toowoomba Regional Council, Queensland Police Service, Legal AID Queensland and the Domestic Violence Service. Also present were two observers from the Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS) in Brisbane.

The group divided in two language groups, Sudanese Arabic and Dinka, with two professional interpreters on hand throughout the workshop.

### **2 Gender roles**

The session discussed how work roles in Australia historically had changed for both men and women. The facilitator related how she had been brought up in a family where both parents had been new arrivals in Australia and that they had been brought up to respect traditional roles in which a man went to work and a woman stayed at home and brought up their children. However, upon arrival in Australia her mother had found paid work first and her father then had to change his views on what work meant to him.

The facilitator then asked 'what are your views on what work is?'

Among the group's replies were:

Work in African traditional society is a duty unless you are an elder or a young person.

In our society work means to support and contribute to the family.

To do something that is beneficial to family or the community.

The facilitator then asked 'how do we value work and how have things changed for you since settling in Australia?'

The replies included:

Women didn't usually do work like they do in Australia. We encourage effort but the work itself has changed. Work here is valued by being paid.

Back home there's no cost of childcare.

Lack of extended family here gives us a lot of pressure to produce more children to look after the family.

The facilitator agreed that extended families were not usual in Australia and that work roles in her own family had changed. The facilitator related how her father was 'horrified' when she first wore trousers and what was seen as inappropriate dress for girls had led to family disagreement. Today, Australian men increasingly undertake domestic tasks such as cooking for the family, and her son now cooks as his wife also works in a paid job.

### 3 Children left alone

It was calculated through a show of hands that most of the group had children, including teenagers, living at home. The facilitator said that the pressures of finding money to pay for childcare sometimes made it not worthwhile for both parents to leave home and find a paid job.

The facilitator posed the example of a migrant family who had left their children alone at home so that the parents could find paid work, with the question 'how do you see their decision to leave their children alone at home?'

Group members replied:

You may leave children at home but it's too risky. We have a culture where it was the grandmother's duty to watch after children.

This family may not have awareness. In Sudan it's okay because something won't happen to them.

It's too risky to leave children alone at home because of fire. In the Sudan we didn't expect people could come to the house and take our children.

I see the value of one parent working and one watching after the children and there's a law here you can't leave children at home.

The facilitator replied that laws protected the safety of children and then asked the group 'what sort of role models would you like to provide for your children?'

The participants' responses included:

To educate them. I need my children to look into the future.

People are not the same in wanting and getting something, and some children have an interest and so you must observe the child and encourage their ideas.

### 4 Domestic and family violence

The facilitator, who was from the Domestic Violence Service, with two police officers present to answer any police-related questions, started this session with the question 'what is domestic violence?', then paused and added 'do you understand that domestic violence is more than hitting? What do you think domestic violence is?'

Participants expressed the following views:

It's a problem within a family and not communicating with your wife.

It's emotional and mental and makes them [the wife] frightened.

Neglect is one of them. Letting your children go to school without food.

When the facilitator asked 'what about sexual abuse?', their only reply was:

When a woman is tired and the man is ready, this can happen.

The facilitator asked 'what if she says no and he still wants sex, what do you think?' When there was no reply, the facilitator continued: 'under the law it is sexual abuse if one partner doesn't want sex. Forcing yourself on your partner is sexual violence'.

Group members then replied:

Women are now engaged in study or work and when the woman says no she is accused of having a boyfriend and this is a problem.

Issues to do with sex are not discussed in public.

Sexual abuse can bring crisis when there is an accusation from either side. When you accept to marry it is a sort of agreement and that agreement is set by both sides and the family should not be dishonoured. What is happening nowadays is Australia ladies have a hidden agenda and they make call the police and take you away from the house. The agreement is not honoured here.

We do respect the ladies and in the southern part of the Sudan you don't hit women. To the tribe of the southern part we don't kill child or women or old people.

As a Sudanese there are three important things to me. One is my wife. Two is to get my children. Three, it's my property. I get cattle and if anybody touches them [my wife] it's wrong. If I get problem in the house the elders will come to the house. If there's violence in the house we all sit down with my extended family and work out what's wrong.

## **5 Police involvement**

The facilitator asked 'why do you think the police get involved?' One participant replied:

We have two different cultures. For very long time we haven't had contact with government which was a nasty one. In Australia it's me and the government and it's difficult to come to terms with. If I have a problem my brother will take away my wife and children and the elders will decide. If I'm wrong I'll be condemned. But here it is just me and the police.

The facilitator asked the group 'do you think we can help earlier?'

There followed intense group discussion on how police officers 'go into homes and speak with' family members when an incident was reported. Many were vocal about family members being separated from one another during police visits:

When a police comes around it's best not to separate people, to listen to their stories but sit wife and husband down together.

When people call the police to say violence what do they do? When you take a wife in one direction and a child or husband in different directions it isn't good in Africa.

We believe if you take a partner away they [husband and wife] should all be together.

If my wife says no to sex it's not an issue for me. The solution is to bring the man and wife together and not put them in a separate corner.

A participant suggested that the concepts of freedom, responsibilities and boundaries were being continually misunderstood by most Sudanese men, women and children. He felt that freedom in Australia had boundaries set out in law and that people in his community misunderstood and consequently abused the limits of freedom. There was a need to elaborate more on freedom, responsibility and boundaries for everybody.

Another participant stated that police should be involved:

If a male can initiate sexual things to children or a disabled person it [child protection laws] is much more effective than between a man and a woman.

There followed a quick interchange between the facilitator and participants when the facilitator asked 'in your country is it the man that manages the discipline?'

A participant replied 'each house has its own rules and physical violence can occur due to her [the wife's] reply!'

The facilitator interjected 'but you can't have physical violence' and the participant who had been speaking responded that 'physical violence can come when it gets out of control. Every community in Australia can be violent.'

The spokesperson from Legal AID then replied that 'the laws here also apply to Sudanese families as well as to other Australian families. In Australia we say 'no' to violence.'

A participant responded:

Domestic violence is a challenging task that can't be addressed in a week or two. It's a cultural matter. Forming a family is a bigger issue as it is an agreement. When disagreement comes and it leads to violence, and that family happens to be in Australia and that man is taken away, culturally the community will say this is the wrong way. When the police comes and takes a member of a family away, as a Sudanese, if you do this, it is the destruction of a family, as one parent can't bring up the family.

## **6 Assisting in domestic violence situations**

The police spokesperson began the discussion by saying 'the police have to act on the law. We can't ignore domestic violence in the house.'

There followed talk on how the community could help the police in their duties and in dealing with domestic violence.

One participant argued that there was a 'big gap between community life and the government' and that local police should engage with community elders if they wished to 'take a person away'. Another participant recommended that:

We need direct contact with the police liaison officer. Sometimes the police will do seventeen things in an area and we don't even know.

The facilitator then asked 'why then are the women calling the police', which drew the following reply:

A couple of years ago our women were having a higher sense of freedom. Ladies were very active in calling the police. Nowadays this freedom is not thought of getting away from husbands. Now they know they have to call the husband back to help out with the family.

## **7 Final comments**

The facilitator said that it would take some time to work this all out and the police spokesperson stressed 'we [the police] don't want to break up families' and made the following points:

- Anybody can call the police in Australia—a husband, a wife or a child
- The police use the court process and this does not mean that a person cannot go home again
- The courts make all final decisions

- If there is a serious violent incident the police will not call the community elders first because they must respond to the incident immediately. However, if there is a less serious incident, the police will be able to talk with elders first.

The Legal AID spokesperson then invited community members to come and talk with Legal AID if they had problems with the law. He said there was some misunderstanding that the police were 'getting in the way' of the family.

In the closing minutes of the workshop, one facilitator made the observation that the two female elders present had not spoken during the workshop and that only the men present had taken part in the discussion. The facilitator then invited one of the female elders to speak, who reflected that the men 'talked a lot' and that 'things were not working' as well as they could when community information was being passed 'only among the men'.

## **appendix**



# Evaluation methodology

The planning process for the pilot modules included an evaluation of the modules, scheduled to be conducted during all three workshops, with feedback to stakeholders once the workshops had concluded.

The evaluation used a qualitative methodology, based on a case study approach with observation of module delivery throughout all sessions.

The author attended the Toowoomba Multicultural Child Protection Project Working Groups, reviewed course content documentation, observed the delivery of all three pilot modules and spoke with facilitators, participants and agency workers.

The analysis and findings of the evaluation draws on the views and perceptions of all who took part in the modules, with quotes to illustrate these findings where possible.

The details of module participants have been kept confidential in this evaluation.

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### **Module 1 Child Rearing and Family Functioning**

#### **Target group**

Parents with children up to 12 years of age preferably.

#### **Rationale**

This session will highlight recognition of challenges faced by Sudanese parents in examining the changing concept of family and parenting in the Australian community. It builds on positive recognition of family functions and offers information around how other Sudanese parents have felt about parenting experiences after arrival in Australia. Information is provided on the recently negotiated protocol between the Department of Child Safety, the Sudanese community in Toowoomba and the Queensland Police Service around child protection issues. It is also anticipated that the provision of information regarding the availability of appropriate sources of support, service information, advice and referral contacts within the Toowoomba setting, will be of some assistance to families in seeking appropriate community supports.

#### **Key points**

- Include information regarding discipline in the Australian context—note generational and cultural influences
- What would be regarded as ‘not reasonable’ in terms of disciplining children?
- Include information about parent and children’s rights and responsibilities (see ‘What about parent’s rights’ from SA site).

**Facilitator** ..... **Time** .....

Content	Time	Resources
<p><b>Welcome and Introductions</b> of participants and facilitators – participants to introduce themselves and to tell us about their children (ie how many, how old)</p>	10 mins	Interpreter Facilitators
<p><b>Thank participants</b> for their involvement and attendance.</p>		
<p><b>Housekeeping</b> – toilets, exits etc</p>		
<p><b>Overview of the purpose and structure of the session</b></p> <p>'What we will be doing today' – some talking in small groups, some watching DVDs, will be providing some new ideas for you to think about</p> <p>Need to firstly acknowledge that we recognise the many skills and talents that you bring to the room from your own culture and place of birth. In this session we will be talking about some things to do with child rearing and will share some information about parenting practices.</p> <p>We believe that this information is important and may help you to adjust better to living in Australia. We don't believe that we have all the answers but we hope that together with you, we can help to build a better understanding about parenting, so that all of us can benefit.</p>	10 mins	
<p><b>Development of group rules</b></p> <p>Why do we need rules? We will be thinking about and talking about our families today ... we will be sharing thoughts and feelings ... we need to be respectful of each other ... and to understand that talking and remembering can sometimes bring up a range of feelings and emotions ... we need to be sensitive and supportive of each other.</p> <p>Rules might include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Being sensitive and respectful towards others</li> <li>2 Listening when other people are talking</li> <li>3 Only tell people what you are comfortable for them to know; it is OK to not share information if you feel uncomfortable</li> <li>4 Help facilitator to keep on time ... etc</li> </ol>	10 mins	

Content	Time	Resources
<p><b>Ice breaker exercise</b></p> <p>In small groups talk about: 1 some things that you like about families; 2 some things that you dislike about families</p> <p><b>Discussion about ‘parenthood’</b></p> <p>I would like you to think about ‘what it is like to be a parent’. Think about some things that you like about being a parent. Think about some of the challenges or difficulties of being a parent.</p> <p><b>In small groups</b> please take a few moments to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• as a parent living in Australia, what appears to be easier now?</li> <li>• as a parent living in Australia, what appears to be harder now?</li> </ul> <p>Finish section by acknowledging the difficulties faced by families, if these have been identified.</p>	15 mins	
<p><b>Introduce the ‘Raising Children in Australia’ DVD. View DVD in full.</b></p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think – was it good? OK?</li> <li>• Were there any parts of the DVD that you liked or related to?</li> </ul> <p>The video talked about many different roles that we have as parents. Group discussion about all the different roles that we have as parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety</li> <li>• Income provider</li> <li>• Basic needs</li> <li>• Emotional support and development</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Values and respect</li> <li>• Are there any other roles?</li> </ul>	20 mins	<p>‘Raising Children in Australia’ DVD</p> <p>DVD player and screen</p>

Content	Time	Resources
<p><b>Discussion about ‘childhood’</b></p> <p>We are now going to talk about ‘what it is like to be a child’ and the importance of being a child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a moment to think about some games that you played as a child.</li> <li>• What jobs or responsibilities did you have when you were a child? If you are comfortable, please share one of these thoughts with people in your small group.</li> <li>• Take a moment to think about the games that your children now play in Australia.</li> <li>• Are they the same or are they different?</li> </ul>	20 mins	
<p><b>View CD-ROM ‘Every Child is Important’</b></p> <p>View the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through a child’s eyes</li> <li>• Being a parent</li> </ul>	10 mins	
<p><b>Discussion about ‘Children’s needs’</b></p> <p>We are now going to consider the things that all children need to help them to grow into adults.</p> <p>There are many different things that children need to help them to grow into adults. Here are some ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical needs – shelter, warmth, food, water, clothing, sleep, hygiene etc</li> <li>• Emotional needs – love, caring, affection, to feel accepted and wanted etc</li> <li>• Intellectual needs – to go to school to learn, to get an education etc</li> <li>• Social needs – to have friends, to be able to fit in and be part of a group, to learn how to manage their behaviours etc</li> <li>• Spiritual needs – beliefs, values etc</li> <li>• Other needs</li> </ul> <p><b>BREAK FOR REFRESHMENT</b></p>	20 mins	

Content	Time	Resources
<p><b>View CD-ROM ‘Every Child is Important’</b></p> <p>View the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child’s play is a parent’s business</li> <li>• Words and actions can hurt</li> <li>• Shaping children’s behaviour</li> </ul>	15–20 mins	

### **BRAINSTORM**

We are now going to spend some time thinking about the things that are **not** helpful to children’s development.

- Poor nutrition – fatty food, not enough water etc
- Physical abuse – hitting, slapping, punching, pinching etc
- Emotional abuse – calling children names, belittling, threatening to abandon them etc
- Being disrespectful to parents and to others – swearing, lying, disobedience etc
- Not going to school to learn
- Parental conflict and family violence
- Other things

Our society does not allow :

- Hitting or beating with an implement
- Punching, pinching, slapping
- Leaving children at home without adult supervision
- Leaving children alone in a car (especially on hot days)
- Locking children in rooms without supervision
- Withholding food or water as punishment
- Calling children names that are demeaning, or telling them that they are useless or worthless
- Other

Content	Time	Resources
<p><b>View CD-ROM ‘Every Child is Important’</b></p> <p>View the following section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shaping children’s behaviour</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion</b></p> <p>People from different cultures may have some things in common about ways to raise their children, but often there are lots of differences in beliefs and practices for bringing up children.</p> <p>It may be confusing or difficult to understand how in Australia there are some different ways to manage children’s misbehaviour.</p> <p>In Australia we don’t allow physical punishment or other forms of physical or emotional abuse or neglect of children. There are strong laws that protect children from such harsh forms of discipline.</p> <p>In Australia there are many reasons why physical punishment, and other ways of managing children’s behaviour are not allowed. We don’t do these things because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children may be hurt or seriously injured – physically and emotionally</li> <li>• It teaches children that violence is an acceptable way to get what they want</li> <li>• The use of violence and aggression is not acceptable in our society</li> <li>• It is against the law to do this</li> </ul>	20 mins	
<p><b>Discussion</b></p> <p>It is important that we try to enjoy the positive aspects of life in Australia together with your own valued traditions and practices.</p> <p>Parenting can be done in a way that protects children from harm and promotes the health and wellbeing of children. This helps families to enjoy each other, and to adjust better into their new life in Australia.</p> <p>In Australia we promote the use of alternative ways to manage difficult behaviour in children. There are some strategies that parents can use to manage their children’s behaviour. These ways can help with the positive development of children, and enhance family relationships.</p>	20 mins	

Content	Time	Resources
<p>We are not going to discuss these strategies in detail, but we want to give you an introduction to some ideas.</p> <p><b>View CD Rom ‘Every Child is Important’</b></p> <p>View the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do children misbehave</li> <li>• A child’s contribution</li> <li>• Helping children cope with stressful events</li> <li>• Keeping children safe from harm.</li> </ul> <p>There is a legislative framework governing child protection and right of authorities to investigate. In Toowoomba the Sudanese community have a protocol in place to assist Sudanese community to provide child protection advice to Department of Child Safety and Qld Police Service.</p>	10 mins	Information on roles of Child Safety, Qld Police Service, and Sudanese community as contained in protocol document
<p>There are many services and agencies in Australia that are designed to help parents.</p> <p>There are services to assist with child health, education, family violence, family welfare including financial help, as well as a range of counselling and family support services. Some services can access the use of an interpreter if this is needed.</p> <p>Have list of services on overhead and/or representatives in the room who are available to assist families in these areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Youth and Family Health – child health nurses, parenting and early intervention specialists etc</li> <li>• Relationships Australia</li> <li>• Family Intervention Service – Lifeline</li> <li>• Salvation Army – Family Support Service and courses</li> <li>• Guidance counsellors in the schools</li> <li>• Managing Young Children’s Behaviour Program</li> <li>• Child Care Directors in the Child Care Centres where children are attending</li> <li>• Parentline</li> <li>• QPASTT</li> </ul> <p>Allow opportunity for questions from participants.</p> <p>Thank everyone for their participation.</p> <p>Complete the evaluation.</p>	5 mins	Brochures from each of the services with contact details and how to access the service

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### **Module 2 Youth**

#### **Target group**

#### **Rationale**

#### **Key points**

- Consider the best mechanism to stimulate discussion between young people and parents in a constructive manner.

**Facilitator** ..... **Time** .....

Content	Time	Resources
<p>Develop ground rules with the group, and explain why they are important and how they will be used. Write them on board or butchers paper.</p>	10 minutes	
<p><b>Becoming An Adult In Australia</b></p> <p><b>Are teenagers treated like adults or children in your country of origin?</b>  <b>What are teenagers saying about their life in Australia?</b></p> <p>As per the FICT program. Have young people's perspectives available anonymously via program run by Mission Australia in schools, or by having one group of parents, and one group of young people.</p>	30 minutes: 15 minutes gaining adults' perspective 15 minutes gaining adolescents' perspective	
<p><b>A Foot On Both Sides Of The Ocean</b></p> <p><b>What sorts of problems face young people maturing in Australia with 'one foot' in their country of origin, compared with their parents' memories of their own teenage years?</b></p> <p>Try to involve young people to be a part of the session to create a dialogue between young people and adults. Use the handout 'Puberty Blues' or refer to some of the points verbally to explain what teenagers worry about in Australia.</p>	40 minutes: 20 minutes on how adults lives differ from their children and 20 minutes on children's perspective	Butchers paper, textas or crayons Adolescents and the Puberty Blues handout Three circles diagram
<p><b>I Worry So Much</b></p> <p>Discussion and guest speaker regarding issues outside the home (racism, peer pressure, language difficulties, unemployment, parents fear that young people are becoming too Australian in their ways)</p>	20 minutes	Incorporate guest speaker (eg School Guidance Officer, Sudanese pastor, or field worker who has worked with Sudanese young people and their families)

Content	Time	Resources
<p><b>Talking to Teenagers</b></p> <p><b>Parents will have an increased understanding of the social pressures described in the previous session that face young people outside the home</b></p> <p><b>Discussion questions</b>            What is the problem here?            What other solutions can we think of?            What might happen as a result?            What additional tips could we give parents who are having problems with their teenagers?            What sort of advice might others in the group have?</p>	45 minutes	Use visual aids – photo series, magazine pictures, personal photos, etc. to facilitate discussion
<p><b>Defining Adulthood</b></p> <p><b>Discussion questions</b>            How do you define adulthood?            What does it mean to be an adult?            What messages are your kids getting from Australian society about being an adult?            How do these messages differ from the ones you got as an adolescent?            How will their hopes and fears differ from yours?</p>	45 minutes	Facilitator to ask these questions
<p><b>Summarise learnings from this module</b></p> <p>Have services attend as observers and introduce themselves to the group: e.g. Toowoomba Youth Service, Youth Justice Service Centre (contact Peter Simpson on ph. 4615 3444), Mission Australia (contact Annette Hawkless), Bush Connection Guidance Officers, School-based Youth Health nurses, pastors from Sudanese church communities</p>	15 minutes	Discussion  Provide services with some of the points from the Parents' Rights document

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### **Module 3 Getting and Keeping Work, Cultural Transition and Gender Relations**

#### **Target group**

#### **Rationale**

Understanding of changing roles, family pressures, domestic violence

#### **Key points**

- New situations create different pressures on families

**Facilitator** ..... **Time** .....

Content	Time	Resources
<p>Have 'Domestic Violence' DVD and/or 'Raising Families in Australia' videos playing as people arrive and have lunch.</p> <p><b>Introductions of participants and facilitators</b></p> <p><b>Overview of the purpose and structure</b> of the Strengthening Families program, and in particular this module, which aims to assist in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gaining an understanding of the different pressures on families and how to assist families to deal with them</li> <li>• discussing changing gender roles, family pressures, domestic violence, and paid and unpaid work</li> <li>• developing a consensus among elders about how they can promote these perspectives within their community</li> <li>• providing avenues for service system support to the elders.</li> </ul>	10 minutes	Abraham, Paul, Maria
<p>Goal: to become aware of traditional gender roles associated with work and home and question their relevance today.</p> <p>What is work? Work is a gender issue and a big issue for newly arrived refugee families. Many people have clear definitions of what constitutes men's and women's work. Paid work is rewarded with money and prestige. How is unpaid work valued? Discuss the value of housework and who should do it? Especially when extended family is not available, and husbands and wives may both be working outside the home. Discuss other pressures and responsibilities as raised by the group.</p>	20 minutes	Elizabeth Jones Refer to Raising Families video
<p>If parents are working for low wages, their welfare benefits may decrease or disappear altogether. What would be wrong with leaving children at home on their own? What working conditions do parents need in order to meet both their home and work commitments? How might you suggest to community members they balance their working arrangements with bringing up of children so they are not neglected? What role-models might be promoted within this community?</p>	20 minutes	Elizabeth Jones
<p><b>Group discussion:</b> Domestic and Family Violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Queensland Police Service</li> <li>• Dept Child Safety Senior Practitioners</li> <li>• Legal Aid</li> <li>• Domestic and Family Violence Service.</li> </ul> <p>Define domestic violence.</p>	1 hour	Rachel, Paul, Louise, Wayne.

Content	Time	Resources
<p>Points to be covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What options would women have in a violent situation in their own country of origin, and what options would they have in a refugee camp?</li> <li>• Is it ever okay for a man to be violent or abusive to his wife?</li> <li>• Is it ever okay for a woman to be violent or abusive her husband?</li> <li>• Is it more harmful for the children if government intervenes or for the children to stay in the violent situation? What are the risks to children who are seeing and hearing domestic violence?</li> <li>• What action does a man/woman take if they fear for their own safety and the safety of their children?</li> <li>• What does the law say?</li> <li>• Where families are experiencing conflict, what is the role of the Sudanese extended family and elders?</li> <li>• What could happen where a Sudanese family have no family or cultural support available to them here?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Services</b> available for support and assistance and how to access services</p>	20 mins	Rachel and Paul
<p><b>Summarise learning and conclusion</b></p>	20 mins	Maria and Abraham
<p><b>Evaluation</b>            What would you like to see included in this module if it were to be run again for community members?            What would like your community to know on these topics that we have discussed today?</p>		

# TOOWOOMBA MULTICULTURAL CHILD PROTECTION PROJECT

## *Strengthening Families*

### Training facilitators

Families and Child Rearing	Youth	Culture and Gender
Kelli Troy Early Intervention and Parenting Specialist Child Youth and Family Health	Tess Minogue Toowoomba Advocacy and Support Centre	Susan Aloyo  Sudanese Elders Committee
June Whelan Rosemary Dean East Creek Neighbourhood Centre	Annie Roker and Julie Barby Youth Health Nurses in state schools	Maria O' Keefe Department of Child Safety
	Trudi Graham Toowoomba Refugee and Migrant Support Service	Wayne Black Legal AID  Elizabeth Jones Toowoomba Regional Council  Rachel Thiele Domestic Violence Regional Services  Paul Hart Queensland Police Service