



**ethnic  
communities'  
council of  
victoria**

# Horn of African and Sudanese Communities in Victoria

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## Executive Summary

This report explores the settlement of Horn of African and Sudanese communities in Victoria. Consideration is given to the areas of education, employment, language services, consumer/life skills, harmony and acceptance, police and crime and health. The Horn of Africa is geographically located in the north east of Africa and encompasses Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia. Although Sudan borders on the Horn of Africa, it is not technically part of the region. Sudanese communities in Australia are also included in this report as, overall, many of the issues facing Sudanese new arrivals in settlement resonate with Horn of African communities. In considering Horn of African and Sudanese communities it is important to acknowledge the great diversity which exists within these communities.

Whilst the report does not exclusively focus on humanitarian entrants, it is very much orientated around this group of settlers. Eighty percent of entrants from the African countries of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya,<sup>1</sup> Somalia and Sudan, enter Australia through the humanitarian program.<sup>2</sup> These include onshore and offshore resettlement, refugees, Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) entrants, Permanent Protection Visa (PPV) holders and Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) holders.<sup>3</sup> As refugee experiences are common to the majority of Horn of African entrants in Australia many of the issues explored in this report consider the services provided to humanitarian entrants.

This report particularly focuses on youth arrivals as those aged up to nineteen currently make up approximately 47% of all arrivals from Horn of African countries.<sup>4</sup> Young people in the higher end of this bracket often face additional pressures when settling into a new country and the demand for improved settlement services for this age group is increasing and critical.

The report concludes with some key recommendations to improve settlement for Horn of African and Sudanese communities in Victoria which are drawn from a significant body of research in the field.

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<sup>1</sup> Although Kenya is not located in the Horn of African region many Somali and Sudanese entrants have been born in Kenya as a result of having spent long periods inside Kenyan refugee camps. Many entrants, whilst ethnically Somali or Sudanese, have listed their country of birth as Kenya.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. *Numbers by Migration Stream for: All Settlers, Country of Birth: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Sudan, State: Victoria, Sex: All*. Settlement Database, Commonwealth of Australia, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. *Australia's Support for Humanitarian Entrants 2004-05*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2005, pp 5. SHP entrants are people outside their home country who have experienced substantial discrimination amounting to gross violation of human rights. SHP entrants have a proposer in Australia. Asylum seekers who entered Australia unlawfully and who are found to be refugees and meet character requirements are granted a TPV, which gives them residence for three years. TPV holders are then able to apply for further protection visas. In contrast, asylum seekers who have entered Australia lawfully on genuine documents and are found to be refugees and meet character requirements are able to access a PPV.

<sup>4</sup> Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. *Sex and Age Distribution for: All Settlers, Country of Birth: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Sudan, State: Victoria, Sex: All*. Settlement Database, Commonwealth of Australia, 2007.



## Chapter One - Horn of African and Sudanese Communities in Victoria

Settlement of people from the Horn of Africa has been increasing since the late 1980s through the Australian Government's Humanitarian Program.<sup>5</sup> Civil war in much of the region has led to increased migration flows to Australia. The first major cohort of arrivals from the Horn of Africa came to Australia in the early 1990s from Somalia and in the late 1990s people from Sudan arrived. The Ethiopian, Eritrean and Kenyan communities began arriving in the late 1990s and early 2000s. As a result, the settlement services and requirements of these communities are at different stages; however, all require further assistance to improve their settlement experiences in Victoria.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) is the government agency responsible for the settlement of new and emerging communities in Australia and aims to 'enrich Australia through the well managed entry and settlement of people'.<sup>6</sup> Many of the services that will be discussed in the following chapters are funded by DIAC and are implemented by community organisations and local providers. It is important to note that in the 2007-2008 Budget, DIAC committed \$209.2 million over four years to refugee and humanitarian settlement in Australia.<sup>7</sup>

Using 2001 Census data, the largest African communities in Victoria are from Sudan and number around 7,000. The table below gives an indication of the numbers of recent arrivals from the Horn of Africa, Sudan and Kenya.

Selected African Communities in Victoria

Rank	Number	Birthplace
1	7,116	Sudan
2	3,210	Ethiopia
3	2,954	Somalia
4	1,880	Kenya
5	1,317	Eritrea

Source: Collated from 2001 Census and DIMA Settler Arrivals

Communities from the Horn of Africa and Sudan are considered to be 'new and emerging communities' in Victoria. As defined by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship the term refers to a community that has an Australia wide population of fewer than 15,000 of whom 30% or more have arrived in the past five years. Communities that are listed as new and emerging in Australia include people from the countries of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan.<sup>8</sup> A broader definition is to say new and emerging communities are those which are small in number and have complex settlement needs.

In terms of religious expression, the majority of settlers identify as Christian although there are a significant number of settlers who identify as Muslim. The table on the next page for details the top five religions for Horn of African and Sudanese communities in Victoria.

<sup>5</sup> Beattie, Andy and Ward, Susan. *The Horn of Africa: Background Information for Workers with Young People*. Ethnic Youth Issues Network, Fitzroy, Victoria, 1997, pp 12.

<sup>6</sup> Department of Immigration and Citizenship. *About Us*. <<http://www.immi.gov.au/about/index.htm>> (accessed on 25 May 2007), 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Andrews, Kevin and Gambaro, Teresa. *Increased Services and 13,000 Places for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants*, <<http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media-releases/2007/ka07039.htm>> (accessed on 25 May 2007), May 2007, pp 3.

<sup>8</sup> Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. *Guide to Settlement and Multicultural Affairs*. Branch Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs Victorian Office, Victoria, 2006, pp 5.

**Top Five Religions for Horn of African and Sudanese Communities in Victoria**

Religion	Percentage of Settlers
Christian (nfd)	65.2
Islam	23.7
Catholic	3.2
Other Christian	1.6
Orthodox (nfd)	1.3
Others	6.4

Source: Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs Settlement Database - Nfd: Not further defined

The majority of migrants in Australia from the Horn of Africa and Sudan are refugees or humanitarian entrants, and a large proportion of these new arrivals are young. The table below provides data on the age distribution of Horn of African and Sudanese persons in Victoria.

**Age Distribution for Horn of African and Sudanese Communities in Victoria**

Age	Number
0-9	3,013
10-19	3,138
20-29	3,312
30-39	2,509
40-49	830
50-59	261
60-69	91
70-79	15
80+	9

Source: Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs Settlement Database

New and emerging Horn of African and Sudanese communities in Victoria are amongst the most disadvantaged communities in Victoria. This is a result of refugee experiences, culture shock and difficulties in the areas of language, housing, schooling and employment. The table below reflects the fact that many African refugees come to Australia with limited formal schooling due to long periods spent in refugee camps.

**Years of Education for Horn of African and Sudanese Communities in Victoria**

Years of Education	Percentage of Settlers
1	3.1
2	3.4
3	3.7
4	3.3
5	3.2
6	5.7
7	3.4
8	4.5
9	3.4
10	3.6
11	2.5
12	12.0
13	2.1
14	2.0
15	1.9
15+	4.2
Unknown	38.0

Source: Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs Settlement Database



For many of those within the cohort who have twelve years of education, the school may have been located in the context of refugee camps where experiences of displacement, a lack of resources and stress impact upon learning.

Rates of home ownership and weekly income levels for Horn of African and Sudanese communities are much lower compared to other Victorian communities. For instance, home ownership rates among Ethiopian born persons are 10.3%, as compared to 39.2% for the average Victorian. A large number of Victorians born in Eritrea receive a very low level of income, less than \$160 per week, which is significantly less than the Victorian average weekly income.

The unemployment rate for all of Victoria is 6.8%, but for the new and emerging Horn of African communities this rate ranges from 22% to 47%, indicating a much greater level of unemployment than the broader community. The table below outlines the numbers of unemployed people from the Horn of African in Victoria.

#### Percentage of Unemployed People from the Horn of Africa in Victoria

Birthplace	Percentage Unemployed
Ethiopia	22.3
Eritrea	32.9
Somalia	47.1

*Source: Victorian Community Profiles 2001 census: Eritrea, Somalia and Ethiopian Born*

Dinka is estimated to be the most spoken African language in Victoria, a reflection of the growing number of Sudanese migrants in Victoria. Arabic is widely spoken by the Eritrean community (62.9%), while 86.9% of Somalians speak Somali, and 32.3% of Ethiopians speak Amharic. In Victoria few people from the Horn of Africa or Sudan speak English as their only language. Approximately 11.4 % of all Eritreans, Ethiopians and Somalians nominate English as their only spoken language.

#### Estimated Number of Speakers and Rank Order of Languages

Language	Estimated Number of Speakers	Rank
Dinka	3,500	1
Somali	2,300	2
Sudanese Arabic	1,900	3
Amharic	1,200	4
Tigrigna	950	5
Nuer	700	6
Oromo	600	7
Juba Arabic	500	8
Swahili	300	9
Tigre	250	10
Other	<650	

*Source: The Numbers of Speakers of African Languages Emerging in Victoria: Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs, Department for Victorian Communities, 2006.*

Depictions of Horn of African and Sudanese communities in the mainstream Australian media are often problematic and sensationalist in their approach. Negative media depictions of these communities can damage community acceptance as well as a sense of belonging for Horn of African and Sudanese people in Victoria. For example, newspaper articles stating 'Police say Sudanese a gang threat',<sup>9</sup> and the reaction of the Tamworth community to the small Sudanese community living there, 'You're not welcome, town tells refugees',<sup>10</sup> add to the difficulties Horn of African and Sudanese migrants experience adjusting to Australian

<sup>9</sup> Kerbaj, Richard. *Police say Sudanese a gang threat*. The Australian, 5 January, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Norrie, Justin. *You're not welcome, town tells refugees*. Sunday Morning Herald, 15 December, 2006.



life. Negative media representations contribute to misconceptions amongst the non-African community and feelings of isolation, rejection and difficulties in settlement for Horn of African and Sudanese communities.

The overview given in this chapter indicates that Horn of African and Sudanese communities are disadvantaged when compared to the mainstream in Victoria. The standard of living experienced by Horn of African and Sudanese communities is well below the Victorian average. While this is common amongst many new migrant groups, the lack of immediate employment opportunities which were available to previous waves of migrants suggest that improving the living standard of Horn of African and Sudanese migrants will be a significant challenge for government and the wider community. Settlement, employment, education and training are all areas where further work is needed to make real improvements for these communities.



## Chapter Two - Settlement Challenges

### 2.1 Education

In this section the problems faced by Horn of African and Sudanese youth when entering the Victorian school system will be explored. Particular attention is given to migrants aged between 15 and 18 as this group experiences greater difficulties in settlement compared to younger arrivals.<sup>11</sup>

When migrant youth arrive in Victoria they are provided with a six or twelve month intensive education program, under the New Arrivals Program (NAP). This program 'aims to improve the educational opportunities and outcomes of newly arrived students of non-English speaking backgrounds by developing their English language competence and facilitating their participation.'<sup>12</sup> The program endeavours to teach students the English language skills they need in order to study in primary or secondary school.

After the completion of the NAP students are placed in mainstream Victorian schools. Students are generally placed into schools according to their age and not their ability. In particular, the low level of English language proficiency achieved by students in the NAP contributes to difficulties adjusting to mainstream schools and/or the workplace.<sup>13</sup> The limitations of the New Arrivals Program in bringing students up to speed in six or twelve months and subsequent placement of humanitarian entrants into classrooms on the basis of age are contributing to the growing numbers of school drop outs from the Horn of Africa and Sudan.

English language tuition is also available to those aged between 16 and 24, who are unable to find a place in a mainstream school, or who haven't attended the NAP, and who have had less than seven years of education. This language tuition is available through Adult Migrant English Programs (AMEP) Special Preparatory Program (SPP) and students are able to access 400 hours of tuition.

Although many Horn of African and Sudanese youth have had some schooling it has often been heavily disrupted by refugee experiences. A lack of English language skills and lower levels of literacy and numeracy also compound difficulties for Horn of African and Sudanese students in the mainstream education system. In addition, the impact of torture and trauma is particularly relevant to Horn of African and Sudanese students. The effects of torture and trauma include fear, distrust, sleeplessness, low confidence and self-esteem and sensitivity to failure.<sup>14</sup> Students often struggle to keep up with their class mates and experience feelings of embarrassment at not being able to read and write at the same level as others in their age group.

The education system within Victoria was not developed to meet the needs of students with vastly different educational experiences to the mainstream. As a result, it is often difficult for Horn of African and Sudanese students to navigate the education system and retention within schools is an area of concern. The classroom environment can be intimidating, particularly when a lack of familiarity with the curriculum and methodology used is combined with low levels of English language proficiency. The experience of sitting in a classroom all day may be new to Horn of African and Sudanese students, and for some students the school experience involves difficulties complying with school rules, keeping time and truancy. Cultural

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<sup>11</sup> Farah, Omar. (March 2007), Multicultural Community Development Worker, Carlton Local Agencies Network.

<sup>12</sup> Department of Education, Science and Training. *New Arrivals Programme: Arrangements for 2007*. Commonwealth of Australia, 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues and South East Learning and Employment Network. 2004, *Pathways and Pitfalls: The journey of refugee young people in and around the education system in Greater Dandenong*, pp 3.

<sup>14</sup> Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture. *Education and Refugee Students from Southern Sudan*. Foundation House, 2005, pp 5.



differences in teacher/student relationships also have to be negotiated as in contrast to many African communities where the onus is on the teacher to teach, the Australian education system places an onus on the student to learn. Activities outside of the classroom such as completing homework, research, projects and preparing assignments for class can also present difficulties for students from the Horn of Africa and Sudan as they may have no familiarity with such activities from their prior education.

Home life and the role of parents also impacts upon students' progress at school. The overcrowding and lack of appropriate housing experienced by some Horn of African and Sudanese communities does impact upon students' ability to find a quiet place to study. At home students may have no time for homework, no access to a computer and there may not be someone who speaks English around to assist with homework. Parents are often confused about how the education system operates in Australia. Confusion in relation to the education system and limited language skills can result in little follow-up from parents in regards to students' progress at school. There is also often an unspoken pressure on students to do extremely well in school and to fulfil their parents' expectations. As a result, a tendency exists among students who are struggling in the education system to remain quiet so as not to disappoint parents.

Racism in schools presents another challenge for Horn of African and Sudanese students as they settle into the mainstream education system. Some students have reported feelings of rejection and isolation as a result of social exclusion. Somewhat aggravated by negative media portrayals of Horn of African and Sudanese communities, some students feel as though they are immediately picked on because they are black.<sup>15</sup>

The Australian Government committed to provide \$127.8 million over four years to government and non-government education authorities for the English as a Second Language New Arrivals Program in the 2007-08 budget. This commitment effectively doubles the Australian Government's contribution working towards English language proficiency for humanitarian new arrivals.<sup>16</sup> Effective use of this funding could see real improvements in the English language proficiency levels achieved by students as they progress through the New Arrivals Program, and provide a solid basis for transitioning into the mainstream education system.

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<sup>15</sup> Mohamed, Yousif. (23 April, 2007), VICSEG.

<sup>16</sup> Andrews, Kevin and Gambaro, Teresa. *Increased Services and 13,000 Places for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants*, 2007, pp 3.



### Possible Models to Guide Education Initiatives for Horn of African and Sudanese Students

1. Yachad Accelerated Learning Program (YALP) is based on an educational approach and methodology used in Israel, aimed at general and at-risk populations, particularly Ethiopian settlers in the 1980s. YALP is currently used in Australia to assist students in remote and rural locations, particularly Indigenous Australian students. It involves a three year educational intervention program aimed at raising the scholastic achievements of students. The program aims to improve the literacy and numeracy outcomes of students, and involves observing, listening, consulting, and pre and post testing. YALP has produced significant outcomes among its students, improving student literacy and numeracy skills and increased self-confidence. YALP could potentially prove effective as a model to guide programs for Horn of African and Sudanese students in Victoria.
2. Debney Park Secondary College in Victoria has many Sudanese and Somali students and has been proactive in supporting the learning and education needs of refugee students. The school has implemented a bridging program aimed at students aged 13-15 which involves a further twelve months literacy and numeracy program. In addition, the New Arrivals Program is a foundation Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) aimed at students aged between 17 and 20. VCAL can take students two or three years to complete and focuses on literacy and numeracy. The school offers individual case management for each student and holds regular parent information sessions with multicultural education aides and interpreters. The school is responsive to the needs of refugee students and allows for flexibility in moving between mainstream programs and bridging programs. Vice-Principal Jane Wignell has noted that overall students who complete the bridging program and the VCAL succeed.



## 2.2 Employment

Horn of African and Sudanese communities face barriers to gaining meaningful employment once they have arrived in Victoria. Generally, there is great pressure placed on men, and to a lesser degree youth, to immediately gain employment. Employment is necessary to financially support the family home and relatives who are still overseas. Omar Farah notes that the key problems in relation to employment are language barriers and a lack of local experience.<sup>17</sup> Farah believes that 510 hours is not enough for Horn of African and Sudanese people to learn sufficient English to use in the workplace and suggests that many migrants may need extra support and encouragement in the process of learning English. Criticisms have also been made of language tuition, noting that it is not geared towards employment, and a number of those who have completed the English language course have not obtained a reasonable level of English for them to cope in the workplace.

A lack of local work experience is also a barrier to obtaining employment. Country of origin work experience is often under-valued and overseas job references are often unacceptable to Australian employers.<sup>18</sup> Local experience is often hard to come by, and given the pressures placed on Horn of African and Sudanese new arrivals to financially support their relatives in Australia and overseas, it is understandable that there is a reluctance to gain local experience in a voluntary and unpaid capacity. As a result, many Horn of African and Sudanese new arrivals are today employed in areas such as taxi driving and factory work because it is easy and provides quick cash.<sup>19</sup>

Overseas qualification recognition is a significant barrier to employment. The fact that no single authority exists in Australia to assess or recognise all overseas gained skills and qualifications results in many qualified accountants, business people and other professionals in menial positions. Liz Dimock and Apollo Nsubuga-Kyobe found when interviewing Horn of African migrants, that 50% of employed principal applicants with post-secondary school qualifications were occupationally mismatched.<sup>20</sup> Most professional organisations in Victoria have their own guidelines for recognising overseas qualifications. Some qualifications are not recognised, and as a result newly arrived migrants are required to update their qualifications at Victorian institutions, a process which is costly in terms of both time and money.<sup>21</sup> The difficulties associated with gaining recognition of overseas qualifications are prohibitive for Horn of African and Sudanese people seeking to gain employment in their field.

There is also reluctance on behalf of some employers to take on Horn of African and Sudanese employees even if they have the correct qualifications and work experience in their home country.<sup>22</sup> Whilst this is often due to the employer preference for local work experience, in some instances it is attributable to discriminatory attitudes of employers.<sup>23</sup> Other research has noted the need for a push from within industry to accept Horn of African and Sudanese workers in companies.<sup>24</sup>

Employment agencies have come under heavy criticism for their role in assisting Horn of African and Sudanese job seekers to find employment. Comments regarding the role of Centrelink in assisting Horn of

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<sup>17</sup> Farah, Omar. (March 2007), Multicultural Community Development Worker, Carlton Local Agencies Network.

<sup>18</sup> Dimock, Liz and Nsubuga-Kyobe, Apollo. *African Communities and Settlement Services in Victoria: Towards Better Service Delivery Models*. Melbourne, Australian Multicultural Foundation, 2002, pp 44.

<sup>19</sup> Farah, Omar. (March 2007), Carlton Local Agencies Network.

<sup>20</sup> Dimock, Liz and Nsubuga-Kyobe, Apollo. *African Communities and Settlement Services*, pp 44.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Farah, Omar. (March 2007), Multicultural Community Development Worker, Carlton Local Agencies Network.

<sup>23</sup> Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW. *Report of the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW: Investigation into African Humanitarian Settlement in NSW*, June 2006, pp 111.

<sup>24</sup> Farah, Omar. (March 2007), Multicultural Community Development Worker, Carlton Local Agencies Network.



Africans to find a job has been critical, noting that finding a job through a case manager was 'impossible ... it's a waste of time'.<sup>25</sup> There is a sense of confusion on behalf of Horn of African and Sudanese migrants about the role of agencies such as Centrelink and Job Network, and great frustrations in not being able to deal directly with employers.<sup>26</sup> One service provider located in NSW has concluded 'it is clear that the Job Network system is not assisting the African communities effectively in accessing employment.'<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Dimock, Liz and Nsubuga-Kyobe, Apollo. *African Communities and Settlement Services: Towards Better Service Delivery Models*, pp 85.

<sup>26</sup> Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW, *Report of the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW: Investigation into African Humanitarian Settlement in NSW*, pp 112.

<sup>27</sup> Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW. *Report of the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW: Investigation into African Humanitarian Settlement in NSW*, pp 112.



### 2.3 English Language Training

There are a variety of English language training programs available to newly arrived migrants when settling in Victoria. Language is often hailed as the key to ensuring effective settlement, as one service provider in NSW comments 'Language is always one of the major settlement issues, as it is the key to communication and vocational pathways, employment and improved access to all government and non-government services'.<sup>28</sup> DIAC has noted that there is a large body of research that confirms that the most significant indicator of successful settlement is English language proficiency.<sup>29</sup> It is clear from such sentiments that language training is essential for the effective settlement of Horn of African and Sudanese communities in Australia.

One such program offered is the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), available to migrants and humanitarian entrants 18 years old and over, or between 16 and 18 years of age who are not attending the New Arrivals Program, and who do not have functional English. Entrants are eligible for 510 hours of tuition which in Victoria takes place through Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) and the Northern AMEP Consortium.<sup>30</sup> AMEP offers a further 400 hours under the Special Preparatory Program to refugee and humanitarian entrants between 16 and 24 years of age with less than seven years of education who are not attending the NAP. Those over 18 with more than seven years of education are eligible for a further 100 hours of tuition. The tuition aims to help clients achieve functional English and equip students with the basic English skills needed to settle satisfactorily in Australia. Students learn about Australian society, customs and culture, and are linked with other services and agencies which aid their settlement.<sup>31</sup>

It has been noted that the language proficiency level initially offered under AMEP, which is geared towards living and not vocational and employment requirements, is not useful when migrants try to find employment.<sup>32</sup> AMEP English competency outcomes are characterised as suitable for social survival but not job functional. Further challenges include the issue of the provided hours being insufficient for migrants to learn adequate English skills. Community workers from the African Workers Network state 'those who have no classroom experience tend not to be benefiting from the 510 plus hours of English tutoring they are entitled to. At the end of the 510 hours hardly any of their English language skills get improved.'<sup>33</sup> While the dedication of teachers working within government funded English language programs is not disputed, the methodologies used in English language programs tend to be geared towards the mainstream, making it difficult for new arrivals such as those from the Horn of Africa and Sudan to fully benefit from the courses. Although home tutoring is available, many single-parent households find it difficult to find the time for language classes, and face challenges in getting to classes within the allocated schedule. The cost and availability of childcare is also an issue which inhibits the ability of some new arrivals to access English language tuition. The provision of programs and access in regional areas also constitutes a significant challenge.

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<sup>28</sup> Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW. *Report of the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW: Investigation into African Humanitarian Settlement in NSW*, pp 87.

<sup>29</sup> Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues and South East Learning and Employment Network, *Pathways and Pitfalls: The journey of refugee young people in and around the education system in Greater Dandenong*. November 2004, pp 21.

<sup>30</sup> VSPC Education Working Group. *Education and Training Pathways to Employment for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants in Victoria*, 2007.

<sup>31</sup> Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. *Guide to Settlement and Multicultural Affairs*. Branch Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs Victorian Office. Victoria, 2006, pp 7.

<sup>32</sup> Dimock, Liz and Nsubuga-Kyobe, Apollo. *African Communities and Settlement Services in Victoria: Towards Better Service Delivery Models*, pp 91.

<sup>33</sup> Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW. *Report of the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW: Investigation into African Humanitarian Settlement in NSW*, pp 109.



As discussed in the section on barriers to education, the NAP is provided through selected English Language Schools and Colleges, to students newly enrolled in Victorian government schools who need to learn English.<sup>34</sup> The program runs for either six or twelve months depending on the needs of the student, and aims to teach students the English language skills they need in order to study in primary or secondary school. Criticisms have been made that six or twelve months is insufficient time for a lot of young people, and as one Refugee Youth Welfare worker notes, 'They need more time at the language centre.'<sup>35</sup> Although an ideal length of time is not widely agreed upon, many including Berhan Ahmed suggest, that it is not the amount of time that is the concern, rather the intensification level and the way the training is delivered that is the real problem.<sup>36</sup> As with the AMEP program, there is widespread concern that many young people who are exiting the NAP are struggling to cope with mainstream education and are either dropping out or achieving low outcomes.<sup>37</sup>

The programs outlined are the core on-arrival English language programs, provided free to eligible new entrants. There are further programs that assist settlers in English language tuition, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, many of which are aimed at students, and provided through Technical and Further Education (TAFE) or schools.

Translating and interpreting services, which are provided on a fee free basis for those who do not speak adequate English to communicate with doctors, police, community organisations and so forth, are extremely important for many Horn of African and Sudanese communities as they settle in Australia. However, there is a severe shortage of accredited interpreters in emerging African languages and a lack of information on services in Horn of African languages.<sup>38</sup> It is no overstatement to say that translating and interpreting services are under resourced in Australia and there is a lack of awareness in the mainstream community as to the importance of engaging interpreters and translators. The 2007- 08 Federal Budget allocated \$0.4 million to encourage new interpreters in community languages where there are significant shortages. It is hoped that some of this funding will be directed to African languages and increase the number of Horn of African and Sudanese interpreters.<sup>39</sup> Increased interpreting and translating services in these communities also have the positive flow on effect of creating employment opportunities.

Clearly there are a wide range of issues and concerns in the provision of English language training in Victoria. As a government service provider commented, 'if you don't get your language right you're on the back foot for the rest of your life.' The effective settlement of Horn of African and Sudanese communities depends largely on the development of effective English language skills. Significant investment in this area early in the settlement stage may well return savings in reduced social welfare expenditure further into the settlement process.

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<sup>34</sup> VSPC Education Working Group. *Education and Training Pathways to Employment for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants in Victoria*, 2007.

<sup>35</sup> Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues and South East Learning and Employment Network. *Pathways and Pitfalls: The journey of refugee young people in and around the education system in Greater Dandenong*, pp 25.

<sup>36</sup> Ahmed, Berhan. (9 May, 2007.) President, Eritrean Community in Australia.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW. *Report of the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW: Investigation into African Humanitarian Settlement in NSW*, pp 60.

<sup>39</sup> Andrews, Kevin and Gambaro, Teresa. *Increased Services and 13,000 Places for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants*, pp 4.



## 2.4 Consumer / Life Skills

Under the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS), services are provided to those who enter under this scheme for six months and include initial information and orientation assistance, accommodation support, household formation support, early health assessment and intervention and proposer support.<sup>40</sup> Many challenges have been highlighted with the level of support offered by the government in regards to these services, particularly in relation to accommodation and household formation support.

Dimock and Nsubuga-Kyobe have identified several problems relating to housing in their research and these include the general shortage of accommodation and short length of time that on-arrival accommodation is provided for.<sup>41</sup> On-arrival accommodation is generally provided for four weeks, and this is often noted as being far too short. One service provider notes that 'the notion that on-arrival accommodation for four weeks is adequate is flawed and naïve. The added pressure of finding longer term accommodation in that short period is immensely unsettling and stressful.'<sup>42</sup> Finding long-term public housing is very difficult and there are often long waiting lists.

There is insufficient housing to cater for large families, which can often result in families being forced to live in small housing where overcrowding is a major problem. This can impact negatively on the educational performance of the children, as there is lack of quiet space for study and homework.<sup>43</sup> The alternative to public housing is too expensive for most families. Finally, there is a perception of racial discrimination in rental housing toward Horn of African and Sudanese families to the point where real estate agents have been reported to refuse accommodation.

It has been noted that the length of support services under IHSS is too short and a more flexible timeframe is needed.<sup>44</sup> The six month timeframe provides settlers with limited support, and during this time many settlers are still suffering from culture shock and lack a strong orientation such as familiarity with transport, timetables and local geography. A flexible timeframe is needed to accommodate the needs of different settlers, and the services provided under the IHSS should not be squeezed into this short timeframe. In the 2007-08 Federal budget, \$5.3 million was allocated to subsidise rental and utilities costs in the first month after arrival under the IHSS. While the month long timeframe is still a concern, this boost in funding will be extremely useful.<sup>45</sup> The latest Federal budget also included funding of \$3.2 million to provide public transport tickets to entrants in the first month after arrival, which will help with orientation and travel to service providers.<sup>46</sup>

It is important to note that the services provided under the IHSS are not available to all Horn of African and Sudanese entrants.

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<sup>40</sup> Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. *Australia's Support for Humanitarian Entrants 2004-05*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2005, pp 1

<sup>41</sup> Dimock, Liz and Nsubuga-Kyobe, Apollo. *African Communities and Settlement Services in Victoria: Towards Better Service Delivery Models*, pp 26.

<sup>42</sup> Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW. *Report of the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW: Investigation into African Humanitarian Settlement in NSW*, pp 48.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, pp 66.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>45</sup> Andrews, Kevin and Gambaro, Teresa, *Increased Services and 13,000 Places for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants*, pp 4.

<sup>46</sup> Andrews, Kevin and Gambaro, Teresa. *Increased Services and 13,000 Places for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants*, pp 4.



IHSS Service	Refugees	SHP Entrants	PPV Holders	TPV Holders
Initial Information and Orientation Assistance	√	X	X	X
Accommodation Support	√	X	X	X
Household Formation Support	√	√	X	X
Early Health Assessment and Intervention	√	√	√*	√*
Proposer Support	X	√	X	X

\* Only PPV Holders released from Immigration Detention are eligible.  
Source: [http://www.dimia.gov.au/media/publications/visa-entry/\\_pdf/ashe.pdf](http://www.dimia.gov.au/media/publications/visa-entry/_pdf/ashe.pdf)

There are some limitations to the provision of IHSS services and it is clear that greater flexibility needs to be imbedded in these programs if they are to better meet the needs of Horn of African and Sudanese settlers and ensure good settlement outcomes.



## 2.5 Harmony and Acceptance

Themes of harmony and acceptance have become relevant in the discussion of the previous settlement challenges for Horn of African and Sudanese settlers. Many Horn of African and Sudanese people in fleeing their home country do not actively choose to come to Australia, rather they are placed here under instruction from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and have no firm knowledge of Australian culture or lifestyle. This raises some challenges in terms of settling into Australian society.<sup>47</sup> Some Horn of African and Sudanese people hold out a hope of returning to their homeland once conditions have improved and civil war is over. For such persons, Australia is more of a transitory destination rather than a permanent one.

Many parents are particularly concerned that their children will be attracted to forms of Australian teen culture such as pop music, drugs and alcohol, and that they will start to lose their own African identity. As one mother has stated, 'the issue of culture is a big challenge. Our children are growing up in this culture and grasping it while we as parents are in shock and surprise with this culture.'<sup>48</sup> Some Horn of African and Sudanese youth have reported that the differences between their sense of culture and the dominant Australian culture bring challenges. Many are confused and unsure about how to adopt the best of both cultures, not wanting to disappoint parents, but still wanting to fit in with Australian students.<sup>49</sup> It is difficult for Horn of African and Sudanese youth to juggle both cultures and this challenge has implications for their effective settlement.

Incidents of racism directed at Horn of African and Sudanese communities are a concern, and may occur in the areas of education, employment, housing and the media. There is no doubt that racism towards Horn of African and Sudanese communities in Victoria exists and this must be strongly opposed in order to assist the settlement process in Victoria. One study notes that many Somali students do not feel that they or their family are truly part of Australian society. The majority of students in this study felt that they were more accepted by their school community and immediate neighbours than they were when in public places or using public services.<sup>50</sup> Clearly, acceptance is integral to the effective settlement of Horn of Africans in Victoria. Significant scope exists for the broader community to perform a role in promoting harmony and acceptance of Horn of African and Sudanese communities to ensure smoother settlement trajectories.

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<sup>47</sup> Dimock, Liz and Nsubuga-Kyobe, Apollo. *African Communities and Settlement Services in Victoria: Towards Better Service Delivery Models*, pp 101.

<sup>48</sup> Yusuf, Sheikh Omar. *The Educational and Employment Aspirations of Somali High School Students in Melbourne: Some Insights from a Small Study*. Ecumenical Migration Centre, Brotherhood of St Laurence, 2005, pp 8.

<sup>49</sup> Dimock, Liz and Nsubuga-Kyobe, Apollo. *African Communities and Settlement Services in Victoria: Towards Better Service Delivery Models*, pp 102.

<sup>50</sup> Yusuf, Sheikh Omar. *The Educational and Employment Aspirations of Somali High School Students in Melbourne: Some Insights from a Small Study*. Ecumenical Migration Centre, Brotherhood of St Laurence, pp 22.



## 2.6 Police and Crime

The relationship between youth from the Horn of Africa and Sudan and police officers has become increasingly tense, mainly due to amplified media attention and negative reports in the media. Yousif Mohamed of Victorian Cooperative on Children's Services for Ethnic Groups (VICSEG), notes that the media constantly highlights the ethnicity of individuals in such reports and articles, in circumstances where there is no need to do so.<sup>51</sup> The Refugee Support Network notes that 'the media has ... sensationalised settlement demographics and conjured images of Horn of African youth gangs running out of control.'<sup>52</sup> This has resulted in unfair representation of Horn of African and Sudanese settlers, to the point where these youth are experiencing increased racism within schools. Youth have reported feeling unfairly targeted by police and transit officers, and often feel victimised and singled-out because of their appearance or ethnicity.<sup>53</sup>

Young people from the Horn of Africa and Sudan may associate uniforms with persecution and torture as a result of past trauma and this contributes to an underlying feeling of distrust.<sup>54</sup> Amongst Horn of African and Sudanese youth there tends to be a general fear of people in uniform. This past experience does nothing to help interactions with the police and needs to be addressed for relationships to be built and strengthened. Despite some incidents, Victoria Police is doing significant work to overcome these challenges.

The example of two Greater Dandenong police officers spending three weeks in Southern Sudan in order to build trust with the community and to assist the police in dealing with Sudanese refugees is a positive example of work towards building relationships.<sup>55</sup> Police need to continue with culturally sensitive training in direct partnership with Horn of African and Sudanese communities to foster trust and good community relations. Reports of the policing of Horn of African and Sudanese youth vary greatly. While some regions and police in Victoria are exceptionally good other reports are less assuring. Victoria Police need to continue their efforts to ensure Horn of African and Sudanese youth are not subject to discrimination or indifferent treatment by police.

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<sup>51</sup> Mohamed, Yousif (23 April, 2007), VICSEG.

<sup>52</sup> Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW. *Report of the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW: Investigation into African Humanitarian Settlement in NSW*, pp 136.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, pp 145.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, pp 143.

<sup>55</sup> Gebre-selassie, Haileluel. *African Think Tank Closing Address (Attachment)*, 2007.



## 2.7 Health

Health, encompassing mental health and wellbeing as well as nutrition, is an important area affecting the settlement of Horn of African and Sudanese communities in Victoria. A range of behavioural and developmental problems are impacting on refugee students, stemming from torture and trauma, which interrupt development, result in poor school performance, anxiety, and poor adjustment in relating to peers.<sup>56</sup> The effects of torture and trauma is particularly relevant to Horn of African and Sudanese settlers, most of whom have come from war torn countries, and may have been subjected to or witnessed extreme cases of violence. At the Federal level, it is promising that the most recent Federal Budget has allocated \$12.2 million in additional funding to the Programme of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma, as this will directly benefit Horn of African and Sudanese survivors of torture and trauma.<sup>57</sup>

The issue of mental health and counselling is often unfamiliar to Horn of African and Sudanese communities and as a result mental health issues are often left untreated. Despite the resilience which is often associated with this group, stigma, fear and the shame associated with admitting to mental health issues contribute to leaving mental health issues unchecked. Depression and anxiety do occur as a result of war trauma, poverty and a lack of medical attention.<sup>58</sup> Learning programs that are specifically tailored to the needs of refugees in the area of health, taking trauma and torture into account, are required to address such issues.

Sexual health issues are also increasingly relevant to Horn of African and Sudanese youth arrivals. Youth arrivals have not always been subjected to education campaigns regarding the risks of unprotected sex and contraception methods. This contributes to unplanned pregnancies, which in turn tend to result in female students dropping out of high school. In this matter and other health issues, as the result of a lack of coordination between health services and government providers, youth arrivals are confused about where to get the help they need.

Other issues facing Horn of African and Sudanese communities include a general lack of health prevention services, including understanding the causes of mental health and communicable diseases. Too few culturally appropriate support programs are in place and there is a need for more service providers to understand varying attitudes to mental health problems. Also, the lack of interpreters within the health sector, a problem exacerbated in regional areas where there is often limited access to interpreters, impacts significantly on the health of Horn of African and Sudanese communities in Victoria.<sup>59</sup> Most Horn of African and Sudanese settlers come to Australia from countries where Western medicine was not widely available, no systematic medical or health structure is in place and the general population does not receive broad education on health matters. In order to facilitate an effective transition into Victorian society, settlers need to be aware of how to best deal with health issues, and more effective and culturally sensitive health services need to be available to Horn of African and Sudanese settlers.

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<sup>56</sup> Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW, *Report of the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW: Investigation into African Humanitarian Settlement in NSW*, pp 80.

<sup>57</sup> Andrews, Kevin and Gambaro, Teresa. *Increased Services and 13,000 Places for Refugees and Humanitarian Entrant*, pp 5.

<sup>58</sup> Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW, *Report of the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW: Investigation into African Humanitarian Settlement in NSW*, pp 80.

<sup>59</sup> African Think Tank, *Report of the African-Australian Community's Initiative Workshop on Issues Affecting the Resettlement of Africans*, Melbourne, 2006, pp 16.



## Conclusion

This report highlights some of the challenges to effective settlement experienced by Horn of African and Sudanese communities in Victoria. It is important to recognise, however, that many people from the Horn of Africa and Sudan are rising to the challenge and settling effectively. The report has touched on issues particularly faced by some youth entrants in the areas of education, employment, police and crime, language training, consumer/life skills, harmony and acceptance and health.

Although many of the services that have been discussed are effective at addressing the needs of many culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, greater flexibility and initiatives are required to meet the needs of Horn of African and Sudanese communities. As a Commonwealth document *Measures to Improve Settlement Outcomes for Humanitarian Entrants* notes:

*"The African caseload generally has greater settlement needs than people from previous source regions, reflecting their experiences and circumstances prior to arriving in Australia. Some of these pre-migration experiences include high levels of poverty, larger families, lower levels of education and English language proficiency, lower levels of literacy in their own languages, higher incidence of health issues, longer periods spent in refugee camps, little experience of urban environments, and higher rates of torture and trauma."*<sup>60</sup>

It is clear that new services, initiatives and policies need to be implemented to address the needs of Horn of African and Sudanese communities in Australia. The African Think Tank noted in the closing address of the 2007 conference, 'Simply repackaging thirty year old refugee strategies or adopting a one size fits all approach to settlement services is not going to be sufficient in addressing the unique set of challenges that the African-Australian groups face today'.<sup>61</sup>

Whilst there has been a great deal of research conducted into the barriers faced by Horn of African and Sudanese communities in Australia, and ways in which to improve settlement services, it is clear from this report that there is still further work to be done in the field. Clearly, further assistance and initiatives are required for Horn of African and Sudanese youth as they settle in Victoria. Like previous migrant groups, Horn of African and Sudanese communities can and will contribute significantly to Victorian society. However, they must be provided with flexible, well resourced and innovative programs that meet different levels of need in order to effectively participate in Australian society.

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<sup>60</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, *Measures to Improve Settlement Outcomes for Humanitarian Entrants*. Commonwealth of Australia, 2006, pp 7.

<sup>61</sup> Gebre-selassie, Haileluel. *African Think Tank Closing Address*, 2007, pp 4.



## ECCV Recommendations

In recommending ways to assist Horn of African and Sudanese communities as they settle in Victoria it is important to acknowledge the existing body of work and expertise in this area. The African Think Tank, Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council, Victorian Foundation for the Survivors of Torture, Refugee Education Partnership Project,<sup>62</sup> Refugee Health Research Centre, Carlton Local Agencies Network and the DIAC Victorian Settlement Planning Committee all have significant expertise in the field. Many of the recommendations below are drawn from the work of the aforementioned organisations, with particular emphasis given to the recommendations put forth by the African Think Tank in its 2007 conference report:

1. That the Federal Government implement a national refugee youth strategy which is developed with extensive consultation between government and African communities.<sup>63</sup> A well developed strategy which is appropriately resourced for implementation would significantly improve settlement outcomes for Horn of African and Sudanese youth across Australia.
2. That the New Arrivals Program (NAP) should be administered in a more intensive and flexible way.<sup>64</sup> While no consensus exists on the adequate length of the program, it has been suggested that the program should be extended to at least twelve months for all students, based on a two-phase approach. The first six months should focus on resource building and settlement issues and the second six months should focus on intensive English language learning.<sup>65</sup> Achieving higher English language proficiency through a more intensive NAP would better prepare new arrival students for the mainstream education system.
3. That state and federal education departments review the effectiveness of the age placement system, where entrants are placed into schools according to their age, rather than educational proficiency.<sup>66</sup> The methodology used in the education system are generally appropriate for mainstream students but a more student centred approach is required to give Horn of African and Sudanese students better opportunities to succeed within the education system.
4. That state and federal education departments collaborate to establish 'Refugee and Migrant Education Support Units'.<sup>67</sup> Additionally, the following measures need to be considered for implementation in schools and local communities:
  - the use of Horn of African teacher aides with accredited training opportunities,
  - professional development opportunities for teaching staff to develop effective teaching strategies for students,
  - the creation and appropriate resourcing of after hours homework centres and community language schools,

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<sup>62</sup> The Refugee Education Partnership Project is a partnership between the following agencies, Foundation House - Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture, Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, Victorian Department of Education, Department for Victorian Communities, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Debney Park Secondary College and a private philanthropic trust. The project produced the comprehensive 2007 publication *The Education Needs of Young Refugees in Victoria*.

<sup>63</sup> African Think Tank, 2007, African Resettlement in Australia, Conference Report, pp 11.

<sup>64</sup> Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues and South East Learning and Employment Network. 2004, *Pathways and Pitfalls: The journey of refugee young people in and around the education system in Greater Dandenong*, pp 31.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> African Think Tank, 2007, African Resettlement in Australia, Conference Report, pp 10.

<sup>67</sup> African Think Tank, 2007, African Resettlement in Australia, Conference Report, pp 10.



- a case management system for students with refugee experiences, and
  - education programs for Horn of African and Sudanese parents regarding the Victorian education system.
5. That government funded language training programs consider emphasising careers and skills to improve employment outcomes for Horn of African and Sudanese communities.
  6. That the federal government needs to lead a national campaign promoting the benefits of diversity in the workplace.<sup>68</sup> Such a campaign will need strong partnerships with state governments, industry, employers and culturally and linguistically diverse communities and should result in positive employment outcomes for Horn of African and Sudanese communities.
  7. That the education initiatives within the Victorian Police force and efforts to foster good relations with new and emerging communities are continued with particular attention also given to the recruitment of Horn of African and Sudanese persons into the police force. In addition, due to differing experiences engaging with the Victorian Police force the development of consistent standards and protocols for individual officers dealing with people from CALD backgrounds should be considered for implementation.
  8. That the initial accommodation support and services provided under the IHSS are extended and greater flexibility incorporated into the program to allow for the different needs of families as they settle. Larger public housing must also be funded to accommodate the needs of larger Horn of African and Sudanese families.
  9. That the provision of education and training to mainstream mental health workers dealing with Horn of African and Sudanese communities is further resourced. Education initiatives developed in conjunction with these communities in the areas of mental health, sexual health and communicable diseases are also required.
  10. That Horn of African and Sudanese representatives need to be integrated into government decision making processes and representatives placed on mainstream service providers boards and committees.
  11. That state and federal governments continue to invest in networks that look to solutions for reducing the barriers to settlement facing refugee communities in Australia, including those from the Horn of Africa and Sudan.

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<sup>68</sup> African Think Tank, 2007, African Resettlement in Australia, Conference Report, pp 10.



## Acronyms

AMES	Adult Multicultural Education Services
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
ESL	English as a Second Language
DET	Department of Education and Training
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
IHSS	Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy
MRC	Migrant Resource Centre
PPV	Permanent Protection Visa
SHP	Special Humanitarian Program
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TPV	Temporary Protection Visa
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VCAL	Victoria Certificate of Applied Learning
VICSEG	Victorian Co-operative on Children's Services for Ethnic Groups
VMC	Victorian Multicultural Commission
YALP	Yachad Accelerated Learning Program



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