

# SUDANESE WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP



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## Making healthy food choices can be difficult when you can't read the labels.

Our program was initiated about 10 years ago in discussion with the local HaCC service who were concerned about poor eating habits in the Sudanese community due to limited English language skills.

Currently we have 43 Sudanese women in four groups working at different levels. The women do a mixture of non-accredited and accredited CSWE. The units are selected to meet the needs of the individual group. The introduction of CSO funding has allowed more flexibility to package units, both accredited and non-accredited allowing better outcomes for the women.

Retention and completion rates are high with pregnancy being the main reason why students leave, but they often return when the baby is old enough to go into care.

Some women have gone onto further training at TAFE or employment especially in home based businesses, but the outstanding goals are personal ones. Many of the women come into the program identifying their goals as English language skills to improve family care giving and community connections.

The program has been successful for many reasons:

- We have very clear goals for the program: to collaborate, to educate and to equip the Sudanese community to live independently and contribute to the wider community.
- Catholic Care is a partner in the program and provide wrap around services to the women. The relationship between Catholic

Care and the College is vital, the relationship is very clear and both have common goals for the program. Having Catholic Care working on the social needs of students allows the College to focus on the education side.

- Our LLN trainer is supported by volunteers in the classroom, and the college invests significant resources supporting and managing the volunteers.
- We organise the program to fit in with the women, for instance, holidays in line with school holidays and being aware of tensions within the Sudanese community and ensuring individuals are allocated to classes with sensitivity.
- Involving a mature Sudanese woman from the community to provide guidance to the College regarding group dynamics and social support to the women
- Trialing an interpreter to support early goal setting and individual pathway planning.
- Clarifying goals – the women often have very vague and short-term goals, it seems to be the nature of their culture and their life experience that they set only short term goals.
- Managing the potential for dependency to develop between the women and the trainers/ volunteers.

### Provider Name

Nepean Community College

### Contact

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### Program

Non-Accredited plus part qualification CSWE

### Target Group

Migrant

### Details

2 days/week face to face for 20 weeks. Four groups according to skill level

### Key points of difference

Volunteer LLN support, Partnership with Catholic Care

*This training is subsidised by the NSW Government.*