



FOOTPRINTS Enterprise's co-founder Sarah Williams is taking big steps to tackle racism in Victoria.

The 25-year-old Doveton resident has been chosen as one of 14 young social pioneers by the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) for its inaugural Young Social Pioneers program.

Ms Williams started Footprints Enterprise in 2007 with the help of Dandenong resident Jasmina Kevric. Shortly after, they began the Grounded Project- a creative arts program for students- primarily from refugee backgrounds.

"I have always enjoyed the multi-cultural aspect of Dandenong," Ms Williams said.

"I decided to start the program after I heard negativity in the media about Sudanese integrating into Australia."

As a youth who worked in the City of Greater Dandenong and the City of Casey, Ms Williams decided to visit Sudan with a group of Sudanese Australians. The visit compelled her to continue to work with, and befriend, refugees. Ms Williams said she wanted to use the program as a tool to promote social inclusion for refugees through the arts- such as dance, hip hop and visual arts.

She and Ms Kevric organised an eight-week workshop, which included hip hop sessions, African drumming and a variety of activities for youth.

A group of volunteers and professionals helped run the workshops. In June, almost 400 youth, their friends and families wrapped up the project by celebrating World Refugee Day at The Castle in Dandenong.

Ms Williams said she hoped the Young Social Pioneers program would help her expand the project next year. The program will provide Ms Williams with professional mentoring, training, networking and skill building activities.

"Next year, we are hoping to upscale the project to tackle issues across not only Dandenong and its surrounds, but across all of Australia," she said.

Hopefully, we can set up a camp and finish it off with a performance at Myer Music Bowl."