

# **Evaluation Report on the REAP Project for Mosaic Multicultural Connections**

## **Conducted by**

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## **Overview of the evaluation**

The Regional Employment Agriculture Project (REAP), which aimed to support Ezidi refugees and other migrants in Armidale to gain employment in agriculture and related industries, is evaluated on the criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, and stakeholders' satisfaction. The evaluation is guided by an educational perspective, in particular the principles of scaffolding and promotion of agency in consideration of the REAP's essential function of providing scaffolding for the new settler groups' transition to the regional workforce and mobilising and enhancing their agency in the process.

## **Background**

The REAP was funded by the Federal Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) from 2023 to 2025 to help Ezidi refugees and other migrants in Armidale to find work in agriculture and related sectors. The REAP was designed to achieve seven objectives (see Appendix 3), as follows:

1. Assist new settlers with a rural background to integrate into the Armidale community by helping them to apply and adapt their existing rural skills in an Australian context.
2. Skill a motivated and capable workforce for various segments of the agricultural industry and related sectors.
3. Support employment pathways and small business development in agricultural and related industries, from farm to table, and potentially harnessing tourism interest.
4. Assist participants to explore a range of options and models for their agricultural and related activities.
5. Provide an environment to address structural barriers to employment through a range of positive personal and community developments, English learning in a meaningful and comfortable context, building social networks, and encouraging more understanding about Australian society and culture.
6. Build on participants' existing skills and experience through the provision of informal and formal training and providing experiences in the Australian context, ensuring they are aware of their rights and responsibilities in Australia's workforce.
7. Provide and document a model that can be adopted and adapted elsewhere.

Mosaic Multicultural Connects (Mosaic for short henceforward), the recipient of the DEWR funding, commissioned the University of New England team to evaluate the Project. Mosaic provided a set of data documenting various activities during the life of the Project and stakeholders' responses in the post-project survey and interviews (see Appendices 1-6). The dataset was utilised in the evaluation of the Project in relation to the criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, and stakeholders' satisfaction (Owen, 2006; Richards, 2001).

*Effectiveness* refers to the extent to which the REAP meets its stated objectives and deliverables. It assesses whether the program successfully supports participants in gaining skills, knowledge and pathways to employment in agriculture and related sectors.

*Efficiency* examines how well the program utilises resources (time, funding, personnel, and materials) to achieve outcomes. It considers the timely and cost-effective delivery of the Project's outcomes.

*Satisfaction* reflects the level of satisfaction among key stakeholders concerning the Project's outcomes and stakeholders' perception of the quality of the Project and its delivery.

Two key educational principles, *scaffolding* and *agency*, align well with the key purpose of the REAP to support Ezidi refugees and other migrants in their transitions to the workforce in the regional town of Armidale. Scaffolding refers to the strategic support provided to learners to enable them to gradually develop the knowledge and skills required to complete tasks independently. Effective scaffolding facilitates learning, allowing learners to apply their understanding across different contexts and ultimately

become self-reliant (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). The concept of agency (Archer, 2007) highlights the dynamic interactions between the individual and the structure in the individual's life. It gives due weight to the individual's will and capacity to identify what matters to them, make choices, and pursue meaningful goals in light of the structural conditions they encounter such as government policies, language requirements, workplace practices, social attitudes. The REAP recognises the new settler groups' aspirations and prior experiences while scaffolding their understanding and navigation of the Australian society, culture and workplace practices and promoting their agency. Scaffolding and agency provide useful lens on the REAP's delivery of its objectives.

The evaluation focuses on how the REAP's stated objectives were achieved through key deliverables. Findings are presented next in terms of the effectiveness, efficiency and stakeholders' satisfaction of each objective and its relevant deliverables. This is followed by several recommendations that may be useful for the REAP or similar future projects.

## **Findings**

The seven objectives which are interlinked were achieved to varying extents. One or more relevant deliverables were selected to elaborate on the achievement of each objective. The findings are presented in the order of the objectives as introduced in the Background section.

### **Objective 1: To assist new settlers with a rural background to integrate into the Armidale community by helping them to apply and adapt their existing rural skills in an Australian context**

The Project achieved this objective beyond its expectations. While most deliverables contribute to achieving Objective 1, Deliverables 1 and 2 are especially critical to its success.

- **Deliverable 1:** Engage at least 75 eligible participants over the life of the project.
- **Outcomes:** Structured in three tranches, each with a planned intake of 25 participants, totalling 75 participants (see Appendix 1). The Project engaged a total of 177 participants (see Appendix 4).
- **Deliverable 2:** Deliver 1 or more REAP activities to at least 75 participants via various intakes.
- **Outcomes**
  - Participants had access to:
    - Short courses
    - Units of Certificate II in Agriculture
    - English for Agricultural Work
    - Allocation of planting plots
    - Farm and agri-business visit (see Appendix 1)
  - 31 participants completed more than one course. White card, FSSC, REAP garden/machinery programs had the greatest number of participants (see Appendix 4).
  - Most of the participants surveyed engaged in employment sectors of farming, food processing, retail (see Appendix 2).
  - 22% of participants (40 people) obtained jobs (see Appendix 4).
  - Employment in agriculture, construction, retail, aged care and intensive horticulture, with 7 clients working continuously with the same local construction contracting company for up to 14 months completing work projects around the region (see Appendix 3).

## ***Effectiveness***

The objective is achieved by engaging more than the planned number of participants in the Project and successfully engaging them in a range of agricultural and language activities across multiple intakes, contributing to skill development and pathway progression. The REAP's activities address core domains of integration, including employment, housing, education, health; social bridges, social bonds, social links; language and cultural knowledge, safety, and stability; and rights and citizenship (Ager & Strang,

2008). Specifically, activities such as the allocation of planting plots and visits to local agribusinesses, assisted the new settlers with rural backgrounds to apply and adapt their existing agricultural skills in the Australian agricultural sector, thereby directly supporting integration through employment. Additionally, the facilitation of “English for Agriculture” courses not only enhances participants’ language skills but also improves their ability to participate socially and economically, fostering deeper integration into society.

### ***Efficiency***

The Project effectively leveraged partnerships with Rotary Club of Armidale, TAFE (AMEP and Rural Skills Centre), Rotary landowners and engaged volunteer involvement. This multi-partner collaboration contributed to efficiently organising and delivering the various activities planned for the participants. The phased delivery model, use of diverse venues, and updated training materials reflect an efficient use of time, personnel, and logistical resources.

### ***Satisfaction***

Most of the participants are satisfied with job search assistance that was provided in the Project (see Appendix 2).

63% of the participants surveyed reported that they did not experience challenges in finding employment after completing the courses (see Figure 1).

#### **7. Have you faced any challenges in finding employment after completing the courses?**

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Figure 1. Participant response to question on challenges faced in job seeking. N=30

### **Objective 2: Skill a motivated and capable workforce for various segments of the agricultural industry and related sectors**

The Project delivered a range of activities in line with Deliverable 3.

- **Deliverable 3:** Deliver a range of REAP Activities including the following:
  - A. deliver or facilitate the delivery of short courses for industry tickets.
  - B. deliver or facilitate the delivery of two to three units of a Certificate II course in Agriculture.
  - C. deliver or facilitate the delivery of an 'English for Agriculture' course with one-on-one support and arrange delivery of English for Agriculture and/or English for Agricultural Machinery, through the Adult Migrant English Program at TAFE NSW.
  - D. deliver or facilitate delivery of small business skills development training.
  - E. provide an allocation of land (plot) and enable preparation and planting.
  - F. facilitate exposure visits to farms and agribusinesses.

### **• Outcomes**

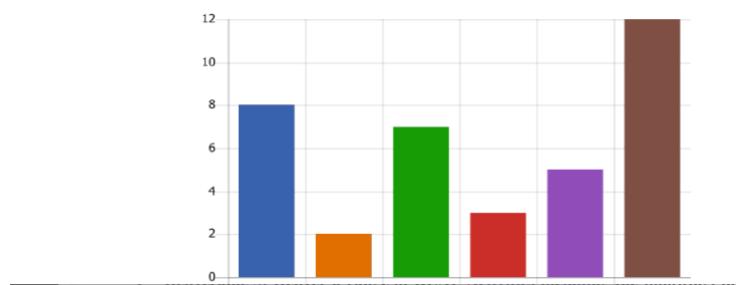
- Comprehensive induction, Work Health and Safety (WHS) briefings and First Aid courses were provided for Tranches 1, 2 and 3 participants, which are foundational industry tickets applicable across agriculture and related sectors (see Appendix 1).
- Pre-course workshops for the First Aid and White Card programs, providing necessary resources to help participants understand the assessment questions, locate answers in the manuals, and use PowerPoint materials to correct mistakes. Participants were also assisted with completing the enrolment forms for both courses, and bilingual support was provided throughout the workshops (see Appendix 5).
- White card (13), Food Safety Supervisor Course (11), REAP garden machinery (9) are the most attended courses (see Appendix 4, number in brackets indicating number of participants).
- Job search assistance (21), Skill training (19), Mentorship (13) are rated as the most beneficial for finding employment by the participants (see Appendix 2, number in brackets indicating number of participants).

### ***Effectiveness***

The REAP positioned the Ezidi and other migrant participants as a capable workforce with skills in the agricultural sector. Through the various activities such as First Aid training, machinery operation, and the REAP garden, the Project delivered essential generic skills that are highly valued across industries. The English courses offered the participants opportunities to develop language skills relevant to industry requirements. Factors such as limited English language proficiency and lack of access to employment-related information are significant barriers to achieving employment aspirations among refugees in Australia (Correa-Velez et al., 2015; Hebbani & Khawaja, 2019). Through the delivery of job-related activities and the facilitation of English language learning, the REAP addressed the constraining factors and delivered its objective of upskilling the Ezidi refugees and other migrants for employment, as evidenced by the REAP participants' successful entry into agriculture, food processing, horticulture, hospitality, health and retail sectors. Figure 2 shows the industries in which participants are currently employed or have been employed.

#### **6. What industry are you currently employed or was employed? في أي صناعة تعمل حالياً أو كنت تعمل؟**

● Food Processing (معالجة الأغذية)	8
● Horticulture (البساتنة)	2
● Retail (بيع بالتجزئة)	7
● Hospitality (خدمات الضيافة الغذائية)	3
● Health (صحة)	5
● Farm (مزرعة)	12



*Figure 2. Employment across industries. N=37*

### ***Efficiency***

The REAP delivered targeted training programs and short courses such as First Aid, machinery operation, hands-on gardening, by integrating practical skills and generic competencies essential for industry employment.

### **Satisfaction**

The majority of the participants in the post-project survey indicated they would recommend the REAP to their friends (see Figure 3), suggesting their satisfaction with the program and its delivery.

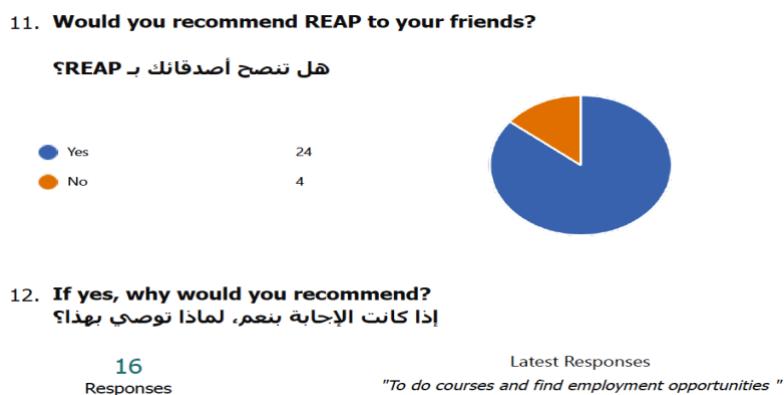


Figure 3. Participants willing to recommend the REAP Project. N=28

### **Objective 3: Support employment pathways and small business development in agricultural and related industries, from farm to table, and potentially harnessing tourism interest**

The Project delivered this objective through the activities in Deliverable 3: Deliver a range of REAP Activities.

- The following three deliverables under Deliverable 3 are particularly relevant:
  - D. deliver or facilitate delivery of small business skills development training.
  - E. provide an allocation of land (plot) and enable preparation and planting.
  - F. facilitate exposure visits to farms and agribusinesses.
- **Outcomes**
  - Organised certificate courses, including Barista Training, RSA and RCG, Food Safety Supervisor, as well as activities such as the Ezidi Women's Community Garden Project and farm and industry visits.
  - Mosaic conducted a site inspection at Thomas Foods International in Tamworth and subsequently supported interested clients through the application process, including assistance with health checks and completing forms. This initiative resulted in nine clients securing employment at the facility. Additionally, Mosaic established employment connections with the Australian Natural Therapeutics Group in Armidale, leading to five clients obtaining work contracts. Ongoing collaboration with the Costa Group in Guyra, one of Mosaic's regular employment partners, has also resulted in five clients currently being employed at their operations (see Appendix 3)
  - Tranche-based work/business experience placements: All three tranches specifically aimed to facilitate connections with potential employers or small businesses in agriculture or related industries (Farmers, Agri-businesses and other relevant employers, Employment Agencies as possible) (see Appendix 1).
  - Site preparation and development (Agricultural Plots) - Participant engagement in codesign and work undertaken (see Appendix 1).

- Monthly group and/or individual industry exposure visits to allow participants to gain a further understanding of the working environments and opportunities (see Appendix 1).
- Ezidi women's garden project, which demonstrates potential for attracting tourism, and the produce from the gardens can be sold at markets, contributing to small business development (see Appendix 6).

### ***Effectiveness***

The REAP supported employment pathways and small business development in agricultural and related industries for the Ezidi and other migrant participants by delivering a number of tailor-made activities. The impact is evident from the fact that a number of the participants who completed the training courses have successfully secured employment across various sectors, including agriculture, construction, retail, aged care, and intensive horticulture. The Project aligns well with the good practices by the Refugee Council of Australia (2010) regarding the importance of mentoring-oriented schemes in promoting immigrant self-employment and programs for long-term integration needs through skill development and career progression for refugee communities.

### ***Efficiency***

The synergy created through multiple organisational involvement (Rotary, Farm Owners, Field Day Operators, Agri-businesses, Produce Wholesalers, and other identified businesses) contributed to efficiency in delivering the objective (see Appendix 1).

### ***Satisfaction***

199 clients commenced training through the Project, and 192 successfully completed it (see Appendix 3). This high completion rate is a powerful indicator of participant satisfaction with the REAP Project. The majority of the participants in the post-project survey reported that they did not face challenges in finding employment after completing the training (see Figure 1). Furthermore, the majority of the participants (85.7%) recommended the REAP to their friends, citing opportunities to undertake courses and access employment pathways as key reasons (see Figure 3).

## **Objective 4: Assist participants to explore a range of options and models for their agricultural and related activities**

The Project delivered this objective through the activities in Deliverable 3: Deliver a range of REAP Activities, in particular Activity B and Activity C.

- **Activity B:** Deliver or facilitate the delivery of two to three units of a Certificate II course in Agriculture.
- **Activity C:** Deliver or facilitate the delivery of an 'English for Agriculture' course with one-on-one support and arrange delivery of English for Agriculture and/or English for Agricultural Machinery, through the Adult Migrant English Program at TAFE NSW.
- **Outcomes**
  - The Certificate II units were integrated across 3 Tranches through partnerships with Registered Training Organisations (see Appendix 1).
  - Assisted participants in landowner consultation, site allocation and preparation, compost and instalment of irrigation lines in Spring 2024. The crop was harvested in late Summer and Autumn 2025 (see Appendix 3).
  - A Land Use Agreement was executed with local landholders, ensuring secure and structured access to land for the REAP participants (see Appendix 1).

### ***Effectiveness***

The REAP achieved this objective by delivering certificate courses in Agriculture and allocating land plots to participants, enabling them to engage in site preparation and planting activities. Offering multiple rounds of agricultural training allowed several cohorts to benefit from these opportunities. Additionally, the review and execution of Land Use Agreements (LUAs) with landowners, which was coordinated by Rotary, provided essential legal and operational clarity, ensuring secure and sustainable land access. The 12-week site preparation and development phase actively involved the REAP participants in both co-design and implementation, fostering a sense of ownership while strengthening practical skills and knowledge transfer. Collins and associates (2016) highlight that immigrant and refugee farming businesses make significant contributions to the Australian agricultural sector through culturally embedded farming practices, innovation, and the transfer of knowledge in both production and marketing. The Ezidi refugees and other participants were assisted in exploring diverse agricultural models and opportunities that value and leverage their existing expertise, with the potential to foster the economic integration of Ezidi settlers and to contribute to the growth and diversification of the agricultural sector in the Armidale region and beyond.

### ***Efficiency***

The Certificate II units were embedded in tranches over time, which allowed for scalability and effective management of participant numbers. The use of volunteers and the Ezidi community members in site preparation allows for peer-led, culturally safe learning and reduces reliance on costly external labour.

### ***Satisfaction***

That 22.6% of the participants (see Appendix 4) have been employed including in the agriculture sector may be viewed as an indicator of the participants' satisfaction with the REAP's role in assisting them to explore options of work.

### **Objective 5: Provide an environment to address structural barriers to employment through a range of positive personal and community developments, English learning in a meaningful and comfortable context, building social networks, and encouraging more understanding about Australian society and culture**

The Project delivered this objective through several deliverables, in particular **Deliverable 3: Deliver a range of REAP Activities**, in particular **Activity C: Deliver or facilitate the delivery of an 'English for Agriculture' course with one-on-one support and arrange delivery of English for Agriculture and/or English for Agricultural Machinery, through the Adult Migrant English Program at TAFE NSW.**

- **Outcomes**

- A 12-week activity was implemented specifically to develop English for Agricultural Work resources, recruit and organise volunteers for one-on-one English for Agricultural Work.
- TAFE NSW's Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) was actively involved in delivery.
- 'English for Agricultural Work' is included across Tranches as one of the REAP activities to be completed by each participant, suggesting it was implemented as a sustained offering, not a one-off (see Appendix 1)

### ***Effectiveness***

The REAP addressed structural barriers to employment by promoting positive personal and community development through accessible English learning, social network building, and greater understanding of Australian society and culture through accessible workplace rights and conditions (also see discussion below about Objective 6). These activities reflect discussions in the literature regarding how to address

structural barriers to employment (Hebbani & Khawaja, 2019), thus providing Ezidi and other migrant participants reliable resources of support for their informed participation in the Australian workforce.

### ***Efficiency***

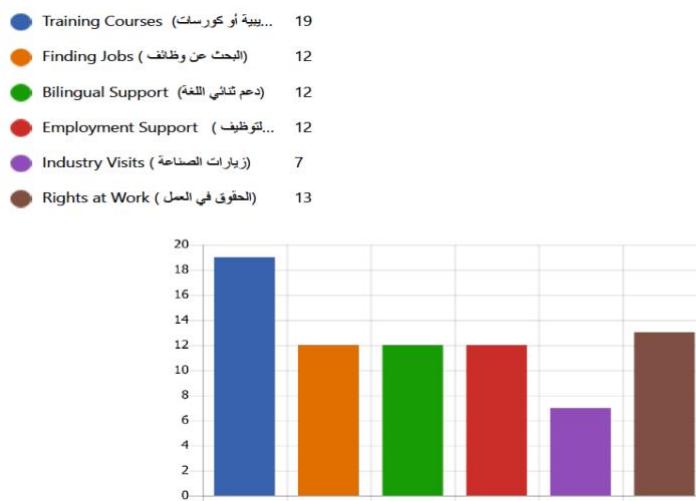
One notable activity in the REAP is the facilitation of English language learning in a meaningful (i.e., tailored specifically to agricultural workplace communication needs) and supportive context through a partnership with TAFE NSW, which specialises in vocational and settlement English. Additionally, one-on-one volunteer support is planned to facilitate ‘English for Agricultural Work’ sessions. These language support activities can significantly help Ezidi and other migrant participants to communicate confidently in Australian workplaces and build community networks through improved speaking skills. Additionally, the ability to communicate in English enhances participants’ understanding of Australian culture and society.

The collaboration and focused approach might have contributed to the Project’s efficiency in addressing the specific language requirements of agricultural workers. However, data on enrolment or completion rates for this activity is not currently available.

### ***Satisfaction***

The English language provision and the workplace rights information, which was made accessible to the Ezidi community as video and voice-over resources, reflect the REAP’s cultural and linguistic responsiveness. This is likely to account for the participants’ overall satisfaction with the Project (see Figure 4).

Which part of REAP support service was beneficial to you? (Select all that apply)



*Figure 4. Participants’ rating of satisfaction with elements of the REAP. N=75*

**Objective 6: Build on participants existing skills and experience through the provision of informal and formal training and providing experiences in the Australian context, ensuring they are aware of their rights and responsibilities in Australia's workforce**

This objective is closely related to **Deliverable 3: E**: Provide an allocation of land (plot) and enable preparation and planting; **Deliverable 3: F**: Facilitate exposure visits to farms and agribusinesses; and

**Deliverable 5:** Obtain resource material on participants' workplace rights from the Fair Work Ombudsman and provide to all program participants in an accessible format, in collaboration with the Fair Work Ombudsman.

- **Outcomes**

- Agricultural Growing Plots prepared ready for participant utilisation.
- Executed Land Use Agreements (LUAs): The review and execution of LUAs with landowners (facilitated by Rotary) (see Appendix 1).
- Site preparation and development (Agricultural Plots) - REAP Participant engagement in codesign and work undertaken (see Appendix 1).
- Liaised with the Fair Work Ombudsman's Office to obtain and or have developed information and materials that can be utilised to inform Ezidi workers and other migrant cohorts of their workplace rights and conditions.
- Workplace rights information/materials obtained in a manner accessible to Ezidi and other migrant cohorts in the target group - including video messaging (see Appendix 1).
- Conducted pre-workshops before the actual courses to assist the participants.

### ***Effectiveness***

The REAP acknowledges that the Ezidis refugees are not lacking in skills. Instead, it focuses on enhancing their capabilities by providing access to Agricultural Growing Plots ready for use, organising exposure visits, and distributing resource materials on workplace rights. Furthermore, bilingual assistance was provided to help participants understand the resources. By harnessing the power of recognising and building on immigrants' strengths (Collins et al., 2016), the REAP empowers and motivates the Ezidi and other migrant participants.

### ***Efficiency***

Partnerships (e.g., Rotary leads land use negotiation) and sub-contractors involved as needed maximise available expertise and networks. The use of Ezidi community members in site prep allows for peer-led, culturally safe learning and reduces reliance on costly external labour. In exposure visits, a monthly cadence strikes a good balance: Frequent enough to offer meaningful exposure, yet manageable in terms of staffing and logistics. The collaboration with the Fair Work Ombudsman to develop accessible workplace rights and conditions both ensures authenticity of the information provided and efficiency in developing the sources.

### ***Satisfaction***

37.5% of the participants in the post-project survey rated bilingual support service as the most beneficial service of the REAP (see Appendix 2; also Figure 4).

## **Objective 7: Provide and document a model that can be adopted and adapted elsewhere**

The REAP showcases an effective approach to assisting Ezidi refugees and other migrant participants in settling in regional Australia. This approach features culturally responsive communication with the settlers. **Deliverable 4:** Undertake promotional and communications activities is focused on in this evaluation.

- **Outcomes**

- engagement across all levels of the community, including Ezidi youth, women, middle-aged men, wider multicultural communities, local service providers, employment agencies, training organisations, and the broader Armidale and New England public.

- communication channels such as face-to-face meetings, WhatsApp, Facebook, SMS, community visits, media releases, emails, flyers, and interagency meetings.
- verbal, written, visual communication types.
- voice and video messaging alongside written translations in Arabic and English.
- Bilingual project officers, voice translations (see Appendix 1).
- An interpreter was present during all workshops.

### ***Effectiveness***

The REAP effectively met the recruitment goal of engaging more than 75 participants through tailored communication that reached diverse groups within the Ezidi community and key stakeholders. Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (2023) emphasises that Community Supporter Groups (CSGs) need to be mindful of potential language barriers when working with their assigned refugee households and plan strategies to overcome these challenges both prior to and following the refugees' arrival in Australia. This includes making arrangements for interpreting and translation services, establishing effective communication before arrival, maintaining clear communication after arrival, and providing informal support for English language learning. The REAP communication plan exemplifies effective scaffolding by carefully structuring information delivery and support to participants at different stages of their learning and settlement journey. By using a variety of communication methods such as bilingual officers, voice and video messaging, and culturally sensitive materials, the Project breaks down complex agribusiness concepts into accessible, manageable steps. This approach not only enhances understanding but also builds confidence, enabling participants to gradually take greater control over their learning and work experiences, thereby fostering their agency. Importantly, the Project's inclusive and adaptive nature ensures that communication is responsive to diverse literacy levels and cultural backgrounds, which further empowers individuals to engage fully with the content and their community.

### ***Efficiency***

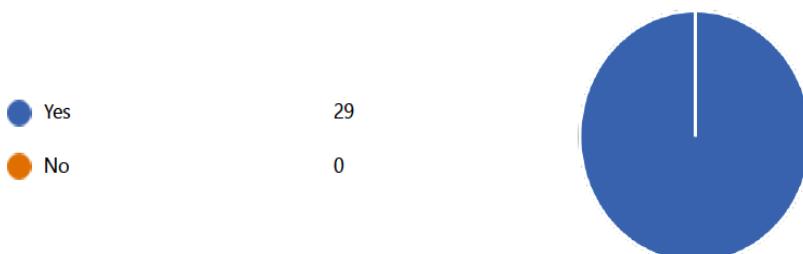
The Project's emphasis on synergy through multi-level stakeholder engagement and inter-organisational partnerships strengthens the overall impact. By connecting local service providers, training organisations, employment agencies, and community groups, the communication strategy creates a collaborative ecosystem where resources and knowledge are shared, enhancing outcomes for the Ezidi participants and the wider refugee and multicultural population.

### ***Satisfaction***

100% of the surveyed participants agreed that having an interpreter present was helpful (see Appendix 2; also Figure 5).

#### **4. Was an interpreter present during the workshop, and was helpful?**

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*Figure 5. Participants' high rating of the role of bilingual interpreters in the Project. N=29*

## **Recommendations**

On the whole, the REAP successfully achieved its key objectives, some more so than others. It showcases several good practices to recommend. There are also several areas for further exploration.

The REAP represents an effective collaboration among key stakeholders, including Rotary, TAFE, and local Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to empower the Ezidi and other migrant communities in Armidale. This inter-organisational collaboration resonates with the discussions at the 2024 Working Group on Resettlement (WGR) Plenary and the Refugee Council of Australia (2024), reflecting a shared commitment to fostering social inclusion, capacity building, and economic participation. Strengthening these collaborative networks has the potential to further amplify the REAP's impact, supporting the Ezidi community in becoming more resilient, self-reliant, and actively engaged in the local economy. Ongoing efforts to deepen these partnerships will be critical to sustaining long-term outcomes and integration. Importantly, Watt et al. (2023) found that the broader Armidale community holds generally positive attitudes towards Ezidi refugees, with little evidence of scapegoating or social resentment. This community goodwill forms a strong foundation for REAP's continued success, as positive public attitudes are essential for effective refugee integration and collaboration between host communities and service initiatives. Ongoing efforts to deepen these partnerships among government agencies, civil society, private sector actors, and refugee communities will be essential in ensuring sustained outcomes and long-term community integration.

The REAP is an effective and meaningful initiative that empowers the Ezidi community by building on their existing knowledge, particularly in agriculture, and providing access to targeted training, experiential learning, and essential resources. Rather than viewing them as passive recipients of aid, the Project acknowledges the agricultural knowledge, practical experience, and cultural skills they bring from their countries of origin. By validating these capabilities and providing opportunities to adapt and expand them within the Australian context, the Project helps the Ezidi refugees and other migrant participants in addressing structural barriers such as limited English proficiency and unfamiliarity with the Australian job market. This strengths-based approach exemplifies the power of scaffolding learning and nurturing agency to foster participants' motivation, confidence, and gradual independence within Australian society. In the REAP, scaffolding is evident through a range of structured support (e.g., tailored language instruction, hands-on training on donated farming plots, and educational programs) to help Ezidi refugees and other migrants transition from guided learning to independent participation in the agricultural workforce. Through this process the REAP empowers individuals to transfer their learning to real-world tasks, fostering independence and long-term economic participation and social integration. To further enhance integration and employment outcomes, it is recommended that the REAP continue expanding vocational pathways aligned with participants' skills, particularly in agriculture, and develop clearer links to the formal recognition of prior learning, English language training, and labour market orientation (Collins et al., 2016; Renzaho et al., 2025).

The REAP's culturally responsive approach ensures the safe and inclusive participation of Ezidi families and children. The project's risk management plan demonstrates strong and comprehensive practices aimed at safeguarding the well-being, engagement, and success of all participants. For instance, water safety is thoughtfully addressed through proactive measures such as informing participants of potential risks around creeks and dams, requiring adult supervision of children, and distributing swim safety resources. A key strength of the plan lies in its culturally sensitive approach to community engagement (Lau & Rodgers, 2021). This includes employing bilingual workers, partnering with trusted community leaders, and addressing language and literacy barriers to ensure that participants, many of whom are Ezidis with lived experiences of trauma, feel welcomed, respected, and supported throughout their involvement in the program. That the participants have progressively developed the confidence and skills needed to engage in family-involved activities independently reflects their growing agency, as they now take the initiative and make informed decisions in ways that support their families and strengthen community participation. It is recommended that the REAP continues to strengthen and regularly review its risk management strategies in collaboration with community members. This includes incorporating

feedback from participants to ensure that cultural responsiveness, trauma-informed practices, and family safety measures remain effective and adaptive to evolving needs.

The Ezidi community garden has emerged as a valuable community networking hub, fostering social connections and strengthening community relationships (New England Times News Desk, 2025). Additionally, the vegetable gardens show potential for attracting tourism, as visitors may be interested in touring the garden. This tourism interest may contribute to both garden sustainability and local business development. It is therefore recommended that the potential for promoting tourism and networking opportunity through the Ezidi community garden be further explored and supported as part of future development initiatives.

There is room for improving the reporting and documenting of activities and data collection in the Project. For example, the lack of relevant data (e.g., lack of data on course enrolment and completion of the English courses) makes it difficult to be definitive about the achievement of Objective 3 related to English learning. The claim for success has considerable support in light of the reporting of 22.6% of the participants obtaining work in the Australian job market in different sectors and the survey result that the majority of the participants did not face challenges in finding jobs after completing the trainings. However, in their response to another question in the survey, a number of the participants reported a variety of challenges (see Figure 6). It is worth exploring these somewhat mixed results, especially when the survey was completed under the mediation of an interpreter – the participants may not fully understand the questions they were asked. At least, the challenges reported by the participants are also found in the literature (Hebbani & Khawaja, 2019; Renzaho et al., 2025). Therefore, it is recommended that more effective strategies for eliciting participant responses and survey design be implemented in future projects.

If yes, what challenges have you faced? (Select all that apply)

- Language barriers (الحواجز اللغوية) 4
- Recognition of qualifications (...) 2
- Lack of local work experience ... 5
- Discrimination (تمييز) 2
- Lack of job opportunities (المعلم...) 7
- Other 0

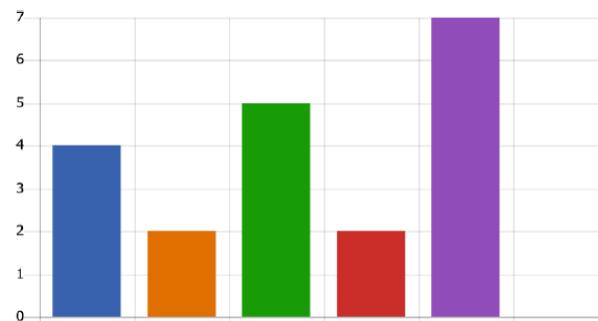


Figure 6. Participants reporting challenges in job seeking

Overall, the REAP demonstrates a culturally responsive and strengths-based model of assisting refugees and other migrants in transitioning to the regional workplace. This model would be useful for future programs where scaffolding and support are paired with opportunities for agency to strengthen migrant communities' capacity for self-determination, cultural integration, and active participation in Australia's social and economic life.

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## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1. NPF 010 Project Plan Mosaic
- Appendix 2: Survey Results
- Appendix 3: NPF Final Report
- Appendix 4: Summary dashboard
- Appendix 5: Pre-Workshop assistance documents
- Appendix 6: Miscellaneous (emails from Mosaic to UNE team)