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Experience of cultural diversity inspires student's learning

A Year 12 student who recently migrated from Iraq to Australia has used her SACE Research Project as an opportunity to examine the differences between the two countries' treatment of women.

Despite receiving no formal education in Iraq and speaking no English when she arrived in Adelaide in 2009, Halah Alghizzi is hoping to complete her SACE this year.

As a student at Parafield Gardens High School, Halah is one of many students whose personal experiences are providing the inspiration for their individual Research Projects.

Halah's research involved conducting surveys and interviewing different groups of people, including her family and other migrants, about their views and experiences on how the law treats women differently in Australia compared to Iraq.

"In Iraq during the early 2000s I could not go to school because of the security risks faced by young women who travelled on their own without a male companion. During this period of conflict, safety was a big concern and my father had already migrated to Australia," Halah said.

"Being able to do the Research Project has taught me a lot about laws in each country, and this subject has also improved my communication with different people.

"It's given me a better insight into my own family life - I interviewed my own mother and she told me things about her own life that I was not aware of before.

"I can now reflect on what I have learnt and this has helped me understand more about the culture of the country I am from and the differences there are between there and Australia.

"When I leave school I hope to study law and become a lawyer. I would like to study law in the area of women's rights and also work to help other migrants."

SACE Board Chief Executive, Dr Paul Kilvert, said: "We know that students' passions, interests and personal experiences can lead to some of the best learning outcomes.

"Research Projects like Halah's can really help to strengthen key life skills, such as citizenship and communication."

Halah's teacher, Ingrid Lees, describes Halah as a determined student who strives to do her best across all her studies.

"Halah works hard to improve her communication skills, and this subject has given her the opportunity and confidence to speak with people in the wider community," said Ms Lees.

“It has also helped her look at her career choices, exploring the areas she is interested in and to think about what she will do when she leaves school.

“The theme of Halah’s Research Project may be unique, but the skills she is gaining are universal and these will help her in life and learning beyond school.”

The World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development is on May 21.