

# Innovations in Student Led Teaching Helps Migrants into Employment



From left: Gillian Sutherland, Access trainer at Centacare and student Victoria Noti ©Centacare Employment and Training 2008, February 13, 2008

A year and a half ago Victoria was in a Ugandan refugee camp where she had spent the last 7 years of her adolescent life. Today, thanks to Centacare's Australian Apprenticeships ACCESS Programme (the Access Programme); she has been employed as a housekeeper at Bayswater Hotel since November 2007.

Victoria achieved her goal with the assistance of Centacare's Access Programme. The six week course provides job seekers who experience barriers to skilled employment, with pre-vocational training, support and assistance to obtain and maintain an Australian Apprenticeship.

It's been a long road towards success for Victoria. Her optimistic outlook on life has helped her face multiple and complex barriers to gaining the life she has dreamed about. Victoria and her 4 other siblings were taken from their parents and brought to a refugee camp in Uganda, as a result of the civil war that has torn apart Sudan. To this day, Victoria still doesn't know where her parents are or whether they are alive. From the age of 10 she spent 7 years in the refugee camp. She then moved to Perth after being sponsored by her older sister, who had immigrated to Melbourne earlier.

With a growing need to help the recent influx of African migrants in Perth, Centacare has tailored a six week Access Programme course specifically for this target group. Gillian Sutherland, one of the Access trainers at Centacare constantly improves and builds on the program. She adjusts her style of delivery and adapts the material to the individual needs of her students. "The course is student-led; the course material isn't set in stone, if the students wish to learn something different, I adapt the material." Gillian ensures that the students give her constant feedback (at the end of each week) so that she can improve the course to suit them.