

African Migrants Finding Corporate Jobs

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African migrants often have trouble finding work in Australia, but a paid

internship program has helped more than 100 people find full-time jobs in the

corporate sector.

The African Australian Inclusion Program offers six months paid internships

at a major Australian corporation. Since its inception in 2009 more 80% of its

graduates have found full-time work.

Ali John is one of the program's success stories. Today he is an analyst at

National Australia Bank. But when he first arrived in Australia in 2011 he had

to take a job as a waiter, despite being a university educated IT professional in

South Sudan.

“As Africans our biggest issues is getting into the Australian workforce,

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because our experience in Africa is completely irrelevant, finding a job is

really hard and most people want local experience.”

Unemployment in Australia’s South Sudanese community is over 25%. Ali

John says he applied for 10 to 15 jobs a day, but like many of his friends was

unable to find work in his industry and so took any job he could get.

“Most of my friends are really qualified people but they’re just working in

factories,” he said.

Jesuit Social Services director, Pamela Webb, said it’s difficult to make the step

from laboring jobs to the corporate sector, particularly for migrants and

refugees. “It’s so hard to get out of the factory, we know in any job you get

defined by that job, often you need something to intervene,”

For Mr. John that was the African Australian Inclusion Program. Six months of

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paid work experience has turned into a career at a major Australian bank. He

says the benefits of his employment have created a ripple effect in his

community.

Zimbabwean-born Farayi Mutasi has an Australian university degree, but he

too faces obstacles in joining the workforce. He says after months of applying

for jobs, he eventually has to return to his previous occupation.

“I had to go back to warehousing, I was about to give up. I was discussing with

my mother should I go back home and take care of her at least and look for

other things because working in the warehouse is not what I wanted, it's not

my passion.”

A 2013 Parliamentary Inquiry found some common employment barriers for

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migrants and refugees included indirect discrimination-such as employers

preferring applicants with Anglo-Saxon sounding names. It also found the

language barrier and a lack of Australian work experience as obstacles to full-

time employment. This often results in migrants and refugees taking low

skilled, low paying jobs.

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