

The Social Studio helps change the lives of young people from new migrant and refugee communities

Refugee Week 2020 runs from Sunday June 14th to Saturday June 20th and The Social Studio is using this time to highlight the continued need to support Australia's refugee community, while sharing positive stories of success from its members.

Founded in 2009, The Social Studio provides skill development, training and a safe place of belonging that strives to create awareness and address the challenges for diverse young people from refugee backgrounds. The social enterprise is an RMIT University accredited fashion school, an upcycled clothing label, a retail shop, an ethical clothing manufacturer and a community space created from the style and skills of young people from new migrant and refugee communities.

Among the main barriers faced by young people from refugee backgrounds are unemployment, isolation and difficulties accessing education and training. The Social Studio addresses these challenges in four ways: creating jobs; providing education; encouraging community engagement and social inclusion.

Alek Nyok, a The Social Studio board member and South Sudanese-Australian community member, said: "Many young people from refugee backgrounds can face unique challenges settling in our country but with the right support and encouragement they make valuable contributions in a range of areas. The Social Studio's approach is a practical way of harnessing skills and talent of refugee and new migrant communities."

Alek herself came as a child refugee to Australia when she was 10 years old. As a teenager in country Victoria, Alek connected with The Social Studio as part of a high school extension and later graduated from its fashion school. Now working as a data analyst, Alek is also an active volunteer in Melbourne's South Sudanese community, and an invaluable member of The Social Studio board.

The Social Studio CEO, Cate Coleman said Refugee Week is an opportunity to reflect on the resilience and capability of young people from refugee backgrounds. "The Social Studio offers a platform through art, creativity and design for these positive community narratives to shine."

By facilitating a range of projects that provide social support including legal advice, counselling, tutoring and formal training in clothing production, retail and fashion, The Social Studio has been able to help change the lives of over 800 new migrant and refugees since its inception.

The Social Studio continues its incredible work through public donations and revenue generated through sales from the clothing produced by new and emerging designers at its Melbourne studio. The Social Studio label is designed and made to an extremely high quality, ethically made using only reclaimed and up-cycled materials gathered from local industry. Over the last decade over 20 tonnes of material has been salvaged from landfill.

All income generated through the Studio is invested in creating social benefits for students, staff and their communities.

Ways to support The Social Studio throughout Refugee Week 2020 and beyond:

- Donate to The Social Studio: <https://www.thesocialstudio.org/donate/>

\$25 can provide a student with a sewing starter kit

\$50 can fund all pattern making paper required for one semester

\$100 can provide an essential student pack for one fashion or design student for one year \$500 can provide teaching support for an entire class in our TAFE program for one week \$1000 can cover training costs for our TAFE programs for one semester

- Shop TSS label - new Collingwood store opening soon

- Buy an Art Scarf online: <https://tssartscarf.org/>

- Follow the journey on social media via @thesocialstudio to hear stories from The Social Studio's community

Contacts

Megan Chambers

0401470609

mailto: megan@olivepr.com.au