

Refugee Week 2023

Simon Sogora's story



Employment, Education & Training Specialist

I was born in South Sudan during a time of prolonged war, with my father being a freedom fighter in the first war. Growing up in the midst of conflict, I experienced the displacement and turmoil that comes with war. As an internally displaced person (IDP) in Khartoum, I worked with NGOs to give back to those who, like me, had been uprooted from their homes. Providing development and capacity-building to IDPs was crucial in transforming them from perceived security threats to refugees in need of assistance.

I later found myself living as a refugee in Egypt, where opportunities were scarce compared to what I had envisioned. I applied to the United Nations as a refugee and was eventually settled in Australia, where I also received humanitarian aid.

Nineteen years ago, I arrived in Australia on a humanitarian visa to reunite with my extended family. Now married with four children, including two daughters born in Australia, our settlement journey presented unique challenges however, we are grateful for the many great opportunities presented to us.

I seized opportunities to study and grow, in 2008, I joined CORE Community Services (formerly, Cabramatta Community Centre), starting my professional career as a settlement worker. One of my most impactful roles was being part of the Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre (FMRC), where we supported refugees and migrants on their path to citizenship through a computer-based program rollout across South West Sydney. Witnessing the support and confidence gained by individuals during this process was truly rewarding.

Having worked with diverse community groups and being involved in the citizenship rollout program, I understood that freedom is deeply connected to a sense of belonging. Empowering others and helping them achieve their dreams of becoming citizens brought me a sense of fulfillment.

Currently as employment specialist, I chose to embrace the challenge of supporting individuals in their employment journey. I believe that employment, education, and training are crucial components of successful settlement. Seeing the successful journeys of my clients and witnessing their happiness brings me immense joy. Although it has been challenging, my work in the employment and settlement space has allowed me to lead a meaningful life, making a positive difference in the lives of others.

#FreedomwithCORE

