

SAY NO TO CRIME YOUTH PROJECT

Evaluation Report 2012

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Executive Summary

In 2011 and 2012, the Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne) carried out a project that aimed to prevent crime amongst young people from Chin communities from Burma living in the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne and communities from Southern Sudan living in the Eastern, South Eastern and Western Metropolitan Regions of Melbourne and in the regional area of Gippsland.

The project used a peer-led model, where young people from each target community were recruited and trained in leadership to become Youth Ambassadors on the project. Following their training, Youth Ambassadors worked in five small groups alongside the project worker to identify crime issues impacting upon their peers, and then develop innovative programs aimed to address these issues.

Five separate crime prevention programs were developed by Youth Ambassadors – four targeting young people from Southern Sudanese communities in four distinct geographical regions (Eastern Metropolitan, South Eastern Metropolitan, Western Metropolitan and in the regional area of Gippsland), and one targeting young people from Chin communities (including young people from Hakha Chin, Falam Chin, Zomi and Mizo communities). Each program included a social/recreational component such as a sport, music or dance activity (as selected by the Youth Ambassadors) to encourage the attendance of young people, as well as discussions, workshops and information sessions facilitated by local youth, community and justice agencies. A psychologist from the MIC also facilitated workshops at each program to encourage behaviour change amongst participants.

Feedback was attained from Youth Ambassadors following the leadership training and again after the implementation of their crime prevention programs. Feedback was also gathered from participants who attended each crime prevention program and external agencies who assisted by facilitating crime prevention education workshops.

Key findings from the project were:

- a) Meaningful engagement and building positive relationships within the target communities was imperative to the program's success

- b) Young people from the target communities have different settlement needs to their parents generation, and working alongside young people to develop innovative ways to address their needs is important
- c) Partnerships with external organisations were beneficial to the project's success
- d) The time constraints placed on the project created limitations for the project worker and contributed to increased attrition and lack of enthusiasm amongst some Youth Ambassadors. This was particularly evident in groups who elected to implement their crime prevention program later in the project activities period.
- e) The 'wrong' people attended the programs. Youth Ambassadors in every group expressed disappointment that the young people from their communities known to be involved in crime did not attend their programs. Nevertheless, there was strong evidence to suggest that significant learning and education occurred amongst young people who did attend, suggesting this may lead to increased prevention of potential crime occurring in the future.
- f) The Say No to Crime Youth Project has directly led to increased leadership, education and recreational opportunities for young people from the target communities, particularly those who were involved as Youth Ambassadors or program participants. Several Youth Ambassadors were offered formal or informal leadership opportunities beyond the life of the Say No to Crime Youth Project, and in at least two regions, the crime prevention programs developed are being continued with the support of external agencies who were involved in the programs in their areas.

The successes and key learning gained through the project will be incorporated into future projects and programs at the MIC in the future.

1. Introduction

The *Say No to Crime Youth Project* aimed to prevent crime in the Chin communities from Burma living in the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne and communities from Southern Sudan living in the Eastern, South Eastern and Western Metropolitan Regions of Melbourne and in the regional area of Gippsland.

Young people from Hakha Chin, Falam Chin, Zomi and Mizo communities from Burma and from Southern Sudanese communities in the above locations were invited to apply to participate as Youth Ambassadors on the project. Those selected attended a leadership training camp in July 2011, during the school holidays where they gained skills in effective communication, team work, acknowledging their own strengths, taking initiative and positively influencing their peers.

Following the camp, Youth Ambassadors divided into small groups and attended a series of planning meetings facilitated by the MIC project worker. The aim of these sessions was for Youth Ambassadors to identify the biggest crime issues within their communities and work with the project worker to develop innovative ways to address these issues. Each small group developed and implemented separate crime prevention programs targeting youth from their community living or working in each catchment area.

All programs developed included a social/recreational activity component such as a sport, music or dance activity (as selected by the Youth Ambassadors) to encourage the attendance of young people, as well as discussions, workshops and information sessions facilitated by local youth, community and justice agencies. A psychologist from the MIC also facilitated workshops at each program to encourage behaviour change amongst participants. Sessions facilitated by the psychologist were tailored to meet the needs of each target group and were designed in consultation with the Youth Ambassadors and project worker. The programs developed aimed to encourage crime prevention by educating young people and linking them into existing community, social and recreational services and activities.

Feedback was sought from Youth Ambassadors initially following the leadership training camps, and then focus groups were held with each group of Youth Ambassadors 2 to 4 weeks after the conclusion of their program. Feedback was similarly sought from program participants and workshop facilitators who attended the programs and from community leaders and elders towards the conclusion of project.

2. Program Outline

2.1 Program background

The project was developed through observations made by MIC's settlement workers, who work with newly arrived individuals, families and community groups. Settlement workers identified concerns about the behaviour of refugee young people who migrated from Chin State in Burma and young people from Southern Sudanese backgrounds who were breaking the law. The issues identified for each group were slightly different. For youth from Chin backgrounds, concerns were raised particularly in relation to drink driving and driving without a licence. For youth from Southern Sudanese backgrounds, concerns focussed on congregating in public places that have resulted in fighting and anti-social behaviour. Concerns about underage drinking and drinking in public places were raised in relation to both groups.

In addition, an increasing number of youth from refugee backgrounds have indicated to MIC staff that they believe police treat them differently and do not respond to their concerns if they report racism or bullying against them. In the months immediately prior to submitting the funding application for the project, a group of young people from Southern Sudanese backgrounds were charged following a violent affray with other youth in the Eastern suburbs, and banned from going to the local shopping complex. Not only were the young people charged over the incident, but other young people from refugee backgrounds believe that they received unfair treatment because they were not responsible for starting the fight and the other group involved were not banned from going to the area.

Similarly, prior to undertaking the project, community leaders from the Australian Chin Community Eastern Melbourne and the Bor Community Association of Australia requested support from the MIC to educate youth on Australian laws and to assist them to establish youth activities to provide social networks for young people to minimise harm and prevent youth crime. Holding education sessions through the MIC's settlement program has had limited success because only a small number of young people attend sessions and participant numbers tend to decrease throughout a series of sessions. Subsequently, this project provided an incentive for young people to attend a program, by providing culturally and youth appropriate recreational activities alongside provision of information and education.

2.2 Program Aims and Objectives

The project aimed to both reduce and prevent crime amongst young people from Southern Sudanese and Chin backgrounds by: providing information on Australian laws, rights and responsibilities for young people; providing strategies to deal with anger and conflict; linking young people into local services that can provide support and assistance on a range of youth issues; and, by creating pathways into culturally appropriate social and recreational activities and employment and training opportunities to increase social participation and strengthen engagement of young people within the wider community. The program similarly aimed to increase the capacity of young people within the community to respond to different issues in the future, by providing and fostering leadership and empowerment opportunities for young people from Chin and Southern Sudanese backgrounds.

The objectives of the project were as follows:

Objective 1

Train forty-eight (48) young people aged 18 to 24 years from the Chin and Southern Sudanese communities in leadership skills to become Youth Ambassadors for the project.

Objective 2

Participants gain increased knowledge of Australian laws, constructive anger management and conflict strategies and greater participation in social activities for youth from Chin and Southern Sudanese backgrounds in Melbourne and the country region of Gippsland.

Objective 3

Link youth from Chin and Southern Sudanese backgrounds into youth activities within the wider community.

3. Evaluation Methodology

An evaluation strategy, comprised of four phases was devised by the project worker and is outlined below.

Phase 1 – Recruitment and training of Youth Ambassadors

Timeframe	Method	Purpose
February – June 2011	Notes of meetings and discussions with community elders and leaders	To evaluate approaches for recruiting young people and make changes accordingly
July 2011	Feedback/evaluation surveys completed by Youth Ambassadors at the conclusion of each leadership training camp	To measure success and effectiveness of the leadership training workshops and activities implemented at each camp, and the new skills and knowledge gained by participants during camps

Phase 2 – Program planning phase with Youth Ambassadors

Timeframe	Method	Purpose
August 2011 – March 2012	Agendas and minutes from each program planning meeting with Youth Ambassador groups	To measure the progress of each group, including Youth Ambassador discussions, program planning strategies and resolution of conflict or other difficult issues
August 2011 – March 2012	Attendance lists and notes kept of planning meetings by project worker for each group of Youth Ambassadors	To monitor Youth Ambassadors contribution and commitment to the project
October 2011 – March 2012 (at the conclusion of each groups' planning phase)	Focus group with each group of Youth Ambassadors at the conclusion of the 8 week crime prevention program	To assess the effectiveness and satisfaction of Youth Ambassadors with the program planning phase, including the way meetings were conducted, tasks were delegated and completed and satisfaction with 8 week program developed

Phase 3 – Implementation of crime prevention programs

Timeframe	Method	Purpose
December 2011 – April 2012 (at the conclusion of each 8 week program)	Feedback/evaluation surveys completed by young people who attend each 8 week program (to be completed in final sessions of each program)	To measure the success of each program including new knowledge and skills gained, behaviour changes and enjoyment of sessions by participants
October 2011 – April 2012 (at every session of each 8 week program)	Attendance lists from each program session	To monitor participant involvement and commitment to the project
October 2011 – April 2012 (at every session of each 8 week program)	Notes/reflections taken by project worker at each program session	To monitor participant involvement, responses to activities and topics discussed and to ensure arising issues are resolved and follow up provided where necessary

Phase 4 – Feedback and evaluation

Timeframe	Method	Purpose
October 2011 – April 2012 (at the conclusion of each 8 week program)	Focus groups with each group of Youth Ambassadors (who organised a program together)	To evaluate the successes and shortcomings of each 8 week program, providing opportunity for Youth Ambassadors to reflect on program planning and program implementation phases
May 2012	Focus groups with community elders and leaders from Southern Sudanese and Chin communities	To gather feedback about the whole project, including the recruitment and training of Youth Ambassadors, the effectiveness of the peer-led program model, youth programs developed by Youth Ambassadors and effectiveness of the program overall in increasing knowledge amongst

		young people within the community and decreasing crime
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4. Program Development and Implementation

4.1 Recruitment of Youth Ambassadors

Community Associations were contacted by the project worker to seek their involvement in the project. Based on initial discussions held with community Associations prior to beginning the project, it was envisaged that the recruitment of young people to become Youth Ambassadors would be led by community elders and leaders, church leaders and other prominent community members, who would nominate and/or contact young people within their communities believed to possess the relevant skills and interest to become Youth Ambassadors. The project worker identified and met with community elders and leaders from the following community Associations:

- Australia Chin Community Eastern Melbourne (ACC)
- Bor Community Association of Australia
- Falam Community Association
- Melbourne Mizo Association
- Sudanese Community Association of Australia
- Zomi Australia Association (ZAA)

Members of the Zomi community offered to create a flier for the project, which was subsequently used in all initial promotion to recruit Youth Ambassadors. All community leaders gave feedback to help shape application forms to be completed by young people wishing to become Youth Ambassadors. The project worker met with representatives from each community at least twice each during the recruitment period, to seek their feedback and direction on project documents (such as the application form for Youth Ambassadors and information sheets) and to receive updates about the recruitment process.

Most community leaders were keen for the project to go ahead, however, many were hesitant to take on the responsibility of recruiting young people. Some offered only to pass on the information and distribute fliers amongst community members but were unwilling to follow up with young people. Others advised the project worker that they thought young people within their community would be too busy to undertake the project and were dubious about the project's intentions. One community leader initially told the project worker that he thought it would be better if the MIC could write down some Australian laws on a sheet of paper that could be translated and distributed widely within the community. After a second meeting where the project was explained in more detail, this community leader agreed to participate, and assisted greatly in recruiting young people to become Youth Ambassadors.

For community leaders who agreed to take on the responsibility of recruiting young people, several difficulties and delays were encountered. Difficulties included:

- community leaders having difficulty finding enough young people from their community who were interested in participating in the program (it was later discovered that the application and interview process may have been intimidating for some young people, particularly those from Chin backgrounds – this is discussed in more detail in Section 4)

- community leaders handing out fliers and application forms to young people but not following up to ask young people to return the application forms (due to lack of time, not seeing the young people regularly or forgetting which young people had taken forms)
- community leaders not distributing the project materials as widely as hoped (due to lack of time, forgetting or not feeling comfortable to say no to the project worker)
- young people expressing interest in participating in the project but not completing the forms, or changing their minds when contacted by community leaders or the project worker for a follow up interview

A further difficulty was encountered during this time, as the Bor Community Association of Australia underwent dramatic changes in leadership, with all members of the leadership committee moving overseas or interstate. This meant that after having initial meetings with Bor community leaders, the project worker could not rely on them to recruit young people to become Youth Ambassadors.

This similarly meant the project worker had to try different methods of recruitment of Youth Ambassadors. This included:

- Contacting the Sudanese Community Association of Australia (SCAA – the umbrella Association for all Sudanese communities) to explain the project and seek their assistance in recruiting young people to become Youth Ambassadors
- Contacting community and youth agencies in each of the four geographical regions where the program was to be held to explain the aims and objectives of the project, seek their involvement in promoting the project and recruiting young people to participate (this method proved the most successful, with most young people from Southern Sudanese communities recruited through external agencies)
- Contacting young people who had expressed an interest in the project or had completed application forms to ask if they had friends or knew of others in the community who might also like to be involved in the project
- The project worker attending church services, Southern Sudanese community meetings and MIC groups and program sessions to promote the project amongst young people and their parents and recruit interested young people

These difficulties meant that the process of recruiting young people from Southern Sudanese communities took much longer than anticipated. Similarly, due to difficulties in external agencies identifying young people from Bor backgrounds (as distinct from other Southern Sudanese backgrounds), and the Sudanese Community Association representing all Sudanese tribal groups becoming involved, the Youth Ambassador positions were opened up to young people from all Southern Sudanese communities, instead of targeting Bor youth exclusively.

Once all application forms had been completed and returned to the project worker, the interview phase for potential Youth Ambassadors was implemented. Interviews were held with 24 young people from Chin communities – 6 from Hakha Chin, 8 from Falam Chin, 7 from Zomi and 3 from Mizo communities (the low number of people from Mizo backgrounds

is indicative of the small number of young people within the Mizo community living in the Eastern Region).

Several young people from Chin communities decided not to participate in the program following the interview. While some advised the project worker that they did not wish to participate, others did not turn up on the morning of the camp, without explanation. It was only revealed later (during focus groups at the conclusion of the project) that some young people found the interview and application process intimidating, dissuading young people from participating. As discussed below, this may be due to cultural differences and unfamiliarity with Australian job application processes. Another explanation for this may be the relatively recent arrival of most people from Chin backgrounds (most have been in Australia for less than five years), compared with those from Southern Sudanese backgrounds, whom have generally been in Australia for longer.

Another limitation was the lack of prior consultation with community leaders from all Chin groups prior to the project's implementation, meaning they may have had limited understanding of the projects aims, objectives and structure. This may have led to hesitation from community leaders in encouraging young people to become involved and limited the assistance provided in the recruitment phase. This lack of understanding may have dissuaded young people from participating following the interview process limited support from families and community leaders and associations.

Due to difficulties and delays in recruiting young people from Southern Sudanese backgrounds, some young people were not interviewed prior to the camp. Individual interviews were held with 9 young people from Southern Sudanese backgrounds (4 with young people from the east, 4 from the west and 1 from the south east). Once young people from Gippsland had been identified and application forms had been filled, the project worker travelled to Morwell to meet with 6 young people and held an informal group interview, where the group discussed the intentions of the program and expectations of Youth Ambassadors. Those who were not interviewed formally prior to the camps met with the project worker individually following the camps.

Twenty-four young people from Southern Sudanese backgrounds and 21 young people from Chin backgrounds were identified to participate in the project as Youth Ambassadors.

4.2 Leadership Training

A leadership training program was developed by the project worker. This program was developed based on previous leadership training programs facilitated by the MIC – one for adults and the other for young men, which focussed on the challenges of living between two cultures and positively influencing peers.

The training program developed comprised of three training modules, each of which included a classroom session (facilitated by the project worker) and an outdoor or other interactive activity at the camp facilities (see Appendix 1 – *Leadership Training Program*).

The training was implemented at two separate camps in July 2011 – one for young people from the Southern Sudanese community and the other for young people from Chin communities. Two young people from Chin backgrounds and three young people from Southern Sudanese communities who were recruited to be trained as Youth Ambassadors

informed the project worker prior to the camp that they could not attend due to work or study commitments. The project worker had individual meetings with these participants both prior to and following the camp, to individually discuss each of the training modules implemented during the camp and provide written materials and activity sheets completed during the camp. These five young people became Youth Ambassadors for the project.

The first camp was attended by 22 young people from Southern Sudanese backgrounds. Although 21 young people from Chin backgrounds were selected to be trained as Youth Ambassadors for the program, only 16 attended the leadership camp. Several young people who said they would attend the camp did not present at the meeting place on the morning of camp. Reasons given were that they did not have time (due to work/study) or that they had changed their minds and did not want to attend the camp or participate in the program.

Young people and community leaders who attended the camp expressed disappointment that those who had committed to the camp had not turned up on the day, with no explanation or contact made with the project worker. Community leaders who were assisting in supervising participants during the camp phoned each of the individuals to talk with them when they did not turn up to the meeting place at the morning of camp to see if they would change their minds, however, none wanted to attend. All of these young people decided they did not want to participate in the program.

4.2.1 Feedback from the Leadership Training Camps

All participants who attended the camps completed an evaluative feedback form after the final training module on the last day of each camp. For participants from the Southern Sudanese community, 17 participants (77%) rated the camp as 'Great/Informative' and one participant rated it as 'Okay/Neutral'. Two other participants did not record their responses. For participants from the Chin community, 13 people (81%) rated the training as 'Great/Informative', with 3 participants (18%) rating it 'Okay/Neutral'.

Responses from participants for both groups illustrate that the most valuable things participants learnt related largely to the learning objectives as set out in the workshop modules, with most participants mentioning the importance of team work, communication skills, learning about personal strengths and influencing others.

"One of the most valuable things that I have learned during this leadership camp is that teamwork is very important in and around the community, working as a team, meeting new people, something new to learn, listening to other people's ideas." – Southern Sudanese group participant

"Time management and communication skills, leading by example, my strength, teamwork" – Southern Sudanese group participant

"Team work and good communication skills such as active listening and also the ability to value others' opinion while talking, being respectful" – Chin group participant

Others reflected on different areas of learning that they found most valuable.

"Leadership potential we have among Chin young people" – Chin group participant

“...respecting others and give everybody to share their opinion” – Southern Sudanese group participant

“...building relationships and getting along with each other. Being confident to contribute and present in presence of everyone” – Chin group participant

“The most was respect and how to work well with others of different backgrounds, not to misjudge people” – Southern Sudanese group participant

Many participants from the Southern Sudanese group stated that they enjoyed the outdoor interactive activities that allowed for practical application of skills learnt during workshop modules. The most popular activity appeared to be the giant swing, where participants had to work as a team, pulling on a rope to hoist one of their peers, fixed into a harness, up sixteen meters in the air. The person in the harness then had to pull another rope to release themselves, swinging through the air. Participants appeared to find the experience new and exciting, challenging them to step outside of their comfort zones, whilst working as a team.

“I enjoy giant swing because here were a lot of people that scared to do it” – Southern Sudanese group participant

“Giant swing because it was scary but it’s fun at the same time” – Southern Sudanese group participant

The camp attended by the Chin group was at a different location to the Southern Sudanese group. For the Chin group’s team work activity, they participated in a ‘team rescue’, where they were given a fictional scenario of being stranded following a helicopter crash. The group was given a dummy on a stretcher, whom they were told was their injured friend ‘Steady Eddie’. The group had to work together to get all team members, including Steady Eddie through an obstacle course, without anyone touching the ground. The project worker facilitated a discussion following the activity to encourage participants to reflect on how well they had worked as a team.

“Team rescue activity is that I enjoyed most because it is the example for us to work together or how we can the problem in a team. And also it really make me understand that I cannot work out by myself.” – Chin group participant

“Team rescue – it’s about working in a team and strive for a same goal. We learnt a bit about group work and the skills required.” – Chin group participant

“Rescue Steady Eddie – because it showed that we have to work together as a team and should listen to other opinion to achieve the goal.” – Chin group participant

While many participants found outdoor activities most valuable for their learning, others enjoyed the workshops, including discussions and small group work, where participants were often asked to write or draw responses on butchers paper, then present to the larger group.

“Group discussion – because I get good understanding of each individual and their point of view. Get to know each other well and knowing their strengths in leadership.” – Southern Sudanese group participant

“At camp, the best was to do the activities in small groups, then come up to the front with our big papers to discuss. This helped us to think about those things we needed to learn and see what others thought about this.” – Chin group participant

“I really enjoyed the group discussion. Throughout the group discussion I have discover something about the Sudanese young men that I wasn’t aware of and I was impressed about their knowledge and ideas also like the co-operation of one another.” – Southern Sudanese group participant

“The group discussion mostly because I learn most of the skills I came here to learn and I learn from everyone in the way that they express their ideas and interaction between everyone in the group” – Southern Sudanese group participant

Participants commented on what they will take away with them from the camp.

“Commitment is very important now because in this camp most weren’t committed to get up in the morning and as leader, we need to have good committed skill” – Southern Sudanese group participant

“Supporting one another in order to achieve something because... we can’t do anything without being supported” – Southern Sudanese group participant

“Types of communication – I like to use passiveness and passive-aggressiveness but now what I will take away with me is that is good to be assertive... it the most important” – Southern Sudanese group participant

“Try to put yourself in other’s shoes, it is essential thing since we do not live in this world alone we need to understand the other’s feelings and the situation.” – Chin group participant

“Self-reflection: it is also crucial because it can convince us our situation, own weakness as a leader and what we have to prepare for the future in leading people. Also understanding of our differences: if we understand our differences and accept that differences we can build better relationships and rapport for the future.” – Chin group participant

“Patient, good listening, responsible. These are good skill for leadership what I learnt from the camp.” – Chin group participant

Grievances that participants from both groups had about the camp related mostly to the weather and the time of year camps were held (during winter) and the food.

“Food that served us was great but as it were Western foods it was a bit hard for us to get on with it.” – Chin group participant

“Waking up in the morning, I mostly hated the weather.” – Southern Sudanese group participant

Some participants also believed that they had too much free time and would have preferred the time to be filled with more structured activities or learning.

“Too much free time, if we do more outside activity it would be more fun and interesting.” – Chin group participant

“I actually thought the camp would be more sessions than activities. I didn’t enjoy the too much free time that was given...” – Chin group participant

Others however, thought the meetings were too long and would have preferred some more spare time.

“The part I would like to done differently next time is the meeting times we had a lot of time talking maybe shorten them a bit and then more free time for other activities...” – Southern Sudanese group participant

Overall, participants appeared to enjoy the camp.

“Well it is really good! And that will be great if we can have this kind of chance to be together again... the programme was really good because it is make us together and learn each and everyone’s strength or built good communication between the Chin’s youth people. Thank you so much! And I hope we can get a chance again like this! Thanks!” – Chin group participant

“The things that we learnt in the 3 days at camp really changed us and changed our thinking. It would be great if this could be extended to others.” – Chin group participant

“I really enjoyed being here was grateful thanks to people who arranged it. Was great fun!” – Southern Sudanese group participant

“It was good meeting people I haven’t met before and to get to know them more as in the group or teamwork we have done. I’m happy to work with all the people I have met. Also I have learnt to speak on front of people and that’s one of the important.” – Southern Sudanese group participant

4.3 Program Planning Phase with Youth Ambassadors

4.3.1 Establishing Youth Ambassador Groups

Following the camps, the Youth Ambassadors from Southern Sudanese backgrounds broke into small groups based on geographical location, forming four separate groups – one in Eastern Melbourne, one in South Eastern Melbourne, one in Western Melbourne and one in Morwell in the rural area of Gippsland. At each camp, the project worker and Youth Ambassadors decided the most appropriate day of the week to meet, suitable times for meetings and a venue that was convenient. The project worker liaised with external agencies in each geographic area to find venues that were suitable. Southern Sudanese Youth Ambassadors in the East met at the MIC offices in Box Hill on Monday evenings, those in the South East met at AMES in Dandenong on Wednesday afternoons, those in the West met at the Phoenix Youth Centre in Footscray on Saturdays and those in Morwell met

initially at Anglicare, then later at the Latrobe City Council offices in Morwell on Tuesday afternoons.

For Chin Youth Ambassadors, instead of breaking into four small groups based on language as originally proposed in the funding agreement (Hakha Chin, Falam Chin, Zomi and Mizo), the group asked to continue to meet as a larger group. Youth Ambassadors explained to the project worker their discontent with divisions within the Chin community in Eastern Melbourne based on language and suggested that splitting the group to create separate programs for each language group would continue to exacerbate this. This is in contrast to adults in the communities who primarily identify according to language groups and clans.

Youth Ambassadors from Chin backgrounds proposed they continue to meet as a larger group and develop one crime prevention program (instead of four separate programs) that would target all Chin youth in Eastern Melbourne. The Chin Youth Ambassadors similarly proposed they use their leadership skills and the example of their mixed group in the program to encourage greater cohesion amongst the different language groups within the Chin community. Instead of running their program over eight weeks, the Chin group proposed holding a program over four whole days during the January school holidays 2012 to ensure they would get maximum attendance from all communities.

The process of working in partnership with Youth Ambassadors allowed for the Chin group to identify their desire to work together as a larger group, rather than breaking into smaller groups based on language. This is considered a success of the program, as the meetings with Youth Ambassadors provided opportunity for exploration of different possible approaches to program development and implementation, providing the group autonomy to develop a program that they believed would be most effective for youth in their community. The Chin group met at the Ringwood Uniting Church on Tuesday or Wednesday evenings.

With the five groups established, regular meetings of each group of Youth Ambassadors and the project worker occurred throughout the project (11 meetings were held with Chin Youth Ambassadors; 7 with Southern Sudanese Youth Ambassadors in the East; 11 with Southern Sudanese Youth Ambassadors in the West; 12 with Southern Sudanese Youth Ambassadors in the South East; and 5 with Southern Sudanese Youth Ambassadors in Morwell. An additional 2 meetings were held with Youth Ambassadors in Morwell following the conclusion of their *African Youth Say No to Crime* program, to assist them and local service providers to set up an ongoing African Youth Club in Morwell) and an additional 3 meetings were held with Youth Ambassadors in the West in conjunction with Jesuit Social Services who are similarly assisting this group to establish longer term programs for African youth in the West.

4.3.2 Peer-led Research Project and Program Planning Sessions

The first phase of program planning for all Chin and Southern Sudanese Youth Ambassadors was to assist each group to identify crime related issues affecting young people within their own communities. The project worker contacted Youth Law, who was then facilitating community projects focussed on peer-led research to assist with this process. A worker from Youth Law attended two meetings – one with Chin Youth Ambassadors and the other with all four groups of Southern Sudanese Youth Ambassadors

together – to discuss the benefits of peer-led research and run some activities to demonstrate its practical application and importance.

Following these meetings, Youth Ambassadors from the Chin community developed a survey to be distributed amongst other young people. The same survey was used by both Chin and Southern Sudanese Youth Ambassadors. Each group distributed the surveys amongst their peers, including friends, siblings and other relatives and young people within each community known to them through school, church and recreational activities. Results were tallied in program planning meetings with the project worker (see Appendix 2 – *Say No to Crime Youth Project Peer Research Survey*).

Results gathered from the surveys were used to facilitate discussions with each group of Youth Ambassadors to determine which issues each project would aim to address. Amongst Chin communities, the issues identified as the greatest crime problems amongst young people included drinking alcohol in public and drink-driving. Amongst groups of Southern Sudanese Youth Ambassadors in the three Melbourne Metropolitan Regions, the biggest crime related issues identified were fighting and violence, use of weapons, experiences of racism and problematic behaviour such as fighting and violence which occurred while young people were drinking alcohol. Youth Ambassadors from Morwell were most concerned with experiences of racism and negative encounters with the police (see Appendix 3 – *Peer Research Survey Results*).

This process provided opportunity for initial project planning meetings to focus on the most important issues and areas of need within each of the five target communities. It also helped the Youth Ambassadors to think about how their crime prevention programs could help address some of the issues identified. Youth Ambassadors discussed why they believed results were high on some issues but not on others and this helped Youth Ambassadors to shape their program and think about how to address issues identified. The research project similarly provided Youth Ambassadors with the experience of conducting a needs analysis, illustrating the importance of including community members in decision making processes, using prior knowledge to interpret data and not making assumptions about the needs of others.

Each group of Youth Ambassadors was encouraged to brainstorm how the issues identified could be addressed in their crime prevention program, including which service providers could be invited to facilitate workshops and deliver sessions. Based on the issues identified, some service providers, including Victoria Police, were invited to attend program planning meetings with Youth Ambassadors.

These sessions allowed Youth Ambassadors to become better informed on different crime related issues, assisting to quell myths while raising knowledge of different services available to them and other young people within their community. These sessions similarly allowed Youth Ambassadors the opportunity to help shape the crime prevention workshops delivered, assisting in their leadership development as they took on roles of ‘experts’ advising service providers as to the best approaches to different topics and session content.

4.3.3 Recreational Activities and Program Structures

Each group of Youth Ambassadors spent time during planning meetings discussing the kinds of recreational activities they believed would attract young people to attend their program and how each program would be implemented with these activities in mind. Once program topics and recreational activities had been decided, action plans were developed with each group, giving each Youth Ambassador individual responsibilities and tasks to complete, assisting in focussing discussion and direction for each program. The crime prevention programs developed by each group outlining both recreational activities and crime prevention education workshops implemented can be found in Appendix 4 – *Crime Prevention Program Outlines*.

Three groups of Youth Ambassadors – the Chin group, and Southern Sudanese groups in Morwell and the South Eastern Region – each decided that including a structured recreational activity would be best for their program. The Morwell group developed a twilight program that was implemented over five consecutive weeks between November and December 2011. Each week, the program began at 4pm and included 1.5 hours allocated to a soccer competition (for the boys) and a netball skills clinic (for the girls), followed by a BBQ, then a 2 hour crime prevention workshop, facilitated by different local service providers each week. Due to a donation of clothing from fashion label *Bardot* (organised through the Multicultural Liaison Officer at Victoria Police), some participants organised a fashion parade in the final session, where Youth Ambassadors and program participants modelled the clothing to music.

The Chin Youth Ambassadors developed a four day program, which was implemented during the January school holidays in 2012, run between 10am and 5.30pm. Participants split into four groups for the duration of the program and each rotated through four, one hour workshops each day – a music workshop, a hip hop dance workshop and two crime prevention education workshops, facilitated by different local service providers. Each day concluded with an indoor soccer competition, organised and run by the Youth Ambassadors for those who wished to stay back to participate.

The program in the South East ran over two whole days (10am to 5pm on the first day and 10am to 6.30pm on the second day) during the school holidays in April 2012. Each day, the program included two outdoor soccer competitions – one for girls and the other for boys (with prizes and trophies for winners), followed by a hip hop dance workshop, lunch and then three different one hour crime prevention workshops each afternoon, facilitated by local service providers. At the conclusion of the workshops on the second day, Youth Ambassadors organised a youth concert, where they invited local musicians to perform at the venue for participants.

The remaining two groups each decided to develop a more informal structure for their recreational activities, creating fun environments where participants could ‘hang out’, socialise informally and choose whether or not they wished to participate in activities offered. Youth Ambassadors decided on this approach as they believed that having a youth friendly space to informally socialise was lacking in their area and thought this would encourage maximum attendance.

The group in the Eastern Region was implemented over eight weeks between October and December 2011. This program was held in a youth friendly space ('The Factory' at Mitcham Baptist Church) that included couches, an indoor soccer court, basketball ring and a sound system where participants could play their own music from their ipods and/or mobile phones. The program was structured so that participants had 1.5 hours to socialise informally, listen to music and play soccer and basketball if they wished. The Youth Ambassadors also organised a hip hop dance instructor to attend two of the eight sessions to run workshops. Following these activities each week, a 1.5 hour crime prevention education workshop was facilitated by local service providers.

Youth Ambassadors in the Western Region implemented a similar program, again over an eight week period between April and June 2012. This program was similarly held in a youth friendly space (Victoria University Sports Centre) where participants could play indoor soccer, basketball or table tennis, listen to music and socialise informally for the first 1.5 hours. At this program, two hip hop dance workshops and two skin care and make-up sessions were organised by the Youth Ambassadors, and participants chose whether to participate in these. Following these activities, 1.5 hour crime prevention education workshops were facilitated by local service providers.

Once program plans, dates and venues were finalised, Youth Ambassadors nominated members of their group to develop promotional materials, including fliers and brochures outlining the programs (see Appendix 5 – *Crime Prevention Program Promotional Fliers*). Promotion was discussed in each group and Youth Ambassador teams developed promotional plans to help inform their peers about their program. This involved distributing fliers around schools, peer groups, youth centres, churches and in local spaces where Youth Ambassadors advised that other young people from each target group socialised. The project worker similarly assisted by attending youth and CALD network meetings in each region to promote each project, setting up and monitoring Facebook groups and event pages and in some cases attending youth, church and community activities to promote the programs, as advised by Youth Ambassadors.

The use of Facebook was particularly effective as this is a form of social media most participants and Youth Ambassadors regularly use via computers as well as android phones. For each program, the Facebook page was created by the project worker in consultation with the Youth Ambassadors. Whilst the project worker had the login details and was the only person able to update the pages and send and receive messages, Youth Ambassadors provided direction as to the pages' look, content and frequency that reminder messages about sessions and programs should be sent out to participants. On several occasions, Youth Ambassadors approached the project worker to assist with improving the Facebook page for their group, sitting with the project worker and finding and inviting friends, altering wording, graphics and assisting to upload images. This method of communication was effective, with several participants stating in the evaluation that they found this useful.

4.3.4 Difficulties and delays encountered during program planning phase

Difficulties and delays in program planning were encountered when Youth Ambassadors did not attend meetings or did not complete allocated tasks within pre-determined time frames. When attendance at program planning meetings was low, the progress of program development within the groups was similarly delayed, as the project worker and Youth

Ambassadors who were present had to spend time revisiting what was missed in previous meetings. It also meant that some tasks as identified on the action plan were not conducted within set time frames (or could not be reported on during meetings if those responsible were absent) meaning time frames and deadlines were blown out and/or follow on tasks were delayed.

On some occasions Youth Ambassadors did not complete the tasks allocated to them in the previous meeting. This delayed processes meaning that subsequent tasks were similarly delayed. For example, in one group, a Youth Ambassador nominated himself to complete a logo and design to be used on all promotional materials for the program; however, he did not complete this by the next meeting, which was the deadline agreed upon on the program plan. This meant that development of the fliers and Facebook page for promoting the program were similarly delayed until the following meeting, shortening timelines that Youth Ambassadors had allocated to promoting the program. Delays occurred when Youth Ambassador forgot to bring completed surveys and results to the meetings, skewing results and/or delaying discussions about crime issues affecting their peers. At some meetings, Youth Ambassadors were hesitant to move forward without the input of other group members, delaying decision making and subsequent actions that could be taken in the program planning phase.

On four separate occasions (two in the South East, one in the East and one in the West) program planning meetings were cancelled when only one Youth Ambassador and the project worker attended the meeting. Although meetings could not go ahead in these instances, the time was spent on each of these occasions setting up or monitoring Facebook pages for programs and discussing promotional strategies with the Youth Ambassadors who did attend.

4.4 Implementation of crime prevention programs

Five crime separate prevention programs were developed and implemented by Youth Ambassadors, with a total of 182 young people participating across the programs. Twenty-five young people attended the program for Southern Sudanese youth in the East, 37 attended in Morwell, 31 attended in the South East and 31 attended in the West; 58 young people from Chin backgrounds attended the Chin Say No to Crime Youth Program in the East. Program outlines including recreational activities undertaken and crime prevention issues covered can be viewed in Appendix 4 – *Crime Prevention Program Outlines*.

4.4.1 Difficulties and delays

The Chin Say No to Crime Youth Program was scheduled to run over four days during the school holidays in January 2012. On each of the first three days, participants attended a series of four workshops (including two educational workshops facilitated by local service providers and focussing on different crime issues and two recreational workshops whereby participants learnt dance and musical routines). The fourth day had been scheduled as a talent contest and performance day, where participants were to perform the music and dance routines that they had been developing and rehearsing over the course of the program.

Unfortunately, on the second day of the program several young people advised the project worker that they could not attend the final day of the program due to a Chin community event being held on the same day. Consequently, the project worker in consultation with the Youth Ambassadors and a community leader who attended the program decided to cancel the final day and instead hold the talent contest at the end of the third day, which subsequently ran an hour later than originally planned.

Although this meant that all participants were present for the music and dance performances, it similarly meant that young people missed out on one of the days scheduled and a recreational activity planned as part of the program. Some Youth Ambassadors expressed disappointment that this happened and their project was cut short, as well as annoyance that they had not been made aware of the Chin community event prior to the program's commencement. Nevertheless, most participants agreed that it was better to hold the talent contest when most participants could attend rather than holding the final day without several participants able to attend.

Other difficulties and delays were encountered where Youth Ambassadors did not attend actual program sessions and days. In the South East Region, only three of the six Youth Ambassadors attended the program on the first day, and only one Youth Ambassador attended on the second day. The focus group with Youth Ambassadors in the South East was similarly cancelled as only one Youth Ambassador was able to attend. This Youth Ambassador provided feedback that he felt disappointed that his peers from the group did not attend and did not know why this had occurred. Some Youth Ambassadors from this group provided no explanation as to why they did not attend; others advised they were busy with University or TAFE classes and assignments.

5. Feedback and Outcomes

5.1 Crime Prevention Program Outcomes

Feedback forms were distributed during the final two sessions at each crime prevention program (except for the program in the West) and completed by participants who attended. In the West, an evaluative focus group discussion was held during the final session, in collaboration with Jesuit Social Services African Project workers who had expressed an interest in continuing to work with program participants and Youth Ambassadors beyond the life of the Say No to Crime Youth Project.

Following each crime prevention program, a focus group conducted by the project worker with each group of Youth Ambassadors. Each group of Youth Ambassadors was asked to discuss their thoughts on the crime prevention program they developed and implemented, including its successes and shortcomings and the impacts they believed it had on their peers. The comments from both program participants and Youth Ambassadors are included in this section.

5.1.1 East-Side Sudanese Say No to Crime, Mitcham

Youth Ambassadors from Southern Sudanese backgrounds in the East were the first to implement their crime prevention program, which ran over a series of eight weeks between October and December 2012. The program was structured with a 1.5 hour informal activity time (listening to music, playing soccer, basketball and hip hop dance workshops at two of the sessions), then a 1 hour crime prevention workshop, facilitated by local service providers. All program sessions were held at the Mitcham Baptist Church, a venue selected by Youth Ambassadors for its close proximity to public transport, the indoor soccer court, basketball rings and youth friendly environment and for the fact that other youth programs have been held at the venue before, making it well known to community members.

Twenty-five young people attended the program over the eight week period, however, only ten participant feedback forms were completed. Of those who completed feedback forms, 6 (60%) participants rated the program overall in the top category, as 'Fun/Great', while 4 (40%) rated the program as 'Okay/Average'. Feedback from short-answer questions indicated that the most useful session for participants was the roundtable discussion held with police.

This was a session developed through discussions during planning meetings between the Youth Ambassadors and Multicultural Liaison Officer from Nunawading Police, facilitated by the project worker. The Youth Ambassadors believed inviting local police members to attend a session of the crime prevention program was important to help address negative interactions between their peers and police in the area. The Youth Ambassadors hoped this session would provide an opportunity to build understandings between the two groups, quell myths about particular laws and police regulations and provide an opportunity for their peers to ask questions.

The session included a soccer game and basketball shooting competition, with police and young people mixing up and competing on the same teams, followed by a 'roundtable' discussion, where participants were encouraged to ask questions and make comments

about their interactions with local police. The discussion was facilitated by the Victoria Police Multicultural Liaison Officer and the project worker, with Youth Ambassadors assisting to encourage open and respectful communication between the police and participants. Participants commented:

“I like the police session, because we have got a lot of problems with cops everywhere we go and this was a chance to talk to them...”

“The police session – I found out where and what I can do if police harass me...”

“Police session was great!”

It was apparent during the session that there were several misunderstandings held between the two groups, with several points being clarified during the session. Unexpectedly, two Youth Ambassadors arrived at the session early and spent time sharing their personal refugee stories with police members (who had been asked to arrive before program participants for a briefing about the Say No to Crime Youth Project overall and the outline for the session). This appeared to have an unexpected impact on police, some of whom had never had the opportunity to ask questions about the challenges for refugee young people. Following the session, the Victoria Police Multicultural Liaison Officer commented how useful she believed this had been for local police members, who may have limited understandings about the needs of newly arrived young people.

“The police members in attendance spoke to me at the end of the program and they were all very grateful for the opportunity to be involved in this very worthwhile project. The feedback from my colleagues was very positive.”

Another emergent theme from participant feedback related to the opportunity the program overall gave to sharing ideas, learning new ways of thinking and considering opinions and ideas of others. Although few participants stated it explicitly, the concept of considering ideas and opinions different to one’s own was a major theme covered in the two sessions delivered by the MIC psychologist about accepting differences. This was a learning that clearly stuck with participants.

“[through the program I have learnt]...sharing views and ideas”

“I liked this program very much because I learn understanding in this program

“I have learnt accepting”

“[through the program I have learnt]...you don’t have to accept [ideas of others] but don’t reject”

“[through the program I have learnt]...always consider”

When asked what other discussion topics participants would like to cover in future programs, few had any ideas of alternate topics. Four participants left this question blank and most others wanted to discuss similar topics again. Comments included:

“The same”

“Not sure”

“More time to do and say these things”

“None different”

Participants similarly gave positive feedback about the recreational activities implemented for the program, reinforcing the Youth Ambassadors’ initiative to have unstructured activities.

“It was real fun to me”

“I love all of them”

“Soccer was great – I love it!”

Few participants had comments about other recreational activities they would have preferred, with three participants leaving this question blank and a further three stating “None” or “Not sure”. Other comments included:

“More hip hop dance and music”

“Music stuff”

“Bring them all to me”

Overall, participants had limited suggestions about how they would improve the program overall if a similar group was to run again, however, most were enthusiastic about similar groups being run in the future.

“I need this program to run next year”

“Keep it on!”

“Thanks for having me it was great!”

“This is good the way it is”

Four of the five Youth Ambassadors from the East attended the focus group meeting following the conclusion of the program. Feedback on the program from Youth Ambassadors was similarly positive, Youth Ambassadors believing that the sessions provided an opportunity to share ideas, beliefs and have discussions and that this would benefit their peers.

“It was good to listen to others’ opinions – people have different ideas and beliefs so it was good to come together to discuss all of these”

“The information and advice that we got was really good, useful, practical and helpful”

Some Youth Ambassadors raised concerns that although the information provided during workshops was useful, this may not necessarily lead to changes in behaviour amongst their peers.

“It depends on the individual, whether or not they will use that information that was given during the sessions. Some will use it, but some will not”

“For some, it may take a long time for the message to actually reach their ears. You can tell them something many times, but they don’t pay attention for a long time”.

The group discussed their disappointment in the people who attended the program not being those who they believe ‘needed’ to hear the information.

“It was good to get new skills and information, but the wrong people attended. Those who have problems with drugs and alcohol, fighting and these things, they weren’t there’

Some saw the benefit in providing information in a preventative manner.

“Even if those who attended are not involved in crimes now, it might help them to know about these things in the future. Maybe it will stop some people getting involved in crimes later on”

The group expressed a general disappointment in the number of people who regularly attended the program and discussed the difficulties encountered in encouraging more young people to attend (8 to 12 participants regularly attended each week, with 20 attending on the day of the police roundtable discussion).

“...even though we spoke to a lot of people each week, encouraging them and inviting them to come, they gave us a lot of excuses. Like they said they were busy or said yes when they really meant no. Some people just said they thought it sounded like a waste of time”

The group discussed the relative age of the Youth Ambassador group (between 18 and 25 years) and the participants and thought this might have been a contributing factor to the low attendance.

“It’s hard to get people our age to go to something like this all the time. They don’t want to go...”

While most in the group shared this disappointment, many similarly believed that it was beneficial for themselves and others who did attend to attain this information, as it would be shared and distributed within the community.

“I think people learnt a lot and those who came can pass this information on to others”

“There was not a huge number who attended, but for those who did come, they came regularly, so I think those people still benefited and use that information in their lives...”

When asked how they could encourage people to attend similar programs in the future, the group agreed that a camp would be a better setting in which to conduct the program.

“People like the idea of going on camp, even though we would tell them the same things that we did for this program, a camp would get them to come”

“For some reason, they like the idea of going away somewhere, it seems more exciting. So they would go and then when they’re there we could capture their attention really well and have all those discussions about these crime issues.”

Several recreational opportunities were presented to Youth Ambassadors and program participants over the course of the program. All were encouraged to become involved in a low cost indoor soccer competition, which is held at the same venue as the crime prevention program (Mitcham Baptist Church), which some Youth Ambassadors already participate in. Organisers of the soccer competition attended the final session of the program to promote the competition and invited participants to attend to observe some games and become involved.

Participants were also made aware of youth programs run through Maroondah Youth Services (the local Council run youth service, who attended a program session to promote their services and activities) and were encouraged to join groups and activities in the local area. The Youth Workers from the MIC similarly attended program sessions on two occasions and encouraged participants to become involved in MIC Youth Programs, including the holiday program that was running close to the conclusion of the crime prevention program.

Following the program’s conclusion, three program participants individually approached the project worker at the MIC office, seeking assistance with becoming involved in different activities and services. One participant advised that he is interested in film making and wanted to be linked in with a group or program that could give him some skills in this area. Another participant sought assistance with finding a local outdoor soccer competition he could join. A third participant approached the project worker because she had accrued a public transport fine that she felt was unjust and wanted assistance to write a waiver letter. The project worker assisted the participant to do this and has subsequently linked her in with the MIC Youth Workers for ongoing support.

5.1.2 African Youth Say No to Crime Program, Morwell

The program targeting Southern Sudanese youth in Gippsland was undertaken in partnership with the Latrobe City Council, Refugee Action Program. After the difficulties in engaging young people through the community elders and leaders and churches in Gippsland, the project worker contacted agencies who work with newly arrived communities in Gippsland, including Anglicare, Latrobe Community Health Service and Latrobe City Council workers from the Refugee Action Program, who identified young people from Southern Sudanese backgrounds who were interested in participating as Youth Ambassadors. All young people who submitted applications to become Youth Ambassadors were from Morwell, a regional industry town where several Southern Sudanese families have settled in the past five years and the town in the Gippsland area with the largest population

of Southern Sudanese families. Consequently, project activities, including planning meetings and the crime prevention program for Gippsland were concentrated in Morwell.

Refugee Action Program workers in Morwell were enthusiastic and supportive of the project, providing a venue for program planning meetings at their offices in Morwell free of charge and assisting the project worker to identify and contact local service providers, including youth and recreational programs and local sports clubs. This worker similarly organised the venue to hold the crime prevention program developed, through his own community and personal contacts and assisted the project worker to co-facilitate some of the program planning meetings and crime prevention program sessions.

The *African Youth Say No to Crime Program* developed by Youth Ambassadors was opened to all young people from African backgrounds living in the Gippsland area rather than focussing exclusively on young people from Southern Sudanese backgrounds. Although most African families in Gippsland are Southern Sudanese-Australian, Youth Ambassadors felt it would be discriminatory towards the small number of Liberian families (2-3 families) also living in the area if they were excluded.

The program ran over five weeks and was structured to include 1.5 hours of soccer games (for boys) and netball clinics (for girls), held on two basketball courts at Morwell Park Primary School. This venue was chosen by Youth Ambassadors for its location close to the area of the town where many families from Southern Sudanese backgrounds live in public housing properties. Soccer and netball clinics were run by members of local sports clubs, who similarly encouraged participants to become involved in their clubs at the conclusion of the program. A worker from Centrelink who had been involved in planning meetings was also actively involved in the local soccer club. This worker approached and supported two young men from Southern Sudanese backgrounds who were part of the soccer club to run the soccer games at the program, providing them an opportunity to undertake a leadership role in running activities for their peers.

Following the soccer and netball clinics each week, participants shared a BBQ dinner and spent time socialising and mingling informally with the project worker and other service providers, creating an informal environment before crime prevention workshops began. Each crime prevention workshop lasted for 1.5 hours and covered a range of different topics, each with an interactive focus. During the final session, some of the girls put on a fashion parade, modelling clothes that had been donated to them through *Bardot*, organised by the Multicultural Liaison Unit Officer from Victoria Police for the Eastern Region.

Thirty-seven young people attended the program in total, with between 20 and 30 participants attending each individual session. Twenty-two participants completed evaluation feedback sheets at the conclusion of the program.

When asked to rate the program overall, 16 participants (72%) rated it 'Fun/Great' and 1 participant rated it 'Okay/Average'. Five participants did not record a response to this question. When asked what part of the program they found most useful, there were mixed responses, with most participants making comments about the sessions that focussed on drugs and alcohol, legal issues and rights for young people and interactions with police.

"I think the police session was the most important because I found out lots of interesting things I didn't know"

"The drug and alcohol session [was the most useful] because I have friends who drink... and I learned where I can get more information"

"Legal aid session was good because it gave us lots of information"

Through these responses, there was an emergent theme of gaining new knowledge at the sessions, which participants believed was helpful for them.

"I found every session was useful because I feel it answers most of the questions I had and it gives us a knowledge about general information"

"It was all useful because I got the chance to know new knowledge"

"The first, second, third, fourth and the last were all useful to me – I have learnt a lot from them"

"The police session [was the most useful] because I learnt a lot from it, and also the drug and alcohol and legal session and the family session too – I find it all useful"

"Everything you give us in these sessions is useful!"

This focus on gaining new information may have been due to the relatively young age of participants, with most aged between 14 and 18 years (only two participants were over 18). It was apparent from some responses that there were gaps in knowledge about Australia laws and systems.

"I learn that it is not legal to drink alcohol if you are under 18"

"[I learnt] that if you do the wrong thing, even if you're young you can get charged"

"[I learnt] do not run if you see police"

"I learnt about laws and what to do if police pull you over"

Some participants explained how their attitudes had changed after the program.

"I'm usually scared of police, so it was good to have that session and to talk to them"

It was similarly evident that the program provided an opportunity for participants to learn about the existence of community and youth services available to them in Gippsland, which may increase their use of these services in the future.

"I learnt about... who to call about family problems"

"I learned that people do care, and there are places here that I can go for help with anything"

"[I learnt] about the different speakers and what they are responsible for in their work"

Other topics and speakers that participants would have liked included in the program were teachers, Child Protection services, modelling agencies, dentists and doctors, people to encourage African girls to play sports, soccer stars and someone to discuss unprotected sex and violence. Recreational activities participants listed as wanting to participate in included art, dancing, drawing, craft, basketball, volleyball, tennis, Playstation and video games and sports that girls and boys can play together.

Ideas for improving the program were sparse, with most participants (76%) leaving this question blank. Other comments included:

“Going to Melbourne to meet up with the other kids for a one-off session”

“Less time on sports and more time talking so we can get a greater understanding”

“Get more programs for parents to understand more about their children as well”

“Invite more speakers”

“Make it twice a week”

“Just keep it like this”

Seven young people attended the focus group for Youth Ambassadors. This included five Youth Ambassadors and the two young men from Southern Sudanese backgrounds who had assisted in running the soccer activities, who had become active participants during the workshops. These young men had not been involved in the program planning meetings, but approached one of the service providers following the program’s conclusion to see if they could become involved in planning and running future programs for African youth. They were consequently invited to attend the focus group meeting, as part of the meeting had been set aside to discuss future directions for the program.

The group agreed that their program had been a great success, and agreed that the consistently large numbers in attendance was attributed to the opportunity the program had provided for African youth in the area to come together. Youth Ambassadors noted that the program had facilitated in consolidating friendships and creating a sense of belonging, whilst providing an opportunity to discuss issues that affect their lives.

“[The program] helped us to come together as a community – we haven’t really had that before, except for at church, but some people are not part of churches so this was good because it was something different...”

“This program really brought us closer, it was a great chance to get together, just our community and I liked being involved in something like this”

“It meant we really got to know each other. We knew each other before, but we’ve never done anything like this, so we have become really close now and everyone has become better friends”

The group believed that it would have been beneficial to hold more than five sessions, due to the obvious interest from those who attended.

“It should have been more than five sessions, it wasn’t long enough and it would have been better to go for more weeks”

“This program can really help people – we should keep it going longer”

Similar to the Eastern group, the Youth Ambassadors in Morwell were concerned that they did not attract the ‘right’ people to attend the program, and those involved in crime did not attend.

“Some people who would have benefited from the information were not there...”

Youth Ambassadors were concerned that they were not in positions to spread the information amongst their peers informally and were unsure if the information presented would be adopted by participants.

“...the people who were there can try to spread the information to others but they might not listen, they will just say ‘what makes you know this better than me?’, they won’t want to hear it from you...”

“...some people will take that information and use it in their life and some people will not – it’s up to the individual how they use it and who they tell...”

To improve the structure of the program, Youth Ambassadors suggested having different activities every week, including volleyball, basketball, cricket, talent shows and dancing. Another suggestion was to have soccer stars come to the program to run clinics. Suggestions for different topics to be covered included inviting someone who has committed crimes in the past or had been to jail to come and talk about their experiences and a careers adviser. The group believed that more sessions on similar topics would also be beneficial to allow for more in depth discussions.

Some Youth Ambassadors suggested opening the program to include all young people from Morwell, to mix African and other cultures, particularly Aboriginal youth together allowing them to learn from one another. Others in the group however, did not like this idea, believing one of the strengths of the *African Youth Say No to Crime Program* had allowed them to come together and build relationships as a community, discussing issues they believed are relevant to them as new arrivals in Australia and creating a sense of identity and belonging amongst young people who participated in the program.

Another significant outcome identified during the focus group was the opportunity Youth Ambassadors had to meet with community elders and leaders and their parents prior to implementing the program. This initiative came out of program planning meetings, where Youth Ambassadors identified a lack of opportunity to openly discuss issues affecting African youth with community elders and leaders. Youth Ambassadors felt that they were sometimes ignored or dismissed during community meetings and as a result, believed some community elders and leaders were out of touch with the issues they face as newly arrived youth in the community.

A meeting was subsequently organised by the project worker with the assistance of the Refugee Action Program worker, where local community elders and leaders (men and women) and the parents of Youth Ambassadors were invited to a meeting to discuss the

African Youth Say No to Crime Project. The meeting was led by Youth Ambassadors, who presented the ideas behind the project and led a discussion about how the program was aiming to address the issues identified through the peer-research survey. Youth Ambassadors reflected on the importance of this meeting during the focus group.

“It was good for us to have that meeting because we never get to talk to older people like that. Usually you have to be really respectful and not say anything. But that meeting really let us have a chance to say what we think and for them to have to listen to us...”

“Coming to that meeting meant that parents liked our program and they let their kids go to the group”

“My dad liked knowing what we were doing and he liked coming to that meeting that we had. He liked hearing that we were doing something for the community”

“It was so good to have that meeting. Maybe we can do it again, like every few months and talk about different topics every time... It would help the older people to understand youth”

Several recreational opportunities were presented to participants and Youth Ambassadors over the course of the program. All were invited to attend local soccer and netball club training sessions by club members who facilitated the activities at the program. Workers from Headspace invited participants to come to their offices to access drop-in facilities available and workers from the Refugee Action Program registered participants in a swimming program that was beginning soon after the conclusion of the crime prevention program. The local sports linkages program, Gippsport, similarly attended the program and discussed different sporting opportunities for participants. Several participants advised the project worker and Refugee Action Program worker that they were planning to attend soccer and netball club training the following term.

Around the time of the program’s conclusion, the new Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) Office was opened in Morwell. The Youth Worker from CMY expressed an interest in becoming involved with participants and developing new programs with them. The project worker met with the CMY Youth Worker and the Refugee Action Program worker to discuss how these two agencies may be able to continue to work with participants and offer recreational opportunities in the future.

Following the program’s conclusion, two meetings were held with Youth Ambassadors, CMY and Latrobe City Council, Refugee Action Program to discuss the potential continuation of the program and/or other recreational opportunities. At the time of writing this report, CMY had been meeting with Youth Ambassadors to develop an ‘African Youth Club’. This was a group that was planning to meet regularly in Morwell, providing recreational activities such as sports, art and dance activities, film nights and an informal drop-in and ‘hang out’ space, alongside more formal educational and discussion workshops on different topics, specified by Youth Ambassadors and other young people who attended the program. Youth Ambassadors commented to the project worker that the structure for the African Youth Club would be similar to that developed for the *African Youth Say No to Crime Program*.

5.1.3 Chin Say No to Crime Youth Program, Mitcham

The *Chin Say No to Crime Youth Program* was held over three days during the school holidays in January 2012, at the Mitcham Baptist Church. During program planning meetings the Youth Ambassadors decided the best way to run their program was to split their participants into four teams, and rotate teams through different workshops over the course of each day. To try to maximise attendance at the program, Youth Ambassadors organised music and dance workshops that participants would undertake each day, alongside two education/discussion workshops, facilitated by local service providers focusing on the different topics identified during the peer-research project.

At the program, each team rotated through an activity workshop and a crime prevention workshop in the morning before lunch, then another activity workshop and crime prevention workshop after lunch. During dance and music workshops, each team learnt one dance routine and one popular song (using instruments provided), that was practiced over the three days then performed on the final day of the program in a talent contest. Participants were encouraged to invite family members and friends to attend the talent contest and prizes were awarded to the winning team for each category. Youth Ambassadors also organised an indoor soccer competition which was held at the end of each day of the program, where teams competed in a round robin competition. A final was held on the last day of the program, with medals and a trophy awarded to the winning team.

Youth Ambassadors decided to become 'team leaders' for the program, breaking into small groups and working together to lead their team. Youth Ambassadors used their leadership skills to do this, moving their team between workshops, assisting with interpreting and explaining difficult concepts during workshops and encouraging team member participants to ask questions and get involved in activities and discussions throughout the program. To assist with team building amongst each team and to encourage Youth Ambassadors to adopt leadership roles, Youth Ambassadors requested having different coloured team t-shirts. A t-shirt and logo was designed by one of the Youth Ambassadors and printed onto different coloured t-shirts. The coloured t-shirts subsequently became team colours for all participants and providing a sense of team belonging for all involved. Youth Ambassadors helped to build team morale by encouraging other team members to dress in their 'team colours' for the second and third days.

Fifty-eight young people from different Chin backgrounds attended the program over the three days. Twenty-six participants completed the feedback and evaluation forms. Twenty-one participants (81%) rated the program as 'Fun/Great' overall, with five (19%) rating in 'Okay/Average'. Feedback indicated that participants found a number of different program workshops 'the most useful', particularly noting that they had enjoyed workshops where new learning and understandings had occurred.

"They were all important for us because lots of young people doesn't know about the right thing and then they get into trouble – this taught us the new things"

"Psychologist – it teaches me to try harder. Drink standards – really informative"

"Drink driving session – it is the most useful that I find because I learn lots more from this that I wanted to know"

“Drink driving session [was the most useful] because I get to know so many other things that I’ve never even heard of”

When asked what they had learnt from the program, several participants noted the specific learning and new knowledge they had gained through the program.

“Police session was good because I didn’t know before that there’s a drug test patrol and that ecstasy pills are also included in drugs”

“I learnt not to drink while driving and if driving, no drinking”

“I learnt about how much alcohol you can drink driving and BAC and others”

When asked what other topics or speakers they would have liked in the program, participants suggested:

“Information about Australian Citizenship”

“More about alcohol limits, police talking about the law”

“Individual rights”

“Sex education”

Others suggested different recreational activities, including basketball, more hip hop and other dance workshops, table tennis, volleyball, singing, mixed soccer for boys and girls together and tennis. Suggestions on how to improve the program overall included:

“Going to the swimming pool”

“Longer days”

“Need more time and invite more people”

“Longer time for soccer”

In the space for additional comments about the program, responses were very positive, with many participants commenting on how they had enjoyed the program.

“This program is great!”

“I love this program so much!”

“We had so much fun! Long live Chin Say No to Crime!”

“I love it! Thank you.”

Five Youth Ambassadors attended the focus group meeting. This number was disappointing, given there were sixteen Youth Ambassadors appointed on the program. Nevertheless, those who attended provided comprehensive feedback on the program. All present believed the program had been very successful and were pleased with it overall.

“The program was so much fun! It was more fun than I thought it would be – I started to miss my team and everyone when it was finished!”

“It’s always so hard to get the attention of young people, to get them to come and to learn about these issues, so I think what we did was really good, we had to try and I think we did well”

Youth Ambassadors commented that the structure of some of the workshops provided encouragement for participants’ learning and may have helped to build self-esteem.

“...when the legal centre was giving out chocolates [for answering questions correctly], it really increased the self-esteem of those young people who were answering the questions. They felt special and raised up – I could see them hold their shoulders high. This was really good for other people in the group, because it showed them they should try to learn things, so they can feel special like them. It showed who has knowledge about these issues, these are the people they can turn to if they have a question or problem in the future.”

Like Youth Ambassadors from other programs, this group similarly believed that they had not attracted the ‘right’ people to attend the program – those who they know are involved in different crimes or misuse drugs and alcohol and who Youth Ambassadors thought should have attended.

“We couldn’t get the bad kids to come along to the sessions. Next time, we need to get their leader – I know who he is and if we get him, I think the others will come too. They really like soccer, so I thought this part of the program would encourage them to come.”

“...we didn’t get many of the older people who might be the ones involved in drink driving and crime”

Youth Ambassadors offered other reasons as to why more people may not have attended the program.

“Some people might have thought the program was just for us [Youth Ambassadors] and our friends, not for everyone”

“...I think some of the participants who were not confident with their English did not come, they might have felt ashamed. I think sometimes people only understand about sixty per cent of what is said and they might have not felt comfortable to come in case they did not understand.”

“We could have attracted more people if our promotion had begun earlier – I think we left it too long...”

Youth Ambassadors similarly believed that the knowledge they gained during the program could be shared within the community.

“Even though they didn’t come, I think we can still teach them what we learnt”

“They might not realise it now, but I think they really learnt a lot. Hopefully those who were there can help spread this information amongst their friends”

Of particular interest to Youth Ambassadors were the drug and alcohol education sessions.

“I keep thinking about the glass they gave us, the one that measures how much is in a standard drink. I just picture that glass every time I am out and I tell my friends when I think they will be over the limit.”

“...although we didn’t get the older ones, we did get the younger ones so hopefully this program helped them so that they don’t get involved in crimes and drinking too much in the future”

Some Youth Ambassadors were disappointed that the program structure was changed from four days to three. This decision was made collaboratively with the project worker, a community leader who was present and Youth Ambassadors. The final day was cancelled after several participants approached their team leaders and the project worker to advise that they could not attend on the final day due to another community activity.

“Don’t change the program once it is set. We should not have cancelled the Saturday. Some people were really upset about this, because they couldn’t come on Wednesday but they were planning to come on Saturday.”

Others however, disagreed and thought the decision to cancel the final day was appropriate.

“It was really hard decision to change the days but we thought no one would come on Saturday because of the Hakha event that day. We had to make a decision and it was a hard decision, but people would have been unhappy both ways so better to have more people available to attend than not enough.”

They also offered ideas about how they could improve this if a similar program was run again in the future.

“It could be good to make a certificate for each participant who attended the program, not just the leaders. This is something they can show to their parents and feel proud of”

During the focus group, the project worker reflected her surprise that there were so few girls in attendance at the program, despite almost half of the Youth Ambassadors being female. Youth Ambassadors commented on this.

“Some of our parents and families are still very traditional. In our culture, girls do not usually go out of the house, so some people have that idea here in Australia. Sometimes the parents don’t want the girls to go out and sometimes the girls think they shouldn’t go with their brothers, so they just stay at home.”

When asked what they believed could be done to encourage more girls to join programs, Youth Ambassadors were unsure, thinking this was a cultural tradition that would change over time.

“Maybe in the future, the girls will become more involved and their parents will allow them to go out, but for many families, they still don’t want their girls to do activities outside of the house, they prefer them to stay home.”

Youth Ambassadors similarly discussed barriers faced by some young people, both boys and girls in making friends outside of the Chin community and in retrospect believed the program could have been more beneficial if it had included non-Chin youth. Youth Ambassadors thought barriers faced to mixing with young people outside of the Chin community was due to shyness or a lack of confidence with using English, differences in humour and jokes and sometimes the lack of opportunity to mix with people outside the Chin community in social settings.

Some Youth Ambassadors advised that some young people from Chin backgrounds think of different activities, including community events, as opportunities to drink alcohol and get drunk with their friends. One participant reflected on his observations of non-Chin events and wondered if integrating non-Chin youth into programs could help encourage Chin youth to make friends outside of the community and role model having fun without alcohol.

“...It would also be good for our young people to have some ‘Aussie’ role models, to show them that they can have fun at events without drinking alcohol. Some people were really surprised when they went to the city on New Year’s Eve to watch the fireworks; they expected everyone there to be completely drunk... but there were a lot of families, young kids and people around who were not drunk at all and I think this changed people’s thinking.”

Participants and Youth Ambassadors were invited to join the local indoor soccer competition that is held at Mitcham Baptist Church and encouraged to attend the competition to watch the following week. A new initiative at the MIC at the time of the program also saw sports scholarships become available for young people from refugee backgrounds. The scholarships paid for sports uniforms and shoes and sports club fees for young people to become involved in a sport of their choice. Program participants were advised of the scholarships during the final session of the program and invited to apply. Eight participants from the Chin Say No to Crime Program were awarded sports scholarships. Participants were similarly invited to join Maroondah Youth Services groups and programs (through a worker who attended the program), and MIC youth activities that were starting in Term 1, 2012.

5.1.4 South East Sudanese Say No to Crime Program

The *South East Sudanese Say No to Crime Program* was implemented over two whole days during the school holidays in April 2012. The program was held at ‘The Castle’ a local youth space in Dandenong, chosen by Youth Ambassadors because it is well known to young people in the area and had outdoor BBQs and a soccer oval to run recreational activities, as well as an indoor space where workshops were held.

The program comprised an outdoor soccer competition (a boy’s and a girl’s competition) in the morning, followed by a hip hop workshop before a BBQ lunch. After lunch, participants attended two crime prevention workshops on the first day and three on the second day. At

the conclusion of the final day, Youth Ambassadors organised a concert, inviting local youth musicians and rap artists to perform for participants at the Castle.

The project worker partnered with Dandenong Youth Services to develop and implement the program. This partnership proved beneficial as Dandenong Youth Services workers were able to promote the program through their networks and amongst their client groups and assisted in booking venues. These workers similarly had existing relationships with local service agencies, providing recommendations of workers to approach to facilitate sessions. Partnering with this service proved beneficial in linking young people into local programs, groups and recreational activities following the Say No to Crime Youth Project.

Twenty-seven young people attended on the first day and twenty-two attended on the second day. Disappointingly, only three (of six) Youth Ambassadors attended the program on the first day, and only one attended on the second day. On the first day, one of the Youth Ambassadors who attended left after lunch and consequently missed the crime prevention workshops. Only one Youth Ambassador who did not attend gave a reason and apology to the project worker prior to the program, explaining that he was unexpectedly offered a job in rural Victoria that he decided to accept one week prior to the program. Other Youth Ambassadors who were not present were not contactable by phone when the project worker and Youth Ambassadors who did attend on the day tried to phone them. When the project worker spoke with them the following week, Youth Ambassadors stated that they were busy on the day so could not attend.

While Youth Ambassadors in this group initially worked hard to develop the program, momentum within the group appeared to flounder towards the time of program implementation. As illustrated in the comments below, this may have been due to the longer time frame between the camp (July 2011) and the implementation of the program (April 2012). This was an unfortunate constraint of the project, as the project worker had to stagger the implementation of each crime prevention program over nine months due to the logistics of implementing five separate crime prevention programs, as well as the part-time nature of her employment.

This appeared to impact on the program overall, participants appearing less engaged with the workshops than in the other groups and Youth Ambassadors not present to provide leadership in the program's organisation. Nevertheless, for those who did attend, feedback overall was fairly positive. Twelve participants completed an evaluation feedback form. Eight participants (67%) rated the program as 'Fun/Great' and one participant rated the program as 'Okay/Average'. Three participants left this question blank. There were a mix of responses about what participants found most useful about the program, with participants focusing on the drug and alcohol, intergenerational conflict and legal education workshops in their responses.

"Drugs and alcohol [was the most useful] because I got a lot of knowledge about the dangers and affects"

"Drugs and alcohol is bad and if you take drugs it can kill yourself"

"The Victorian Legal Aid was a really interesting session"

"I love Woody's [intergenerational conflict] workshop, learning about life"

Participants' responses indicate that their learning throughout the program was more general than other groups, gaining knowledge applicable to several aspects of their lives rather than specific new information about particular topics or issues.

"I got some good advice from Woody that I can apply in life..."

"[I learnt] how to communicate with different people, no matter where you're from"

"The program taught us a lot of useful things about life situations and how the choices that we make every day may affect us"

"[I learnt] how to manage with other people..."

"[I learnt] getting me away from trouble"

Other topics and speakers that participants stated they would have liked in the program included:

"...more drug and alcohol"

"How to find jobs"

"Lecturers from Universities"

Other activities that participants would have liked in the program included more soccer, longer soccer game time, video games, pool tables, table tennis, basketball, camping and singing. Many appeared disappointed that there were not more participants who attended. Other suggestions to improve the program if it were to run again included:

"...involve more young people of a diverse group"

"More time because I think most of us really enjoyed it if I am not mistaken!"

"Do a tournament for a longer time"

"If more people could come it would have been better"

Final comments from participants were extremely positive.

"I really liked it!"

"I loved it and it's a great idea for young people to connect"

"It was a great program, thanks to all the staff for helping out"

"It was great – we just need more people to get involved"

Following the program, the project worker phoned all Youth Ambassadors to try to organise a focus group meeting to discuss the program. Only one Youth Ambassador (the same person who attended both days of the program) expressed an interest in attending, others claiming that they were busy, or they believed they should not be involved in the meeting as they did not attend the program, illustrating again the lack of enthusiasm for the program at

this time. Despite encouragement by the project worker, the focus group meeting did not go ahead. Instead, the project worker had a telephone conversation with the one Youth Ambassador who was interested in participating in the focus group, to get his feedback and thoughts on the program.

This Youth Ambassador expressed great disappointment that his peers had not attended the program.

"I don't know why they didn't come. We have been working on this for ages and we had organised everything. I don't know where they were".

When asked why he thought they did not attend, the Youth Ambassador offered his thoughts.

"I can't speak for them, but maybe they were busy, maybe they had other things on. I think some people might have lost interest, because of the time between our camp and the program... maybe they couldn't commit anymore. But they should have told us if they weren't coming..."

While this program clearly suffered due to the lack of involvement of other Youth Ambassadors, the young person who remained committed throughout has attained several leadership skills and opportunities from the experience.

"It's been a really great experience for me. From the camp, to the meetings I have learnt so much that can help me in my life..."

Other leadership opportunities for this Youth Ambassadors included being selected to join the City of Greater Dandenong Young Leaders Program and becoming involved in coaching a local soccer group (initiated through meeting recreational services workers during the program who were impressed by his leadership skills).

Other participants who attended the program were similarly linked into youth services and programs through the linkage created throughout the program with Dandenong Youth Services workers. On the final day of the program, Dandenong Youth Services conducted a workshop focussing on the importance of seeking assistance if faced with different issues and handed out fliers for several different groups and programs being run in the following term. Some young people were linked into a soccer competition being run in the 'pop-up park' in Dandenong and others advised that they planned to attend other school holiday program activities that were being held later in the week.

5.1.5 Youth Activities Program, Footscray

The final program implemented was the *Youth Activities Program* in Footscray. The name of the program was chosen by Youth Ambassadors to attract the maximum number of people to attend. Youth Ambassadors did not want reference to 'Sudanese' or 'African' in the title of the program for fear of their communities being seen to be involved in crimes.

This program ran over eight consecutive Friday afternoons at Victoria University, Nicholson Campus in Footscray between April and June 2012. The program was structured to include 1.5 hours of informal activities that included basketball and indoor soccer, table tennis and

listening to music. Youth Ambassadors also organised a hip hop workshop at two sessions and staff from 'The Body Shop' also attend two sessions to discuss skin care and give facials and apply make up for female participants. Following the recreational activities, participants took part in discussion workshops focussing on different crime prevention topics.

Thirty-one participants attended the program in total over the eight week period. In the first session, Youth Ambassadors led a discussion about the aims and objectives of the program, how discussion topics were chosen and their roles as Youth Ambassadors. This proved an extremely valuable session, where participants discussed different issues affecting young people within the community and Youth Ambassadors explained the program they had developed. Due to several participants expressing discontent with police in the area and explaining negative interactions that they had experienced, an additional session was added to the program, where local police members were invited to attend a discussion with participants and answer questions relating to policing and laws that had arisen in earlier sessions.

At the time of the program, one of the Youth Ambassadors was employed as a Youth Worker with local service provider Jesuit Social Services (JSS), working with African communities in Footscray and St Albans. JSS were keen to continue working with the group following the conclusion of the Youth Activities Program. With the assistance of this Youth Ambassador, the project worker facilitated a meeting with Youth Ambassadors and the manager at JSS. All agreed that continuation of the program by JSS in some form would be beneficial. It was consequently decided that instead of distributing evaluation feedback forms in the final program session, the Youth Ambassadors would help facilitate focus group discussion to gain feedback about the program and how participants would like to see the program continued by JSS in the future.

This session was attended by 12 participants, which was a little disappointing as attendance in all previous weeks had been between 17 and 22 participants. Similar questions to those on the Participant Evaluation Feedback Form were used to lead the focus group discussions. Participants discussed how they had enjoyed the opportunity to learn something new and interact with service providers.

"I liked having people from different organisations attending – we don't usually get to talk to these workers"

"I liked talking to police... we've never had that opportunity before"

"I liked coming along to get new information, if you don't come to something like this, you don't know"

"When you come and learn something it makes you want to come back and learn something more"

Others enjoyed discussing issues affecting their lives and how the group setting had created a safe space to practice publically voicing opinions and ideas while creating a closeness and sense of belonging amongst participants.

"I enjoyed learning how to speak confidently in the group, learning how to take turns to talk and having the opportunity to give your opinion"

“I liked the group because it was a good opportunity for us to come together as young people and identify ourselves as a group”

“I liked that everyone has a chance to talk and we have become a group where everyone feels comfortable to talk. I think this has taught many of us confidence to speak within a group...”

“I liked sharing ideas”

Participants discussed all they had learnt in the program. Many had commented on the specific learning attained from particular sessions.

“I liked the session that Woody delivered – it really got me thinking about cultural differences, marriage and the challenges that we will face when we want to get married and have our own families in Australia. I think lots of people wanted to discuss this more...”

“I learnt a lot of things about legal issues and... about your rights as a young person”

One participant commented about his change in attitude and the increased understanding he had attained through the program. This participant was particularly vocal in the first two program sessions, passionately arguing with the legal education workshop facilitator, as he felt it was unjust and discriminatory that he should give his personal identification and details to police if they stop him in the street. This participant's change in attitude and public acknowledgement of this in front of participants and workers in the focus group discussion was particularly pertinent, given that he is one of the older members of the group who appears well respected by younger participants.

“I learnt that you have to give your details to police if they ask you. I thought I could do what I wanted and I didn't agree with the idea of giving your details to the police if they asked you and you haven't done anything. But now I realise that if you just give them your details, if you have not done anything wrong then they can't do anything to you, this will be the end, nothing will happen to you. But if you refuse, then you can get into trouble. So I changed my attitude about this...”

Others similarly commented on their changed understandings.

“The discussions were good because they made you think”

“I think some of us changed our mind about things...”

Participants similarly reflected on the benefits they believed the program had provided to them.

“I think this program is changing a lot of lives of young people and I think it can change a lot more people and help improve their lives”

Participants had several suggestions about how the group could be improved, including:

“Some topics were really helpful and we wanted to spend more time discussing them. Like Woody’s session [about intergenerational conflict], there were lots more questions we wanted to discuss but we ran thirty minutes late and didn’t have time...”

“Many people didn’t like that this group was only for Sudanese... I think we should invite other young people to be with us. This can help them to know something about us and we can learn about them. We can at least invite other people and see if they want to come.”

“The time allocated to playing sports is too short...”

“This venue is really cold in the winter, after we stopped playing sport, another room would be better...”

Youth Ambassadors similarly agreed that the program was extremely successful.

“This has been an amazing program. As one of the leaders, I never thought it would be this successful and we would have so many people attending each week.”

“...it was really fantastic for the way it was structured. The information we had from speakers were absolutely meaningful.”

“The greatest thing was about us coming together as young people and catching up with a few mates and new people from the community...”

The Youth Ambassadors reflected on how the program was able to meet its objectives and help to prevent or reduce crime amongst participants.

“Getting young people to activities and listening to the discussions instead of hanging in the public where they can get into trouble”

“The program helped young people to understand themselves and what they do outside. It gives great information... and according to me, these young people have some good changes now”

“It was good that it was done on Friday night, and on Friday nights is where a lot of things go on and we were kept busy on Friday night”

Although participation was relatively high at the Youth Activities Program (between 17-22 participants at most sessions), some Youth Ambassadors perceived their greatest challenges were encountered in attendance during session.

“It was hard when people were not turning up or they didn’t turn up on time to our activities”

Although time had been set aside during the final session to discuss future directions of the program, participants requested a second meeting, to allow for more people to attend and for those present to think about what they would like for the program before continuing discussions. This meeting was held the following week and attended by twelve participants, including five Youth Ambassadors and facilitated by JSS and the project worker. Some

participants had spent time during the week writing down their ideas for the continuation of the program, then presented these to the group.

“I think we should bring community elders and leaders into the group to have them share culture and stories. For me, I don’t know much about these things and I haven’t heard many stories about our country and what it was like there. Many of us grew up away from our country and away from our families so we don’t know that much. So it would be good to have the elders here to tell us about it and share these stories.”

“When you learn something, it makes you want to know more, you have more questions, so I think we need to have more sessions, to talk about these things again as well as many other topics that we might be interested in.”

“I think this should definitely continue – we started with a small number of people, but this has grown into a large number who come each week and people are really enjoying it, so it would be a shame to stop now, just when we are growing”

“We need to focus on these topics again and have more time to discuss them...”

“I think we need to know about consumer issues, invite consumer affairs...”

Other participants had ideas about changes to the activities part of the program.

“I would like to do more public speaking as the activity part of the program and have an audience if we want to talk about a really important issue. We are practising speaking in public and giving our opinions so it would be good to practise this more, or play in a band and have some performances”

“We could do a more structured activities program, like a basketball or soccer competition with teams that play against each other and the other people watch. This might attract more people to come.”

“Lots of us like traditional [Southern Sudanese] dancing, so we could do a traditional dance and then have a discussion session afterwards”

During the meeting, participants wrote lists of topics they would like to discuss and activities they would like to do on butchers paper. These were given to JSS following the meeting, who were planning to develop a new program in collaboration with participants and Youth Ambassadors, who provided their phone numbers to JSS at the conclusion of the meeting.

At the time of writing, JSS was planning a second Youth Activities Program targeting young people from Southern Sudanese backgrounds in the West, which would follow a similar structure to the program implemented for the Say No to Crime Youth Project. Discussion topics, activities and venues were being finalised and the program was due to begin in Semester 2, 2012.

5.2 Outcomes for Youth Ambassadors

5.2.1 Feedback from Youth Ambassadors

During each focus group with Youth Ambassadors, participants were asked to reflect on leadership skills and personal benefits they had gained and practised throughout their involvement in the project and the processes undertaken to develop and implement their crime prevention program. Groups began by discussing their experiences of the program planning phase.

“Being part of the program helped me to work as part of a team. There were times when we disagreed about things in the group, but we had to make decisions together and ‘agree to disagree...”

“[the program planning meetings] ...helped me with discussions and communication skills in a group, and listening to others’ opinions”

“Planning the program was so good – it would be good if these meetings can continue and we can plan other programs!”

“The meetings were really good, we achieved a lot... and it was challenging to us as well at the same time”

“...they were good because we developed good ideas and strategies of getting young people to the activities”

Many Youth Ambassadors reflected on how their involvement in the program had challenged them personally, and the benefits they had consequently gathered through the experience.

“I feel more confident in front of other people”

“I learnt so much about leadership and I can carry this through my life now...”

“I think I have shown the quality of a good leader by being honest, respectful, flexible and the way we communicate. I have really enjoyed this program...”

“I have learnt some decision making techniques, developed confidence in talking and public speaking... I enjoyed the experience”

Several Youth Ambassadors looked upon this experience as an opportunity to influence others and create positive change, explaining how they can now share their experiences for the betterment of friends, peers and communities in the future.

“We can teach others everything we learnt and lead by example, even if they were not part of our program. I think this is a great benefit...”

“Our program really helped people and brought our community closer together, and it was good to be part of the leaders who did that”

“I think we [Youth Ambassadors] all feel more engaged and connected with each other now, and I think we can do more things together in the future”

“I have learnt being an example to the people makes you a leader”

Youth Ambassadors discussed their plans and hopes for participating in similar roles and programs in the future.

“I would be interested to come up with ideas for more programs and ask MIC to help us do them...”

“I would be interested to be part of a program like this in the future – it was a great experience for me”

“Let’s do it again!”

Although most Youth Ambassadors had positive experiences being involved in the program, those from Chin backgrounds discussed the difficulties some of their peers had with the application and interview process for becoming a Youth Ambassador during the focus group meeting. This was the first time difficulties with the application process had been mentioned to the project worker, who felt disappointed that it was not raised at the time so it could be addressed with community leaders and other community members and the application process could have been modified to be more culturally appropriate.

“Lots of people did not like the interview process to become Youth Ambassadors. This is really different from our systems that we are used to in Burma and it was just really uncomfortable, different environment...”

“Some people’s English is not that good, so they felt like if they went through with the program, the workers and other people would find out and so they felt a bit scared... So this was one of our challenges, because it made people feel uncomfortable.”

When asked what would have made the application process more appropriate, Youth Ambassadors responded that a less formal process would have been better.

“...next time, it just needs to be really casual from the start. This would set up the whole mood for the program and people wouldn’t feel so uncomfortable.”

“...we could have had some meetings with more games and casual discussions, people like this kind of thing...”

5.2.2 Non-attendance amongst Youth Ambassadors at program planning meetings and program sessions

Youth Ambassadors from Southern Sudanese and Chin groups believed some of their peers may have lost interest in the program due to the time between the leadership camp and the implementation of their crime prevention program. This was despite each group of Youth Ambassadors deciding as a group when they wanted to implement their program.

“There was too much time between the camp and when we held the program. We were all really interested at the start and we had a really big number attending [program planning meetings], but then, so many meetings and sometimes they were repetitive, then people didn’t want to come. And we became busy with studies and other activities, all this contributed. It would have been better just to have 2-3 weeks

between camp and program, to keep people really interested and we would have kept attending...”

This was particularly true for participants in the Chin group in the East and the Southern Sudanese group in Dandenong. Despite the Southern Sudanese group in the West being the last to implement their program (beginning in April 2012), time lapse between the leadership training and the camp was not problematic for them.

“I think we are all really interested in this and were wanting the program to start, so the time was no problem... it actually felt too short!”

Differences in group dynamics within each group may also have contributed to the discrepancies in enthusiasm and attrition of Youth Ambassadors between groups. The group in the Western Region was comprised of young people who were extremely enthusiastic about the project and illustrated a greater level of maturity and commitment than their peers in the South Eastern Region. This is despite no difference in age, occupation or level of education. Within the Western group, there also appeared to be a greater level of cohesion, with most participants being friends who regularly attended a church and choir rehearsals together. There was also one clear leader within the group, who took it upon himself to text message or phone group participants on the day of a planning meeting, to ensure others were attending and encouraged others to complete tasks allocated between meetings.

In the South Eastern Region, some Youth Ambassadors were friends outside of the project; however, not all were part of the same social group. Similarly, one of the strongest personalities within the group who emerged as a potential leader at the camp stopped attending planning meetings after the first two meetings due to work commitments. This influenced group dynamics and may have made meetings less enticing or fun. Further, another stronger personality who was influential within meetings and assisted greatly in the latter stages, including the development and promotion of the program was unexpectedly away in a rural area during the school holidays when the program was implemented. This may have meant other Youth Ambassadors decided not to attend and may similarly have reduced numbers of participants.

For the Chin community, non attendance amongst Youth Ambassadors at planning meetings and during the program appeared largely due to a loss of interest in the project mixed with Youth Ambassadors' personal and school timetables changing. Lack of cohesion may have been another factor, with several Youth Ambassadors not knowing each other at all prior to the camp. It was surprising the some of the stronger personalities in the group who were consistently influential in group decisions made about the program did not attend, or only attended some days when the program was implemented. While the project worker discussed this with these particular people, they did not offer any explanation apart from saying they were 'busy'. It is unclear whether they were unhappy with particular aspects of the project, lost confidence in the project worker or if they lost interest in the program altogether. It is similarly unknown whether this is a reflection of cultural differences or a result of the Chin community being more newly arrived in Australia, and feeling uncomfortable to tell the project worker they were unhappy with particular aspects of the project.

Common amongst all groups was the disappointment amongst Youth Ambassadors who did attend meetings when their peers did not. Several Youth Ambassadors expressed their annoyance and frustration towards their peers when they did not attend and those present could offer little explanation in most cases as to why people were not attending. This illustrates one of the challenges in working with young people from refugee backgrounds and the differences amongst young people from the same communities in understandings of personal commitment and dedication.

5.2.3 Benefits of participation and positive outcomes for Youth Ambassadors

Along with personal benefits attained by Youth Ambassadors, several were offered further leadership opportunities through their involvement in the program. These include:

- A Youth Ambassador from the Western Region becoming employed as a Youth Worker at JSS, when a member of the interview panel from Victoria Police recognised her from attending program planning meetings with Youth Ambassadors and strongly recommended her for the position (February 2012)
- A group of Youth Ambassadors from the Western Region being invited to participate in an action group facilitated by Victoria Police to combat youth crime in the West (December 2011 to present)
- A Youth Ambassador from Gippsland being invited to give a presentation about issues affecting African Youth at a cultural awareness training session, attended by over 100 health and community service workers in Gippsland, including member of Victoria Police, which later led to her employment in a local community agency (December 2011)
- A Youth Ambassador from Gippsland being appointed to the Latrobe City Council Junior Council, a representative group of young people who are consulted on youth issues and develop pathways and programs for local young people across Gippsland (January 2012)
- All Youth Ambassadors from Gippsland being nominated for the Latrobe City Council Young Leaders program (February 2012)
- A Youth Ambassador in the Chin group giving a presentation about the Say No to Crime Youth Project at the MIC AGM in October 2011. This was his first time at public speaking.
- A group of Youth Ambassadors from the Chin group being asked to participate in a paid focus group to give feedback on the TAC 'Looking After Our Mates' training program on the prevention drink and drug driving (November 2011)
- A Youth Ambassador from the South East being invited to participate in a council run Leadership Program in Dandenong (April 2012)
- Youth Ambassadors from the Southern Sudanese group in the Eastern Region (from both Chin and Southern Sudanese backgrounds) being invited to participate in a group of young people who organise school holiday program activities with the MIC Youth Workers (November 2011 to present)

- A Youth Ambassador from the Southern Sudanese group in the Eastern Region being invited to give cultural awareness presentations at the 'Leadership and Multicultural Program' sessions organised by the MIC (April 2012)

Other leadership qualities observed by the project worker over the course of the program were similarly evident of learning and personal growth of the Youth Ambassadors. Notable examples of Youth Ambassador exhibiting leadership skills and qualities include:

- A Youth Ambassador in the West inviting the project worker to attend a rehearsal of a Dinka choir that he is part of and assisting to explain the aims and objectives of the *Youth Activities Program* and invite choir members to attend. This Youth Ambassador also sent text messages to all 37 members of the choir before the first *Youth Activities Program* session, inviting them to attend the program.
- A Youth Ambassador from the Southern Sudanese group in the Eastern Region dropping into the MIC office to see the project worker to make changes to the Facebook group that had been created for the *Eastside Sudanese Say No to Crime Program*. This Youth Ambassador had noticed that there were several people who had not joined the page and sat with the project worker for two hours, inviting people he knew to attend the program, uploading pictures he thought would attract people to attend and re-wording invitations and event pages.
- A Youth Ambassador from the Southern Sudanese community in the Eastern Region coming into the MIC office on the morning of his program to personally phone young people known to him in the area to invite them to attend the program that afternoon.
- A Youth Ambassador from the Chin group designing a logo for the t-shirts for Youth Ambassadors, then contacting and documenting t-shirt printing organisations to get quotes and feeding this back to the project worker.
- A Youth Ambassador from the Chin group taking it upon himself to send text messages to all young people in his church (over 100 people) inviting them to participate in the *Chin Say No to Crime Youth Project*.
- Several Youth Ambassadors over the course of each program assisting to lead workshop discussions, dispel myths, stop their peers if they were getting argumentative or acting inappropriately, reminding peers to be respectful to workshop presenters and consistently assisting with running each program.
- Youth Ambassadors in Gippsland leading discussions and group refuting arguments during the meeting they organised with community elders and leaders prior to their crime prevention program beginning. One Youth Ambassador in particular very respectfully challenged an elder on his views about young people and his opinions about the issues that they face, correcting his misinterpretations and instead informing him of the results from their peer research project and the issues that Youth Ambassadors had been discussing in their program planning meetings. This helped the community elder to change his mind, eventually agreeing that the Youth Ambassadors may have knowledge he lacks.

5.3 Service Providers

The project worker identified and met with the following service providers to consult about the program, organise workshop presentations and promote the program amongst potential participants in each target area. On some occasions workers from these agencies were invited to attend program planning meetings with the Youth Ambassadors and project worker.

Agencies consulted for programs in the East

- Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC)
- Eastern Drug and Alcohol Service (EDAS)
- Maroondah Youth Services
- Migrant Information Centre (Youth Team)
- Mitcham Baptist Church Indoor Soccer Competition
- Traffic Accident Commission (TAC), presenters
- Victims of Crime (at Eastern Access Community Health)
- Victoria Police (Multicultural Liaison Unit, Youth Engagement Officer)
- Youth Connexions, Box Hill
- Youth Law

Agencies consulted for programs in the West

- Brotherhood of St Lawrence, African Young Men's Program, Braybrook
- Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY)
- Footscray Community Legal Centre (FCLC)
- Good Sheppard Family Services, St Albans
- Jesuit Social Services, African Program (JSS)
- Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley Local Learning and Employment Network (M & MV LLEN)
- Maribyrnong Youth Services
- New Hope Foundation, Footscray
- Phoenix Youth Centre
- Step. Back. Think.
- Sudanese Australian Integrated Learning (SAIL), Maidstone and Braybrook
- Victoria Police (New and Emerging Communities Officer and Community Engagement Officer)
- Western English Language School (WELS)
- Youth Junction Inc., Visy Cares Hub

Agencies for programs in Gippsland

- Anglicare Victoria (Settlement Grants Program), Morwell
- Centrelink
- Gippsport, Gippsland
- Headspace, Morwell
- La Trobe City Council (Refugee Action Program), Morwell
- La Trobe Community Health Centre (Settlement Programs), Morwell
- Victoria Legal Aid (VLA)
- Victoria Police (Multicultural Liaison Unit)

- Youth Support and Advocacy Service (YSAS), Morwell

Agencies for programs in the South East

- African Holistic Social Services
- Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY)
- Dandenong Youth Services
- South East Region Migrant Resource Centre (SERMRC)
- South Eastern Local Learning and Employment Network (SELLEN)
- Southern Ethnic and Advisory Council (SEAAC)
- Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau (SCAAB), Youthlinks Youth Centre, Noble Park
- Victoria Police (Multicultural Liaison Unit, New and Emerging Communities Officer)
- YSTOP Youth Services, Dandenong

Community Associations contacted for input into the programs:

- Bor Community Association of Australia
- Sudanese Community Association of Australia
- Australia Chin Community Eastern Melbourne (ACC)
- Falam Community Association
- Melbourne Mizo Association
- Zomi Australia Association (ZAA)

Different organisations were invited to facilitate workshops at each crime prevention program. Program outlines and sessions are attached in Appendix 4 – *Crime Prevention Program Outlines*.

All service providers involved in each program were sent an electronic survey seeking their feedback about their involvement. Although the initial evaluation plan had sought individual interviews with service providers, due to the large number of organisations involved, the project worker decided that this was not possible, creating the survey instead. Some service providers also sent emails to the project worker following their involvement to express their opinions about the program and their session. Comments below are included from both emails and evaluation surveys completed.

All thirty-nine service providers who participated in the crime prevention programs were sent the survey electronically and asked to email or post it back to the project worker within the coming month. The project worker sent two additional reminder emails requesting the surveys be completed and returned. Seven surveys were returned to the project worker.

All but one service provider who completed the survey agreed that their involvement in the project had assisted them to better understand the social and recreational needs of newly arrived young people from refugee backgrounds.

“The project provided an opportunity to spend some ‘one on one’ time with the youths involved in the project and listen first hand to their issues and needs” – Victoria Police

“How disadvantage and marginalization of these young people has adversely affected their capacity and drive to meaningfully participate in social and recreational activities within the host society.” – Victoria Police

“It was great to be able to personally interact with the young people to listen to their needs and wants as newly-arrived young people from refugee backgrounds. Generally a lot of assumptions are made regarding this and so it was great to hear the stories first hand.” – YouthLaw

“Had a great informal chat with the group before the session for the Sudanese youths. Was really interesting and eye opening to the issues they think are important amongst youths.” – Eastern Access Community Health

Service providers who disagreed that their involvement in the project assisted them to better understand the social and recreational needs of newly arrived young people provided the following explanations for their responses.

“Our workshop was fairly ‘one-way’ in this regard. However, as a service we always try to explore opportunities for consultation of this type... Hopefully this means we provided a workshop that met the needs of the young people involved.” – Community Legal Centre

“I was already aware of some of the social and recreational issues of local youth – I thought the best outcome of this project was the young people gaining an understanding on how they can effect change themselves.” – Latrobe Community Health Centre

Ideas that service providers have for continuing to build their understanding of working with this client group include:

“I think it would be imperative to continue working with the youths involved in this very important project so that there is some continuity with the youth and our organisation. It would be a shame for the great outcomes to be a ‘once off’ without continuing to build on the excellent relationships and trust built with the youths.” – Victoria Police

“An opportunity to hear first hand from the young people's themselves. Would like to explore these with MIC.” – Victoria Police

Difficulties were encountered in working with external service providers where they did not attend program sessions that they had committed to. This was particularly disappointing where an organisation had agreed to facilitate a workshop for the program in the South East, but cancelled without explanation the day before the program. This meant the workshop had to be cancelled and the program schedule re-arranged at the last minute.

On another occasion, a service provider from Gippsland had agreed to attend the program to give a service overview, but phoned an hour before the session was due to begin to cancel. This was similarly disappointing, as although this service provider was not running a workshop, the Youth Ambassadors were keen to have this organisation provide information

about the service for participants. The service provider claimed that they were too busy to attend a future session.

Despite these challenges, for the most part the project worker found working with service providers extremely useful and beneficial, and many had very positive things to say about their involvement and the development of each program by the Youth Ambassadors.

“I think the event went exceedingly well. I am impressed by the turnout of the young people and the level of participation as well. The involvement of other key services were also great.....Well done – Victoria Police (South Eastern Program)

“Once again I wanted to congratulate you on putting together such a successful program. I’ve never seen anything like that, with such positive community ownership and participation by young people. – EDAS (Chin Say No to Crime Program)

“It was my pleasure being involved in the Say No to Crime sessions over the last 5 weeks or so. It was such a worthwhile program and I know from speaking to the guys that the participants got a great deal out of the sessions also... I would be more than happy to be involved in future sessions if required.” – Centrelink (Morwell Program)

“This project facilitated a group of young people to get motivated and gain a voice. Very worthwhile project and hopefully met its targets. I appreciated having a small role in it and hope it has lasting outcomes. – Latrobe Community Health Centre (Morwell Program)

“It was really fun to meet the different groups and to be able help shape the program from the start. I enjoyed seeing their original ideas turn into such a successful program”. – YouthLaw (Eastern Programs)

5.4 Communities

Due to the changes in leadership in the Bor Community Association of Australia, the project worker had limited success including Southern Sudanese community leaders and Associations in the project. The project worker met with the Chairperson of the Southern Sudanese Community Association of Australia, who was interested in the project and directed the project worker to other office bearers to attend program sessions. The project worker invited office bearers to program sessions for each of the different program targeting young people from Southern Sudanese backgrounds, however, they did not attend any of the programs. When they were contacted for feedback on the project overall, community leaders were similarly unable to be contacted or stated that they did not have time to give any feedback on the project.

The project worker met with one community leader from the Chin community, who was closely involved in the program. This leader assisted the project worker to recruit young people from his community to become Youth Ambassadors and attended the leadership training camp, several project planning meetings and two days of the *Chin Say No to Crime Youth Project*.

The community leader believed the project was successful in achieving its aims and commented that the model was one that could be repeated for future programs. The leader discussed the development of new skills amongst the Youth Ambassadors that he observed throughout their involvement in the project, including the benefits of the leadership training camp and experiences in developing and planning, then running the program. He noted how impressed he was with the Youth Ambassadors at the three day program, as he watched them adopt leadership roles confidently, contributing greatly to the program's success. The community leader similarly believed that the skills they exhibited would encourage other young people to take on leadership roles and participate in future programs.

Similar to the responses from Chin Youth Ambassadors, the community leader believed that the application process, including the interview involved to become a Youth Ambassador may have been intimidating for young people, who consequently may have chosen not to apply. The community reflected that this may have been the reason that not all who had been interviewed attended the camp.

“People did not like the application process. Their English is not that good, so they felt like if they went through with filling the form and doing the program, they would be exposed... Same with the interview... This was very formal and I think it might have turned people off... I think this is why some of the young people did the interview then changed their mind and didn't attend the camp”

The community leader was similarly disappointed that this may have meant several young people missed out on the opportunity to attend the training camp and gain new skills. He agreed with suggestions of the Youth Ambassadors to have a much less formal application process which could similarly attract young people to attend. He reflected that some young people have low self-esteem and do not feel confident in trying new things, outside of their comfort zone. He suggested having another camp of a similar nature to help increase these skills amongst young people in the community.

“I think we should do another camp for young people [from Chin backgrounds], with the purpose to increase self esteem, make them feel more confident. I think problems come when our young people feel inferior... They feel inferior at school because their English is not that good, then they don't do very well at school... They might feel scared to mix with Aussie kids, because they don't know the system, they have different jokes and ways of interacting and then they stick with what they know, their friends from our community. I think they don't really have Aussie friends or mix much with them. They don't feel confident at school or out in public and they sometimes feel scared to try new things...”

Other ideas to help overcome the barriers with English and to increase general participation in the program was to have a different style used during the crime prevention program activities. The community leader explained a method used in Burma that he thought was transferable to community education programs and sessions in Australia.

“...to help with the language, we could to have the session in English, but firstly explain to all of the leaders exactly what the session is about. Then we can break into small discussion groups, split by language and the leader can summarise what was said and help to explain and answer questions. This is what used to happen in

the churches in Burma and it is something we are all familiar with, so they would be happy with this structure.”

While the community leader was unsure whether the project will prevent crimes from occurring amongst young people in the community, he did believe the information attained was invaluable. In particular, he commented that the information about anti-drink driving and safety was important for young people, as well as explanations about the law, which he thought was often misunderstood or unknown within his community.

Overall the community leader believed the program was worthwhile and hoped that other, similar programs would be offered to help develop skills of young people from the Chin community in the future.

6. Key Learning and Recommendations

- a) Meaningful engagement and building relationships within the target communities was imperative to the program's success

The project suffered in the initial stages due to the lack of support from the target community leaders. As discussed above, the leadership within the Bor Community Association who had been pivotal in the project's design during the tendering process had since disbanded, leaving the project worker within limited inroads within the community. Similarly, while some Chin community members had been consulted about the project, there had not been a strong commitment and acknowledgement about the project's aims, objectives and methodology prior to it beginning. This meant the project worker had to spend the first several weeks making connections and building rapport within in the target communities, delaying the recruitment of young people to become Youth Ambassadors.

The differences in culture and stages of settlement between the two communities must similarly be acknowledged. Most Southern Sudanese community members have been in Australia for significantly longer than members of the Chin communities, who have arrived more recently and appeared comfortable engaging with the project worker and providing verbal feedback, ideas and opinions. This may have been due to the Southern Sudanese culture, as it is based on a strong oral tradition, where community members are comfortable sharing their ideas and opinions (positive and negative). In contrast, the Chin leaders and young people appeared less familiar and comfortable in engaging with the project worker in these initial stages. Chin community members were similarly less forthright expressing their thoughts about the recruitment processes and project, potentially reflecting cultural and settlement stage differences.

To assist in navigating these differences, the project worker consulted bilingual workers from both groups to ensure engagement methodologies were appropriate and sensitive. Nevertheless, it was not until the focus groups at the project's conclusion that Youth Ambassadors and community leaders felt comfortable to inform the project worker about their aversion to the interview and application process for recruiting Youth Ambassadors, despite the project worker regularly seeking feedback during this time. This highlights the importance of having prior trusting relationships and key connections within communities prior to undertaking similar projects in the future.

Following the recruitment stage, the project worker was able to establish positive working relationships with Youth Ambassadors, which resulted in the development of positive programs that met their needs. Working alongside young people was

- b) Young people from the target communities have different settlement needs to their parents generation, and working alongside young people to develop innovative ways to address their needs is important

Working alongside Youth Ambassadors in partnership to identify issues affecting their peers, develop activities and implement projects was a clear success of the project and illustrates the differences in settlement needs of adults and those of youth. This was evident through

positive feedback provided on program design and implementation by both participants and workers who facilitated sessions during program evaluation.

This was similarly apparent in working with the Chin Youth Ambassadors, who chose to work together in one large group to develop and implement their crime prevention program. This is in direct contrast to adults from the same communities, who have consistently provided feedback to the MIC that they prefer to participate in programs that split individuals by language groups.

This methodology in working alongside community members and groups to identify needs and develop appropriate programs to address these needs is thus recommended for future programs.

c) Partnerships with external organisations were beneficial to the project's success

The project worker relied on external organisations to assist with the recruitment of young people to become Youth Ambassadors as well as the implementation of crime prevention programs. Due to the difficulties encountered in working with community leaders to recruit Youth Ambassadors, the project worker spent the initial stages of the project building relationships with youth and CALD workers in external agencies across each region. This was particularly important in regions outside of the East, where the project worker had fewer contacts and resources to draw upon.

During the development and implementation of each crime prevention program, partnerships were similarly imperative, as local agencies had a better knowledge of each target group and local needs than the project worker. These workers could similarly advise on agencies and workers who could facilitate education sessions and provided significant insights into learning gathered from previous programs aimed at the same target groups in their areas.

Some such partnerships had the unexpected outcome of external agencies ensuring the continuation of programs developed in these regions (discussed further below). In other instances including amongst Youth Workers at the MIC, program structures and designs will be replicated and implemented, used to target communities.

Inviting mainstream services, including Police, to assist in the facilitation of program sessions allowed for service providers to gain a better understanding of issues affecting recently arrived young people. Service providers and participants commented that this was especially important in providing opportunities for each to learn from one another and ask questions in a positive environment (rather than at the time a crime is committed), allowing opportunity to build more positive relationships and dispel myths.

d) The impacts of time constraints on the project

The time constraints placed on the project were largely due to the part-time employment of the project worker. Being employed for three days per week meant the project worker was unable to meet with all five groups of Youth Ambassadors on a weekly basis, as all meetings had to occur either after hours or on weekends (as most Youth Ambassadors were studying or working during the day). These constraints meant it became apparent that the implementation phase for each group would have to be staggered over a 6 to 8 month period, with only 1 to 2 crime prevention running concurrently, to allow the project worker to

attend all program sessions while keeping up regular planning meetings with other Youth Ambassador groups.

Youth Ambassadors who elected to hold their crime prevention programs later in the year consequently suffered attrition of Youth Ambassador members in their groups. This was especially apparent in the Chin group and the Southern Sudanese group in the South East Region. Both attendance and levels of enthusiasm within these two groups was initially high at planning meetings. However, when the programs in Morwell and the Eastern Region were implemented between October and December 2011, program planning meetings were forced to become less frequent, and Youth Ambassadors appeared to lose enthusiasm for the project. Feedback provided during focus groups as well as lack of attendance at planning meetings illustrated this. The fact that only three Youth Ambassadors attended the first day of the program in the South East and only one the following day is further evidence of this.

While Youth Ambassadors in the Western Region were last to implement their program (beginning April 2012), they did not suffer from the same lack of enthusiasm or flailing attendance as did their peers. This may have been due to the large break taken from planning meetings (between November 2011 and February 2012 no meetings were held). It may also be a reflection of the individual Youth Ambassadors within that particular group, who were extremely committed to the project a displayed a level of maturity not observed by the project worker within other groups.

Shorter time frames between leadership training and implementation of programs and activities would be recommended for future projects, to ensure enthusiasm is captured and utilised and the experience of participants remains positive.

e) The 'wrong' people attended the programs

While it is difficult to measure the impact each program had on preventing crime, several participants expressed their disappointment that the 'wrong' people attended. During focus group discussions, Youth Ambassadors from all groups acknowledged that youth from their communities who they know to be involved in crime did not attend. Nevertheless, Youth Ambassadors acknowledged the importance of prevention amongst their peers and many believed the programs provided important education.

Several participants similarly advised the project worker informally about things that they learnt and how they are implementing changes into their lives. For example, a Youth Ambassador from the Chin community recently advised the project worker he always pictures how much alcohol constitutes a standard drink, drawing a drink pouring and measuring exercise undertaken with the drug and alcohol workers during the program. This Youth Ambassador advised the project worker he thinks about this when he is out with friends and takes his friends car keys from them when he thinks they will be over the limit.

Longitudinal follow-up studies with participants from this project could determine the impact, education and prevention of crime it had and provide evidence for the replication or development of future crime prevention programs.

f) The Say No to Crime Youth Project has directly led to increased leadership, education and recreational opportunities for young people from the target

communities, particularly those who were involved as Youth Ambassadors or participants.

Several opportunities emerged for Youth Ambassadors as a direct result of involvement in the project, including employment opportunities, invitations to join leadership groups and programs, sports coaching opportunities, public speaking engagements and others (listed above under section 5.2). This was an unexpected outcome of the project but one that will enhance the lives of several young people who have taken these opportunities. Providing future opportunities for young people from refugee backgrounds to work alongside agencies to develop and lead the implementation of programs is thus recommended in the future.

The success of the programs in some areas were noted by external organisations who were invited to partner with the MIC in their implementation or facilitation of program sessions. This occurred in both Morwell and in the Western Region, where agencies in those regions continued to work alongside Youth Ambassadors continue to run similar programs as a follow on from the crime prevention programs developed in each region. This has provided both sustainability of programs (reflecting on their success) and leadership opportunities for Youth Ambassadors beyond the life of the Say No to Crime Youth Project.

Several young people who attended the different crime prevention programs were linked in with local community services and recreational activities as a direct result of their participation. There were several examples of these linkages (discussed in 5.1). Most notably, these include participants in several regions becoming involved in local sports clubs and activities facilitated by local council and youth services. While the number of young people who have continued to be involved in these activities is unknown, follow up longitudinal follow up consultations with young people who attended the programs could assist in determining long term impacts.

7. Conclusion

The project model, working alongside each group of Youth Ambassadors to identify issues, then design and implement programs for their peers appeared extremely beneficial for the project. Working alongside young people meant that the programs developed reflected their ideas and interests and utilised a community led model that Youth Ambassadors and program participants appeared to benefit from.

While it is difficult to measure how successful the program has been in preventing young people becoming involved in crime, young people who participated in each program certainly learnt some valuable new knowledge about laws, rights and responsibilities, safe drinking and partying, the dangers of drink-driving and strategies and information to help themselves and others who may face challenges in their lives in Australia. Each program similarly provided links into social and recreational opportunities for young people that they may never have had the opportunity to become involved with had it not been for the implementation of each crime prevention program.

For Youth Ambassadors, it is apparent that they have adopted new skills in leadership that they have been able to refine over the course of their involvement in the project. They have similarly had unintended benefits of making new friends, employment and volunteer opportunities and several have been offered additional leadership roles by other agencies who became involved in the project and were impressed by the professionalism of Youth Ambassadors and success of the projects they developed. Service providers and community leaders who provided feedback were similarly supportive and impressed by the project and many saw the tangible benefits for community members, particularly young people.

By having external agencies take an interest in continuing to work with Youth Ambassadors and program participants to develop new programs in the future, it is hoped that the successes of the program will continue beyond the life of the Say No to Crime Youth Project, producing ongoing benefits for community members in the long term.

8. Appendices

Appendices are attached in a separate document