



The Hills Holroyd Parramatta MIGRANT RESOURCE CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT 2009



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Chairperson's Report



*Nola Randall-Mohk,
Chairperson*

I would like to welcome you all to the 13th Annual General Meeting of The Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre.

The MRC plays a unique and important role; it provides settlement information, research and supports the needs of its clients and stakeholders. It brings multicultural communities together, and strives to act as a connector and link to all that work towards building communities.

You will see in our reports on the activities this year, we have provided settlement assistance and capacity building in the most innovative and creative manner. I am proud of what we have accomplished.

This year has been a particularly challenging year with new staff, an organisational restructure and settlement planning. None of this would be possible without our dedicated staff and strong Board of Management.

As the chairperson, I am very pleased with the direction we have taken in the last year. The organisation moved to these new premises in December last year. Feedback indicates it is more accessible and spacious, meeting our growing needs. Our name change recently was in keeping with the change of The Hills Shire Council.

I want to sincerely thank all the Board members, staff. I thank those that continue to work for the organisation, without their effort, commitment and expertise, the MRC's valuable work would not be possible.

I also want to thank my Board colleagues who bring a broad range of skills, experience and insight to our work. Governance is taken very seriously at this MRC, and I want to acknowledge the numerous volunteer hours they have contributed to the organisation.

I am sure my colleagues on the Board will agree with me when I say what a smooth and rewarding experience it has been for us as Management. A special mention to the executive committee that has met each month and provided additional support to the Manager.

This was my second year as Chairperson and I must acknowledge the successes the MRC has had. We have grown more stable, strong and have addressed the settlement needs of both our long term community settlement needs and many new emerging communities who have similar needs but with different cultural understandings which we must take into account.

We have worked hard to ensure that all funding requirements have been met and reporting has been accurate.

I thank DIAC for their support and in particular our Consultants George Chami, and his replacement Maya Salgado. Thanks to Bernice Redman CPO DOCS and Fatma Mohammed for the funding they have provided us and also the support they have extended to our staff. I thank Peter Prants, Director Partnerships and Planning and Barbie Bates, the CPO.

I take this opportunity to congratulate our staff and coordinators for all their successes.

On behalf of the Board of Management, I thank our local councils, State and Federal members, community partners, funding bodies and community leaders for the role they have played and look forward to your continued cooperation and support in the coming year.

Thank you!

Nola Randall-Mohk
Chairperson



Laurie Ferguson MP with Nola Randall-Mohk, the Chair at the opening of new premises



Jennifer Mason, Director General DoCS and Nola Randall-Mohk, Chairperson at the launch of the Kaleidoscope Conference Report

Manager's Report

THE YEAR IN REVIEW – HIGHLIGHTS

It is with great pleasure and delight that I present the Centre's Report for 2008-2009.

We continue to play a key leadership role on a number of fronts. We have consolidated partnerships and relationships with key agencies.

We are entering a new phase where managing growth has been identified at the regional level as a key challenge, great emphasis was placed at the grass root level and much has been accomplished. The magnetism of our catchment sits side by side with the growing popularity of the West.

Western Sydney Kaleidoscope Conference and Attachment Trust distress and Help seeking in Refugee and Humanitarian Entrants reports were launched during this year.

Service Delivery: Face-to-face information, group work, referral services, planning and delivery of services, advocacy and community development projects to various communities. The Job Club/Open Access program has seen a record number of clients in the last year. The Centre operates an employment assistance program, 1000 employment enquiries were made, over 800 clients accessed the Open Access program, utilising resources such as computers, fax, photocopying machine, telephones, internet and newspapers. Regular English (beginners and intermediate levels) and sewing classes were held supported by TAFE (Granville) Outreach.

12,442 high quality telephone advice, casework assistance and referrals were made on a range of settlement issues. An average of 17,772 clients accessed the Centre this year.

DIAC funded SGP: The SGP projects have developed close links with local government, service providers and have gained the confidence and trust of the communities we work for.

Through the settlement workers, the Centre has continued the delivery of case management services for the Burmese, Karen, Afghan, Indian Sub-continent, Iraqi and African communities. Staff has been strategically located to meet the needs of the community.

Mapping and community profiles based on demographics of these communities have been completed.

Over 160 leaders attended specialised training events on leadership. Over 90 people attended the **Communities, Cultures Practices Forum** – a forum to discuss cultural practices that distinguish Egyptian, Sudanese and Arabic communities.

Harmony Day- Links with the Aboriginal community a partnership with Parramatta City Council.

Civics Education training program, Refugee Engagement and Settlement Training Forum – Pathways to Better Service provision for refugee young people.

Think Smart Seminar - Office of Fair Trading, **Settlement Seminar for the Indian Sub-continent.**

Two support groups for the Indian Sub-continent were established in Wentworthville and at the Hills Outreach Centre. Cross cultural awareness, budgeting and financial management, personal and home safety, fire safety sessions were held with over 80 people participating,

First Aid courses and parenting classes have been held for Iraqi clients and financial management and a series of health related sessions were held for refugee and humanitarian women.

Over 35 consultations to identify community needs and issues were conducted, community development support was provided to over 15 African community associations and groups. Successfully conducted "Employment Pathways Project". 27 consultations and 24 information sessions were held and addressed a range of issues, namely housing, employment, family harmony, and general information on the MRC and community services. Two support groups were established in Merrylands and Wentworthville. A successful 3 day cultural exchange excursion to Ulladulla was run with 20 women from different African & other CALD backgrounds.

8 ongoing support groups were run with young people throughout the year, including: Girls Group, School Survival Skills Program

The MaAP Project Basketball Life Skills Program at GYCRC, Basketball Life Skills Program at St. Paul's Catholic School, Granville Youth Centre Drop-in Drumbeat, Future Stars of Tomorrow Soccer Program.

Key partnerships were also established with local youth centres, youth services, schools, the police, Housing NSW, the Attorney General's Department to address settlement issues affecting African young people and to come up with strategies for better service provision.

UWS –Employment Partnership SIFE Project Assist: One Employment Mentoring Program -Following 65 days of service delivery at the MRC we were invited to present and compete at the SIFE National Conference – (Students in Free Enterprise). This Conference awarded the Best Practice Partnerships between universities /community/business.

Schools Access Program

Partnership with Parramatta High School and the Refugee Transition Unit. Three forums held with 150 Afghan students and parents. One major outcome- Launch of the Dari Language School Calendar

Pathways to Primary Industry Program

Partnership with Penrith Centrelink, Richmond TAFE and Campbelltown TAFE and local farming and nursery businesses 30 students from four communities registered for the farming/English/ computer pathways program.

Hills Outreach: The Middle Eastern Women's group has been meeting every week for the past 3 years in the Hills area. Approximately thirty women from various cultural backgrounds such as Arabic, Turkish, Iranian and Pakistan come together once a week.

The Hills Multicultural Volunteer Forum

(HMVF) continues to be a well organised and active group of volunteers in the Hills area. A Healthy Lifestyle Forum was held at Castle Grand with over 150 people participating. HMVF volunteers continue to visit frail aged and socially isolated migrants, shared information on falls prevention, referred people to appropriate services in the area and provided overall support to members of the growing multicultural community in the Hills area.

Citizenship grant funded by DIAC organised a series of events and activities to understand the Australian way of Life, Australian cultural norms and values.

DoCS African Sessional Workers Pilot

refunded by Community Services to promote culturally competent family intervention and to assist DoCS caseworkers to better equip them with language and cultural information when working with African families. Sixty three occasions of service provided to caseworkers. Community education programs have been conducted.

African Learning Circle: Recently the MRC has shared responsibility for convening the Circle with DoCS and other agencies. An active reference group continues to support the activities of the Circle. There has been an increased participation of members of African communities in the Learning Circle.

Strength to Strength: The project continues to be funded by FAHCSIA and is partnership between Relationships Australia as the lead agency and the MRC. The project has been restructured to better address issues and assist families. The project provided therapeutic intervention through integrated family relationships and support to families during their resettlement process. A total of 50 families from the Arabic Assyrian, Turkish, Kurdish, Afghan and Sudanese communities have been assisted.

A Darfur and Afghan women's and youth group work run regularly. Workshops on Parenting, DV and relationships were held in Auburn, Blacktown and Parramatta. The close relationship that has been developed with the Darfur Community has continued and regular support groups were conducted for the Sudanese and Darfur communities in Blacktown.

A number of programs have been organised for the Iraqi and Sudanese community, partnerships with the Josephite Community, Iraqi and Kurdish organisations.

Early Intervention and Perinatal Program

Sharing & Learning Playgroup A playgroup for CALD families is held at the Salvation Army Hall in Granville. All early intervention and perinatal workers have now been trained to deliver PPP programs and all parents in the playgroup participated in the Positive Parenting Program, attending seminars and group work programs.

Grandparents as Carers Group Information sessions were also held regarding the issue of the care of grandparents, as CALD grandparents sometimes have a different understanding of care from what was previously done in their families and within their different cultures. For many families the responsibility of caring for grandparents was left with family members until the person passed away, but roles have changed in Australia.

Premature Babies Support Group Information sessions were held for mothers about creative play and ideas were given to mothers about turning things around the house into creative play ideas. The program also covered the social and emotional behaviour of 2 year olds.

Parramatta West Public School This year the Parramatta West Playgroup celebrated its third anniversary.

Sudanese Playgroup The Sudanese Playgroup is run in partnership with St Anthony's Family Care and Josephite Community Aid.

Presentation by Zulekha Nazir and Norma Boules on Cultural Collaborations following the loss of a baby in Newcastle.

We welcome Affordable Housing and the African Women's Advocacy Unit providing services from the MRC. They join the Smith Family and Darfur Australia Network. We thank Australian Chinese Community Association, Chinese Migrant Welfare Association, Australian Korean Welfare Association, Rubicon Migration for their outreach services.

THE YEAR AHEAD

Congratulations Diing Bul on being selected as a part-time Commissioner for the Community Relations Commission.

I would like to end with a word of thanks to our Executive Committee, The Chairperson Nola Randall -Mohk for her commitment and passion to CALD communities, Treasurer Zaga Nagy, for her direction and expertise, Safar Sarmed, Terri Gardner and Andrew Ang for the endless hours spent at meetings. I thank every Board member for their support, leadership and helping us make a difference in our community.

I would like to thank every staff member for your support, cooperation and helping the Centre to function smoothly in this last year. I sincerely appreciate every contribution you have made and acknowledge your dedication and commitment to the Centre.

A special mention to our Team Coordinators- Aurelia Rahman, Zulekha Nazir, Solomon Freeman, supervisors- Maeve Brown and Priscella Engall for their dedication and leadership to the teams. Thank you is never enough to our Admin and Finance team- Coordinator Dijana Mackic, Ifrah Mohammed-Customer Service Officer and Wendy Mouawad, our Customer Service Assistant.

Linda Marsonet thank you for the wonderful work you do with the accounts. A special appreciation to Maya Salgado, George Chami -DIAC , Peter Prants, Michele Sasrey, Bernice Redman and Fatma Mohammed from Community Services, Kerry Mac Fadden, David Allan and Rahat Choudhury from Relationships Australia.

Our vision is as complex and interwoven as our region and it can be realised with good governance and wise investment - investment in people; in staff and in knowledge, enterprise and innovation.

Melissa Monteiro
Manager



Melissa Monteiro at Darfur community celebrations



Melissa Monteiro (centre) with Amrit Versha and Renu Narchal at the Kaleidoscope Launch



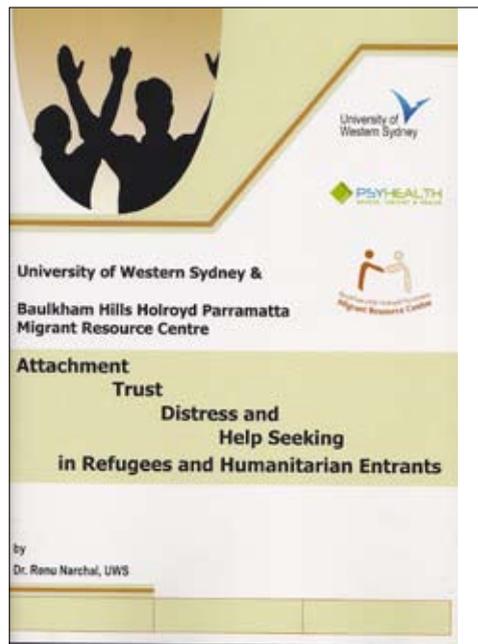
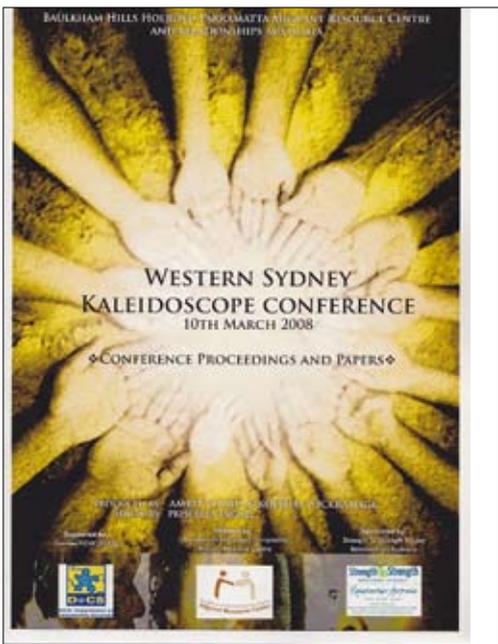
George Chami and Maya Salgado, Grants Managers

Jennifer Mason, DoCS Director General, Ross Beaton, Maryln Fischer, Bernice Redman, Peter Prants and Dijana Mackic - Kaleidoscope Launch





(left) The Hon. Tanya Gadiel MP presenting certificates to children participating in the school holiday program
(right) Dr Renu Narchal with Professor Nigel Bond at the launch of Attachment Trust Distress and Help Seeking in Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants Report Launch



(left) Kaleidoscope Conference Report
(right) Attachment Trust Distress and Help Seeking in Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants Report

Admin and Financial Report

This financial year has seen The Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre continue to consolidate and diversify financially. Through careful planning the organisation has financed the move to the new premises, the upgrading and networking of computers and the revamping of the website without significantly affecting equity.

We have also continued to financially sustain running our two outreach offices: Holroyd and The Hills.

With new projects on board the number of our staff has almost doubled in comparison with the previous year.

The MRC continues to be financially sound with consistent positive cash flow. It has adequate provisions for leave and cash reserves to meet liabilities, leaving a net worth of \$375,774.

The primary source of funding continues to be the Department of Immigration and Citizenship with ten Settlement Grants Projects. A one year funding was also received for the Citizenship Support Grants Program.

Further funding for four projects has been received from the Department of Community Services. The Early Intervention and Perinatal grant, as well as African Sessional Worker's Project have been continuing grants. We have also received new three-year funding for the Hills Inter-connect Project.

The other grants from The Hills Shire Council, Parramatta City Council, Cancer Council and The Foundation for Young Australians have allowed the MRC to run specialised programs.

Through strategic financial planning and continuous monitoring of expenditure we have ensured that The Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre not only meets the requirements of the funding bodies on current projects, but continues to attract funding that ensures it not only remains viable but continues to grow.

My sincere thanks goes to Zaga Nagy, Treasurer, Nola Randall-Mohk, the Chairperson and Melissa Monteiro, Manager for their ongoing support.

A big thank you to Linda Marsonet, our bookkeeper, who has been an invaluable asset to our organisation.

I sincerely appreciate all the assistance and support I have received from staff throughout the year especially Aurelia, Maeve, Priscella, Ifrah and Wadiha.

Dijana Mackic
Admin and Finance Coordinator

Board of Management

Executive Members:

Nola Randall-Mohk
Safar Sarmed
Zaga Nagy
Andrew Ang
Terrie Gardner

Chairperson
Deputy Chairperson
Treasurer
Secretary
Staff Liaison Officer

Albert Jubian
Banu Ranganadhan
Jason Guest
Mehdi Arbabzadeh
Dr Masudul Haque
Michael Maghiaru
Michael Perry
Neil El-Kadomi OAM
Dr Renu Narchal
Umaru Bineeh Conteh

Council of Australian Palestinian
Hills Community Aid
Hillsong Youth Services

Bangladesh Association of NSW
Australian Romanian Association

Parramatta Islamic Cultural Centre
UWS
El-Bethel Crusades

Kamalini Fernando (*until Oct 2008*)
Raffaella Cavadini (*until Dec 2008*)
Lisa Giacomelli (*until Oct 2008*)
Donna Mosford (*from Oct 2008*)

The Hills Shire Council, ex-officio
Holroyd City Council, ex-officio
Parramatta City Council, ex-officio



Nola Randall-Mohk - Chairperson, Jason Guest, Mehdi Arbabzadeh and Masudul Haque



(left) Zaga Nagy - Treasurer, Kamalini Ferando, Banu Ranganadhan and Andre Ang - Secretary (below) Neil El-Kadomi OAM and Zaga Nagy



Safar Sarmed - Deputy Chair, Terri Gardner - Staff Liasion Officer and Albert Jubian

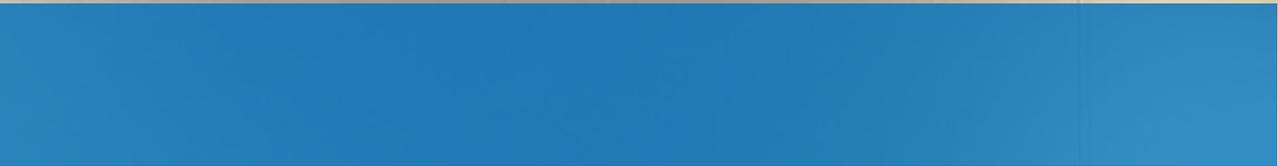




(left) Chair, Ms Nola Randall-Mohk at the Planning Day
(right) Staff and Board of Management at the Planning Day, June 09
(below) Donna Mosford, facilitating the Planning Day









Staff

Staff:

Melissa Monteiro
Dijana Mackic
Ifrah Mohamed
Ian Johns
Wadiha Mouawad
Linda Marsonet

Manager
Admin and Finance Coordinator
Customer Service Officer
Community and Liaison Officer (*until Dec 2008*)
Office Assistant
Bookkeeper

DIAC- SGP Team:

Aurelia Rahman
Priscella Engall
Maeve Brown
Thomas Ater
Elizabeth Philipsz
Saw Aung Htut
Getee Karim
Kassim Abood
Izeta Zecevic
Caroline Mueni Muisyo
Shantha Viswanathan

Community Capacity Building Coordinator
Community Settlement & Development Officer
Community Development Officer-African communities
African SGP Youth Worker
Burmese SGP Worker
Karen SGP Worker
Afghan SGP Worker
Iraqi SGP Worker
Humanitarian SGP Worker
African Caseworker
Indian Sub-Continent SGP Worker

DoCS Early Intervention Team:

Zulekha Nazir
Li Hua Chu
Biljana Kulic
Norma Boules

Early Intervention and Perinatal Coordinator
Early Intervention and Perinatal worker
Early Intervention and Perinatal worker
Family CALD worker

DoCS African Sessional Team:

Idil Abdullhi
Solomon Freeman

African Sessional Project Coordinator (*until April 2009*)
African Sessional Project Coordinator (*from April 2009*)

Casual Workers:

Amou Kot Job
Anjelina Adol Makeny
Anthony Bee-Conteh
Anthony Deng
Ayen Atem Achol
Ayonaddis Beyene
Achom Edward Dimo
Bezabih Berasa
Chibalonza Malula
Gloria Marcella- Johnson
Jean-Bosco Muhiziwintore
Kamal Hussein
Liliane Lukoki N'gengu
Monica Biel
Naimo Abdullahi
Theresa Moore
Yvette Niyonzima

African Sessional Worker
African Sessional Worker

DIAC- Citizenship Support Grant Project:

Linda Marsonet
 Julie Truong
 Micahel Hiriwo
 Kit Mei Tsui
 Jenny Gong

Citizenship Support Program Officer
 Citizenship Support Program Educator
 Bi-lingual Support Worker
 Bi-lingual Support Worker
 Bi-lingual Support Worker

DoCS Hills Inter-Connect Project:

Kamalini Fernando

Hills Inter-Connect Project Coordinator

Hills Outreach Office:

Anuradha Tierney
 Hazel Nazareth
 Lulitta Li
 Shirok Shaaban

Hills Information and Referral Worker
 Hills Information and Referral Worker
 Hills Multicultural Volunteer Forum Worker
 Hills Support Community Worker

DoCS- African Access and Resource Project:

Geoffrey Mangwi Mugi

Community Access and Resource Worker - Horn of Africa

Strength to Strength team:

Isho Georges
 Diing Bul
 Nasren Nasrat
 George Okwera
 Biljana Kulic
 Fayaz Wazin

Bi-lingual Family Support Worker
 Bi-lingual Family Support Worker
 Bi-lingual Family Support Worker
 Bi-lingual Family Support Worker
 Group Worker
 Group Worker

Community workers:

Jama Mohamed
 Ray Shashi Bhushan

Somali Worker
 Nepalese Worker (Feb- June 2009)



(left) Idil, Geoffrey and Priscella **(right)** Shantha and Li



(left) Caroline and Norma **(right)** Elizabeth and Izeta



(left) Wadiha and Ifrah **(right)** Getee, Maeve, Biljana and Jama



(left) Izeta, Maeve, Shantha and Getee
(right) Jennifer Mason, Director General DoCS, Community Services with MRC staff- Anu, Lulitta, Melissa, Aurelia and Kamalini



(left) Linda Bernie MP, Minister for Community Services meets with MRC and DoCS Senior staff
(right) MRC Staff at the Fire Drill
(below) Child Support Consultatons- MRC staff and community members



Funding Bodies, Networks and Partnerships

Funding Bodies

- Department of Immigration & Citizenship (DIAC)
- Department of Community Services (DoCS)
- FAHCSIA (RAPS)
- The Hills Shire Council
- Holroyd City Council
- Parramatta City Council

Partnerships & Networks

- Afghan Australia Youth Network of NSW
- Affordable Housing
- AFL
- African Learning Circle
- African Women's Group of NSW
- AMES Employment
- Anglicare
- Anuak Australian Community of NSW
- Association of Liberian Communities of NSW
- Auburn City Council
- Auburn Diversity Services Inc
- Australian College for Languages (ACL)
- Australian Chinese Community Association (ACCA)
- Australian Hindi Indian Association
- Australian Korean Welfare Association
- Australian National Council on Refugee Women - African Women's Advocacy Unit
- Australian Red Cross
- Australian Turkish Alevi Association
- Awiel Community Organisation
- Baptist Community Services
- Bor Community Organisation
- Burundi Women's Association
- The Cancer Council
- Centrelink
- Chinese Migrant Welfare Association
- Community Health Services (Hills, Merrylands, Parramatta)
- Community of Southern Sudanese & Other Marginalised Areas
- Congolese Community of Australia
- Congolese Community of NSW
- Darfur Australia Network
- Dinka Literacy Association
- Duk Community Association
- El Bethel Crusades
- Equatorial Community and Welfare Association
- Ethiopian Community Association of NSW
- Ethnic Communities Council (ECC)
- Federation of African Communities Council
- Friends of Sierra Leone
- Ghan Lighthouse Institute
- Glenhaven Community Centre
- Granville Multicultural Community Centre (GMCC)
- Granville TAFE Outreach
- Granville Youth and Recreational Centre
- GROW Employment Council
- Harris Park Community Centre
- Hewitt House Neighbourhood Centre
- Hills Multicultural Network
- Hills Community Aid and Information Service
- Hills Community Care
- Hills Community Health Centre
- Hills Youth Support Service



(left) IN MEMORIAM Pastor Weyata Badu, El- Bethel Crusades- 1958 -2009 (top) IN MEMORIAM Hassan Omar, Horn of Africa Relief and Development Agency (HARDA) 1958-2009

- Holroyd CALD Consultative Committee
- Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Services
- Holroyd Parramatta Multicultural Network
- Holroyd Parramatta Youth Network
- Holroyd Youth Services
- Horn of Africa Relief & Development Agency (HARDA)
- Housing NSW
- Igbo Association of NSW
- Immigrant Women's Speakout
- Information & Cultural Exchange (ICE)
- Institute of Family Practice
- Iranian Community Organisation
- Karabi Community & Development Services
- Lakemba Somali Cultural Centre
- Legal Aid NSW
- Lions Club of Parramatta
- Local Area Commands: Holroyd, Parramatta & Rose Hill
- Luo community Association
- Macquarie Legal Centre
- Madi Ethnic Community Welfare Association
- Maronite Catholic Society
- NSW Attorney General's Department
- NSW Police
- NSW Refugee Health
- Office of Fair Trading

- Refugee Council of Australia
- Relationships Australia
- Rouse Hill Families Connect
- SEVA Inc.
- Shell Australia
- The Smith Family
- Social Ventures Australia
- Somali Welfare Association
- St Michael's Family Centre
- STARTTS
- Sudanese Lost Boys Association of NSW
- Technocrats Association of Australia Inc
- Twic Mayardit Community Association of NSW
- Uniting Care Burnside
- University of NSW – Centre for Refugee Research
- University of Western Sydney (UWS)
- The Vedanta Centre
- Western Sydney Area Health Service
- Western Sydney Community Forum
- Westmead Hospital
- WESTIR Ltd
- Zimbabwe Association in Australia

Outreach Organisations

Outreach Organisations:

- Australian National Committee on Refugee Women - ANCORW
- Australia Alevi Cultural Centre
- Australian Chinese Community Association
- Australian Egyptian Council Forum
- Australian Korean Welfare Association
- Chinese Migrant Welfare Association
- Darfur Australia Network
- Maronite Catholic Society
- Smith Family



Australia Korean Welfare Association - Korean group



Panel Discussion at the Communities Cultures Practices Forum

Volunteers

Reception duties:

Padmaja Machiraju
Binh Ngu
Jagruti Chauhan
Parui Jethwa
Gurpreet Raimu
Utpal Shan
Jihye Park
Krishhn Tiwari
Mnameet Pannu
Megha Bhavsas
Jagjeet Kaur
Rex Taylor
Kinnari Prajapati
Jelykater Tunkara
Elizabeth Davis

Tax help:

Michael Perry

English classes:

Ted Wiswaasam
Judith Wonson
Eun Jung Kim

African Community Development SGP Project:

Mayor Anai
Naima Abdullah
Elizabeth Davis
Aidah Nukubulwa
Sandeep Gill
Shashi Bhushanray

African Generalist SGP project:

Cynthia Pereira

Community Capacity Building SGP project:

Srijana Bhandari
Jean Ko
Ankit Midha
Eunhee (Elle) Yoo
Camilla Appanah
Jyoti Jagota
Mandip Kaur

Indian Sub-continent SGP project:

Mitaben Patel
Fiona Wu
Richa Singh
Priyanka Singh

Iraqi SGP project:

Kusavianto Wardhana

Burmese/Karen SGP project:

Teachers - Karen School

Manju Karjee
Bob Fu

Afghan SGP project:

Student Placements

Rahima Ghafari *Granville TAFE*

Generalist SGP project:

Student Placements

Denis Koroma *Granville TAFE*
Alia Massudi

Mohamed Massouquo *University of Sydney*

Kaw Ku Law Lat *Liverpool TAFE*

Lauren Chapman *University of Western Sydney*
Khishna del la Pene
Majidah Abdul Wahab
Krish Kumar
Monte Dib



volunteers

Early Intervention Project:

Volunteers

Jane Everdell (sewing classes with Darfur group)
Josephine Debono (sewing classes with Darfur group)

Student Placements

Claudete Haspec
Jessica Taouk
Monavar Sisani
Octavia Olden
Ling Liu
Min Guo
Sonia Jamba



Melissa Monteiro, Manager with the longest serving MRC volunteer, Mr Ted Visswasam

Perinatal Project:

Mastura Marial
Susana Milla
Roya Marial

Hills Inter-connect Project:

Student placements

Sanvinder Bala
Francine Sultana
Volunteers
Ann Coupland
Bev McWilliams
Sophie Porter
Helen Smith
Joe Lagunzad



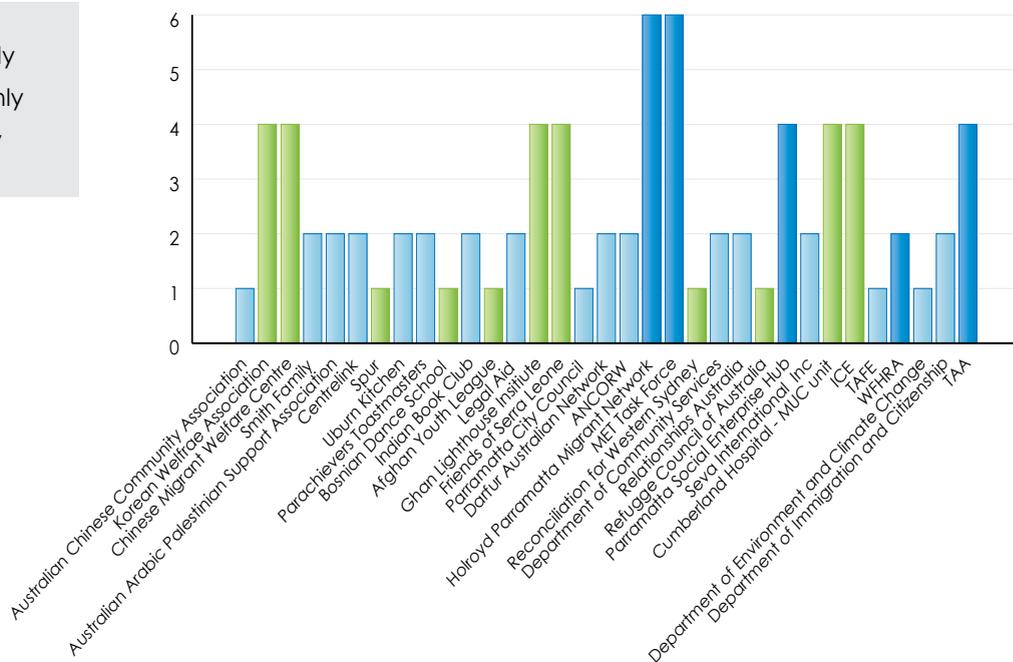
student's photo

Hills Multicultural Volunteer Forum:

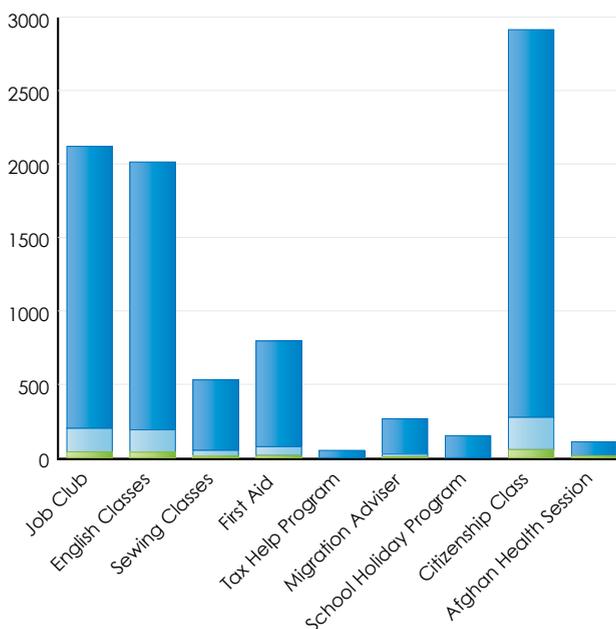
Della Lin
Kitty Chu
Gloria Zhou
Tsai Irene
Capt. Noshir Sachinwalla
Mary Pisani
Yooko Knox
Elizabeth Au
Jia Wan Smith
Joy Chao Huang

Statistics

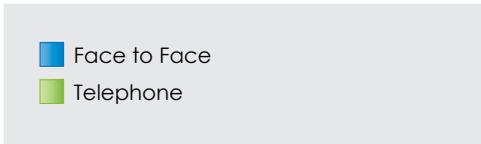
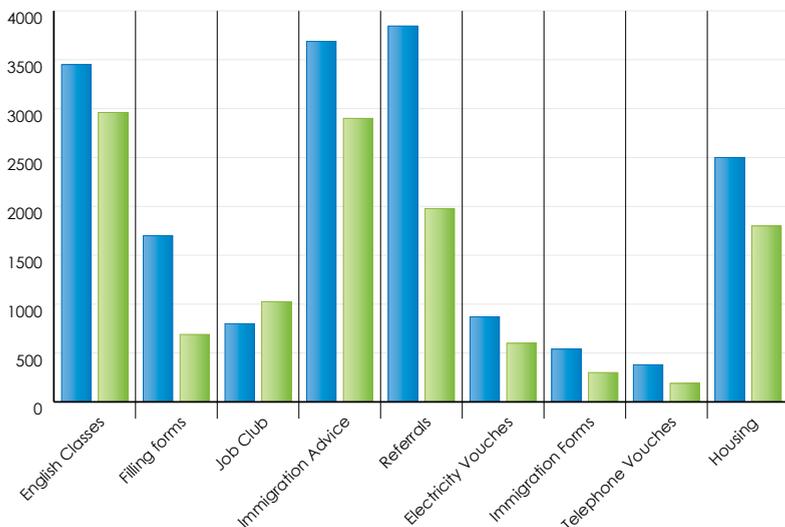
Community Organisations



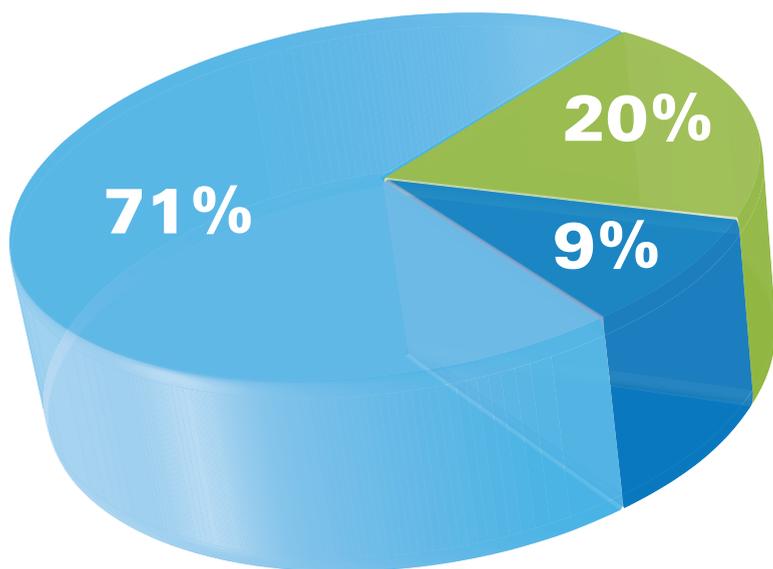
The Hills Holroyd Parramatta MRC Groups



Statistics 2009



Consolidated Statistics



Community Capacity Building

During the past year the Settlement Grants Program (SGP) Team and the Community Capacity Building Coordinator (Aurelia Rahman) have worked together on significant community projects, addressing issues of access and equity and integration of the newer communities in the wider fabric of the Australian community.

The SGP project endeavoured to create better awareness of issues affecting refugee and migrant communities and make relevant service providers aware of these issues and assist them work on strategies to address them.

The capacity building project also developed mechanisms to ensure the ongoing involvement of target communities in issues affecting them, assisted the community to conduct discussions and consultations on topics of relevance to them and to implement projects that assist in addressing their needs.

The MRC's community capacity building project works with mainstream community, government and private agencies to increase their knowledge and understanding of the experiences of people from a refugee and migrant background. We do this by educating and raising awareness about the diversity of the community and how to provide better access to services for people from CALD backgrounds.

The Capacity Building project of the MRC is based on community empowerment, leadership, participation, integration and employment advocacy.

The Community Capacity Building project also focuses on the development of coordinated service networks in MRC's catchment area for refugee and migrant settlement groups, and strategies for furthering their acceptance and participation in these communities. Key elements of the program include the project's convenorship and/or participation in key regional multicultural networks, settlement coordinating committees, and service planning committees including the provision of training and advice to regional service providers.

Leadership Empowerment

The project is designed to develop and improve the leadership skills of members of the target communities. The rationale of the program is that, as individuals from within the communities develop their leadership skills and expertise they will be able to mentor their community members and assist their community members and organisations to grow and increase their community participation in mainstream and cross cultural events.

The capacity building coordinator provides information, resources and skills workshops on topics such as planning and running meetings, planning and managing projects, conflict resolution and organisational development. Assistance to manage grants and budgets is also provided.

Some of the achievements this year are:

- **“How to Get that Grant”** training session in partnership with Anglicare to assist small community organisations with project planning in direct response to identified needs, formulating work plans and sourcing funding;
- **Understanding Budgeting and Financial Accountability** training session in partnership with Anglicare for small community organisations in order to increase their understanding of financial accountability and governance;
- **Leadership Skills training** a three day training course for community minded people to assist with developing their skills in the area of effective communication, conflict resolution, advocacy and networking.
- **Celebration of Harmony Day 3009 - Links with the Aboriginal community** a partnership with Parramatta City Council. The event focussed on Aboriginal and CALD cultural awareness at Parramatta Lake Reserve on the 20th of March.
- **Service providers consultation with the Human Rights Commission;**
- **Communities, Cultures, Practices** - a forum to discuss cultural practices that distinguish Egyptian, Sudanese and Arabic Communities.
- **Civics Education training program** - a program aiming at empowering members of marginalized, minority and hard to reach communities to actively engage in democratic processes. The program which was a partnership with Parramatta City Council and TAFE Outreach Granville provided participants with the opportunity to further develop their understanding and practice of responsible, engaged citizenship at the local level by exploring concepts such as equal rights, freedom of speech, and Australian systems of government.
- **Refugee Engagement and Settlement Training Forum - Pathways to Better Service provision for refugee young people** in partnership with Merrylands and Parramatta Community Health Service, GMCC, NSW Refugee Health Service, STARTTS. The forum provided an opportunity for service providers to better understand the issues that force newer refugee communities from Africa, the Middle East and South Asia to flee their countries of origin and the process that leads to resettlement in Australia. The event also focused on training service providers to better understand the settlement issues faced by refugees, in particular refugee youth, once they arrive in Australia.
- **Think Smart Partners Seminar** - a partnership between the MRC and the Office of Fair Trading. The seminar was designed to enhance the skills and knowledge of service providers, community educators and workers on consumer rights.
- **Cultural awareness** for staff of Interrelate and the Institute of Family Practice
- **Leadership and Volunteer Training Program.** The objectives of the training were to equip the participants with knowledge and understanding of what it means to be a volunteer, settlement services, needs and issues of communities, how to work with individuals and how to make effective referrals.

- Assisted the **Women for Human Rights - Single Women's Group - International Chapter** organisation with their launch of website and logo.
- **Working with CALD Communities Forum** for Hills service providers to assist them in working more effectively with clients from diverse backgrounds.
- **Emergency Services Expo and Fun Day for Kids** at Parramatta Park to assist communities understand the role of emergency services and provide an interactive platform for communities and services to interface.
- **Settlement Seminar for the Indian Sub-continent** with focus on employment in the IT industry in partnership with Technocrats Association and United Indian Association.
- Continued to convene the **Holroyd Parramatta Multicultural Network** – a network of service providers in the area with a view to exchange information and work on joint projects and collaborative partnerships.
- During the year, the **MRC's Hills Outreach** held a number of activities comprising: provision of settlement information and referral to relevant services, English classes, computer classes, various educational and recreational activities.
- Assisting and resourcing the **Hills Multicultural Volunteer Forum** which goes from strength to strength as this year saw the volunteers getting involved with a new project: Eat Smart: Go for 2 and 5 and Healthy Living for the Hills Multicultural Communities.

Last but by no means least, there has been the ongoing work on securing funding for community development projects and activities.

Funding applications have been successful with DIAC for SGP funding, Parramatta and Holroyd Councils, Community Development Expenditure Scheme (Clubs money), Western Sydney Area Assistance Scheme for a new project targeting the Hills area which will assist with linkages between more established communities and newer ones settling in the Shire.

The achievements highlighted in this report were made possible by the commitment and hard work of the staff involved. A heartfelt thank you to all the SGP team members for their contributions that sometimes went well beyond the call of duty.

The achievements mentioned above and many more would not have been possible without the guidance, ongoing support and direction from the Centre Manager, Melissa Monteiro and the dedicated Board of Management. I would to thank you Melissa once again for the constant encouragement, support and inspiration that you have provided throughout the year. You have proved again and again that "together we can do it"!

The support of the Admin and Finance hub, and the Customer Service Officer, ensured the smooth running of various aspects of the projects and I would like to sincerely thank Dijana Mackic and Ifrah Mohamed for their dedicated support and assistance during the year.

During the year we have also farewelled George Chami, DIAC consultant and welcomed Maya Salgado, our new grants manager. I would like to express my sincere thanks to George for his wisdom, guidance and support of the SGP projects. We are forging a new and strong relationship with Maya and are looking forward to continue working with her in the years to come.

To conclude, I would like to extend our thanks and gratitude to a multitude of services and agencies without whom we would not have been able to deliver such great outcomes. We greatly value the partnerships developed and consolidated during the past year. Our thanks go to the local councils, government agencies, various community and ethno-specific organisations, RSL and Leagues clubs, Office of Fair Trading, local police, Centrelink, DoCS, DIAC and many more with whom partnership projects were conceived and implemented. We are all looking forward to new challenges and achievements in the year to come.

Aurelia Rahman
Community Capacity Building Coordinator

(left) Office of Fair Trading Seminar - Deputy Commissioner, Andrew Gavrielatos at the launch of bilingual resources (right) OFT Seminar Panel of Speakers



(left) Office of Fair Trading Seminar (right) Settlement Seminar - 2



Settlement Seminar - 1





*Leadership
Training Nov
2008*



*Civics Education
Program Jun 09*



*Harmony Day
2009*



(left) Congolese Event Flyer Feb 2009
(right) Think Smart Partners Seminar - OFT

Think Smart know your FREE Consumer Rights Seminar
For Think Smart partners, service providers, community educators and workers.

Conducted in collaboration with the BHP Migrant Resource Centre.

The seminar is designed to enhance the skills and knowledge of Fair Trading's Think Smart partners, service providers, community educators and workers on consumer rights. It will provide participants with the opportunity to:

- consider a wide range of approaches in providing help with consumers/clients on relevant consumer issues that are currently affecting the settlement needs of newly-arrived migrants and emerging communities, and
- identify practical and effective solutions of these issues through discussions with speakers and case studies from experts.

When: **Thursday, 20 August 2009**
9.00am for 9.30am – 12.30pm
Where: **Baulkham Hills Holroyd Parramatta (BHP) Migrant Resource Centre**
1 Horwood Place, Parramatta NSW

Bookings essential - see inside for details

think smart on consumer rights

COMMUNITIES CULTURES PRACTICES

A forum to discuss cultural practices that distinguish Egyptian, Sudanese, and Arabic speaking communities

Date: Thursday, 21st May 2009
Time: 9.30 – 10.00am (start) – 12.30 pm
Venue: Conference Room
BHP MRC
Level 4, 1 Horwood Place
Parramatta

Light refreshments will be served

RSVP: Ibrahim Rezkalla 0402 509 640
Aurelia Rahman 9687 9901

Egyptian Forum 2009

Humanitarian

Over the past year the Humanitarian SGP worker has actively assisted women from refugee backgrounds with settlement information and referrals to relevant service providers to enable them to understand the system and integrate more easily into their new life in their new home country Australia.

The Humanitarian Project also included assistance with community capacity building initiatives and service planning and development for women from small and emerging communities in Western Sydney LGAs. The project supported and helped the target group (refugee and women on humanitarian visas) to obtain a greater knowledge and understanding of mainstream services and increase their access to government and non-government services. A vital component of this project is enhancing community participation in the wider community through various activities. This participation helps the target group to contribute to positive settlement outcomes especially in the area of leadership by increasing their ability to develop activities for their communities. An important aspect of the project is represented by the community development activities and the engagement of women in leadership positions within the family and community. The project has been successful in that it continuously builds the capacity of women to achieve their potential and to better their position within their family, community and wider Australian society.

The clients accessing the project are refugee women from various cultural backgrounds. The women bring cultural treasures to our society by sharing and learning different cultural skills through their participation in support groups, at information session, outings, and educational courses. Through various programs implemented by the project, refugee women are given support, encouragement and confidence to improve their status and follow

educational pathways. Feedback received from women (both formally and informally) indicated that the women are better equipped with knowledge and skills to forge a better and self-reliant life for themselves and their families.

During the past year, the Humanitarian Project worker delivered services at two locations: MRC's main office in Parramatta and the Wentworthville outreach office in Holroyd. The project has been working in collaborative partnerships with relevant agencies and mainstream services to address women's needs, such as education, employment, housing, welfare, health, and legal issues.

The global financial crisis has had an impact on our client group, especially new arrivals, in the areas of renting and employment. Accommodation and tenancy issues are the top issues that our clients have been confronted with. There has also been an increased need for welfare support, especially with food and electricity vouchers. Some clients felt uncomfortable to ask for welfare support and that has deepened their financial crisis.

During the past year, regular women's group activities were held in Auburn and Wentworthville with an aim to gain better skills and enhance knowledge about financial management, employment, education and information about setting up small business enterprises. A positive outcome of these activities was that some of the women have gained confidence to pursue further studies at TAFE and community colleges.

In partnership with Granville TAFE, a fashion/sewing course was run for beginners and advanced level. This course was appreciated by all the participating women as it assisted them to develop new skills which can be used for generating an income.

A variety of workshops were organised and held during the past year and topics including: financial and budgeting skills, communication skills, educational pathways, employment, family relationships, health, social and recreational activities.

The Humanitarian Project was also involved in supporting welfare students from Granville and Ultimo TAFE. Three presentations were made to students and teaching staff at Meadowbank TAFE to promote the Humanitarian Project and the Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre services. Both students and teachers became more familiar with the services provided by the MRC and learnt about settlement services in general.

The project's aim is to continue to support the settlement of refugee women with accurate and timely information and appropriate referrals to service providers. The project will continue to build partnerships with relevant agencies in order to assist the target group to understand the Australian systems and way of life.

The Humanitarian project received very positive feedback from both clients and mainstream services. The Humanitarian worker would also like to thank all co-workers, the SGP Coordinator, Manager, and Board of Management members, who all contributed to the success of this project.

Izeta Zecevic
Humanitarian SGP report



Women's Sewing Class



(left) Women's Group Consultation (right) Financial Info Session



(left) Women's Group Consultation (right) Financial Info Session

Iraqi

In July 2008 the MRC was awarded by DIAC a new SGP project to address the needs of the Arabic Speaking community, with focus on Iraqi new arrivals, in the catchment area.

The project's main goal is to assist the target group identify and address issues and needs that they encounter in the process of settlement and to work together with members of the community to build their capacity to become self-reliant and fully participating members of the wider Australian society. The project acts as a bridge between mainstream services and and newly arrivals from the target community and facilitates the dialogue between the two parties in order to assist with successful settlement and integration of Iraqi refugees within the Australian society.

During the past year, the Iraqi SGP worker has provided information sessions to small groups of Iraqi clients on understanding the Australian way of life, orientation to public transport system in Parramatta and other suburbs and understanding the mutual obligation and welfare system. The worker has actively assisted individuals in getting the skills needed to negotiate public transport, understand proposer's obligations and tenancy rights and responsibilities. The worker has assisted eligible clients in negotiating better outcomes for their presenting needs and issues by actively advocating on their behalf to agencies such as Centrelink, Department of Housing, Tenancy Advice and Rights Centre, etc.

The SGP worker has actively assisted Iraqi and Arabic speaking clients in understanding the Australian legal framework and norms as part of the mentoring program that the worker undertakes with each client. The result is that clients, many of whom are new arrivals, understand the rule of law that permeates every aspect of life in Australia. One important aspect of the law in Australia is child protection laws. During casework and groups sessions, the SGP worker imparts information about the importance of understanding the legal norms and rules that apply in Australia and assists clients with strategies to improve communication with their children. The worker also distributes information and materials in Arabic about services available to clients.

In order to get feedback from the community on issues of concern and interest, the Iraqi SGP worker has organised a community consultation with members and community leaders. The consultation was well attended (16 community leaders and active members of the community) and members of the community expressed their views about settlement issues affecting Iraqi refugees. The main issues discussed were immigration, employment and the participation of members of Iraqi Community in the Australian economy and all other aspects of the society. Other issues identified by the Iraqi community consultation included the need for workshops about better parenting techniques and strategies particularly for new arrived families, understanding the Australian system and effective management of community organisations.

During the past year, a First Aid Course has been organised for Iraqi and Arabic women by the Iraqi SGP worker in partnership with Hewitt House Neighbourhood Centre and the Australian Lebanese Welfare Group. The course was run over 6 weeks and was held in Merrylands and attracted a good participation of between 12 to 14 women in each session.

Following on from the success of the initial First Aid Course, the SGP worker together with above mentioned partners, applied for and received funding from Holroyd City Council to run a structured first aid course for the same target group. The project has purchased first aid kits for all participants and is in the process of delivering the second instalment of the course.

In order to promote social integration with the broader community, the SGP worker actively encouraged the target communities to participate in events that bring them closer to the mainstream society, thus facilitating integration. Some of the events participated in included: Harmony Day events, Cancer Council Morning Tea to assist with fundraising for research into possible cures for cancer, Parramatta Centrelink Open Day, etc. The SGP worker has forged good working relationships with service providers in the area and assists them in attracting target group participation.

Kassim Abood
Iraqi SGP worker

Iraqi women's group



Iraqi First Aid classes



Indian Sub-Continent

The Settlement Grants Program for new migrants and refugees from the Indian sub-continent (South Asian region) was initiated in July 2008 to address the unique needs of this community through a well orchestrated and coordinated approach. This program aims at breaking down the key settlement barriers encountered by the South Asian community in the areas of employment, education, English language competency, financial hardship, housing and social isolation. As the South Asian community is characterised by their "unity in diversity", the program is aimed at identifying and addressing individual issues as well as those that affect the entire community.

Orientation to Australia Services

- **At the very beginning..... The Festival of Lights**

My commencement at MRC coincided with Deepavali, a festival of lights celebrated by a majority of South Asians. This was a perfect occasion for me to informally introduce myself, my role and the Settlement Grants Program to the community. The colourful and vibrant festival was celebrated with traditional food, music and dance at play groups at Granville, Karabi (Wentworthville) and at the South Asian group at Castle Hill.

- **Settlement information seminar** with new and emerging communities from the Indian sub-continent was held in partnership with two community organisations: the Technocrats Association of Australia (TAA) and United Indian Association (UIA). Although the main focus was employment, other related topics covered were welfare obligations (Centrelink), changing gender roles and safety in the home and workplace.
- **Resume Writing Workshop** including a presentation conducted by the Australian Institute of Financial Services and Accounting to promote Free Skills Training as part of a Productivity Training Project. New migrants were referred to Assist:One, the Employment Mentoring program provided by the MRC and UWS, Parramatta Community College and volunteer mentors in specialized fields in the community.

- **Managing your Money...** Comprehensive information sessions were presented by Centrelink at Castle Hill and Parramatta that focussed on financial services offered by them, including budgeting, saving and superannuation.
- **Better Safe than Sorry...** Personal and Home Safety information sessions were conducted by the NSW Police in Parramatta, the Hills Shire and Wentworthville. These sessions provided participants with information on how to keep themselves and their homes safe, and stressed the importance of reporting crimes however insignificant they may be.
- **Fire Safety...** In view of the high incidence of domestic fires, the NSW Fire Brigade presented informative sessions at various locations detailing fire safety precautions and measures and legal requirements of installing smoke alarms in the home. The NSW Fire Brigade installed the alarms at no cost to the participating new migrants.
- **Health in the Hills...** This session facilitated by Community Health Workers from the NSW Health Sydney West Area Health Services focussed on various health services available to the communities living in the Hills Shire, the importance of healthy diets and exercise and basic information on falls prevention. All participants registered enthusiastically for the Health Challenge which was clear evidence of a successful outcome for the session.

Following on from Health in the Hills Project, weekly Yoga classes commenced at the Castle Glen Community Centre in May. The enthusiastic teacher having personally experienced the benefits of yoga, volunteered his time to conduct yoga lessons for the group to enhance their physical, mental and social health. The group's attendance has been at its peak since the introduction of these classes.

- **Emotional Health & Well being Workshop** - MRC in partnership with Transcultural Mental Health Centre (TMHC) successfully hosted an informative, interactive information session relating to the Emotional Health and well being of children and adolescents families, so as to facilitate a better understanding of emotional health issues in children, adolescents and young people.



Indian Sub-Continent Settlement Forum



The Emotional Health & Well being Workshop

- **Living in Harmony** - Members from the Indian Subcontinent who attended the Living in Harmony film screened in November 2008 gained a better understanding of Australian history, values and culture. The film illustrated the migration history of Australia focussing on early waves of migrants. The first hand experiences of earlier migration helped raise awareness of the issues experienced by earlier waves of migrants and highlighted the importance of living in harmony.

As part of the Harmony project, the Hills South Asian Group along with the Chinese and Middle Eastern groups, went on an excursion to Fagan Park in May 2009. Despite the inclement weather, the group had a very enjoyable time combining fun, food and fitness. Tai Chi and Bollywood Fitness were in harmony too!

- **Bridging the Cultures** - An interactive Cross Cultural Training workshop held in June 2009 covered various aspects relating to local customs, behaviour and expectations. Besides providing participants with the opportunity to discuss their experiences as new migrants, it also enabled them gain an insight into the Australian way of life.

- **Multicultural Women's Support Group** - One of the highlights of the year was the partnership with the Strength to Strength Project in the establishment of this group which meets every Monday morning at Wentworthville Youth Centre. The project is aimed at empowering women by providing them with resources to make them self sufficient and independent, besides eliminating issues associated with social isolation. This is being achieved by engaging talented members of the group to share their knowledge with others thereby building up their English language skills, self esteem and confidence. The knitting, cake decorating and fruit and vegetable carving classes have been very popular with the group.

Community Development

- **Community Profile** - The MRC closely collaborated and project managed with SEVA (a not-for-profit organisation for South Asians) and a social researcher, Amrit Versha - utilising students from TAFE - to conduct a detailed demographic survey of the Indian sub-continent community in the catchment areas of the MRC, to compile comprehensive statistics relating to the community. This will form a solid foundation and a validated reference document for building need based services for all service providers and organisations focussing on the Indian sub-continent communities.

As a follow up activity, an Indian sub continent Focus Group Meeting was held in April 2009 with key community leaders from the Indian, Sri Lankan (Sinhalese), Bangladeshi and Bhutanese communities. The meeting was very constructive and the representatives were able to individually raise the concerns of recently arrived migrants from their communities. Primary focus during the year has been on employment and social isolation as these were identified as the main barriers to the settlement process.

A separate demographic survey of the Nepalese and Bhutanese communities has been developed to assist in the building of need based services for these communities.

- **Hills Cultural Festival** - Participated in the organisation of this event in Rouse Hill to celebrate the cultural diversity of the Hills Shire.

Integration

- Biggest Multicultural Morning Tea** was organised by the MRC in April to raise awareness about cancer. A significant number of attendees were South Asian migrants. The informative presentation also encouraged the community to support fund raising activities organised by charitable organisations. Being a multicultural morning tea, there was a variety of international food items and it was encouraging to see everyone willing to try something new and in the course of the morning make new friends.
- Bicycle Building Project...**The MRC partnered with Woolworths on this project with participants being a selected number of young boys from disadvantaged families who had never owned a bicycle. The awarding of a bicycle to a young Sri Lankan boy at the conclusion of this project was a very gratifying experience for all concerned.

Overall since inception, the SGP program has been most fulfilling and rewarding from both a personal perspective and the community perspective as evidenced by the positive feedback from the recipients and community representatives. This would not have been possible without the assistance, participation and support from the various service providers, community leaders and representatives, our clients, MRC staff and management, and our valued volunteers. I would like to extend my profound gratitude to my encouraging and supportive managers and my co-workers who have made me feel welcome and helped me establish this new and exciting program. Let us all work together to build a better future for our communities by connecting, communicating and collaborating!

Shantha Viswanathan
 Indian Sub-continent SGP worker



Information Day at Karrabi in Wentworthville



Multicultural Womens Support Group at Wentworthville



Wentworthville Indian support group



Wentworthville Knitting classes at Womens Support Group



Excursion to Fagan Park Harmony Day

FREE interactive information session for Indian / Hindi speaking communities



The Transcultural Mental Health Centre (TMHC) in partnership with the Baulkham Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre (BHHP MRC) is hosting a free interactive information session in Parramatta for Indian / Hindi speaking communities.

The free information session is organised by the culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Carer Support Program, TMHC. The session will discuss how to cope and deal with children and adolescents experiencing:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Disruptive or challenging behaviour
- Grief and loss

The information session will be run by a clinician from the Indian community, who has expertise in working with children. The session is designed to help Indian families better understand and recognise emotional health issues in children, adolescents and young people.

The day is intended to support families by providing information about services available and providing tools on how to deal with challenging behaviour.

Participants who attend the sessions will receive TMHC's free translated resources in English and Hindi to help further explain the topics discussed and to share with friends and family.

TMHC is a state-wide organisation that works in partnership with mental health services, consumers, carers and the community to improve the mental health and wellbeing of people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities living in NSW. BHHP MRC provides various settlement services to newly arrived migrants and refugees living in the local government areas of Baulkham Hills, Holroyd and Parramatta.



Event details

Date: Wednesday, 19 August 2009
Time: 10:00am to 12 noon. Light refreshments will be provided.
Venue: Baulkham Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre (BHHP MRC)
Address: Level 4, 1 Horwood Place, Parramatta 2150
RSVP: Registration essential. Register by 14 August 2009 to:
 • Chandrani at TMHC on ph: 9840 3800 or
 • Shantha at BHHP MRC on ph: 9687 9901
Parking: Paid and street parking available. The venue is approx. 10 minutes walk from Parramatta Station.

Indian communities flyer

Mind your Money flyer

African Community Development Project

African Community Development SGP Project

The African Community Development Project started in July 2008 with the aim to provide community development support and integration services to newly arrived African communities in the Holroyd and Parramatta LGA's. Maeve Brown, the African Community Development Officer, has worked with African communities and the MRC African Team to identify community needs & issues, develop support groups, mentoring programs, community education projects and advocacy strategies, apply for funding, and encourage participation in programs that help community groups to better understand, participate and integrate into the broader Australian community. The African Community Development Officer has also provided supervision and support to the African Team throughout the year which has resulted in a collaborative approach for service provision to African clients accessing the MRC.

Consultations & Info Sessions

During the 2008-2009 funded period roughly 35 consultations were held with members of different African communities through African community associations, support groups, information sessions, formal consultations held with HARDA/UNSW and the Australian Human Rights Commission, community information stalls at events, and individual meetings.

Some of the issues raised included: the lack of affordable and appropriate housing, barriers to employment, employment pathways through small business, gaps in education, difficulty accessing education and English classes, the need for intensive homework support, information on MRC and other community services, belonging/social inclusion, ongoing health & mental health support, understanding Australian culture and systems, parenting, intergenerational conflict, family breakdowns, promoting a positive image of African communities, support with community development and applying for funding, racism and cross-cultural understanding, safety and violence prevention, addressing behaviour that puts young people at risk, budgeting and financial assistance, lack of knowledge of available health and disability services, rights and responsibilities and supporting/sponsoring family members.

Based on the needs expressed during the consultations a number of information sessions were held and projects established through the MRC African Team. Some of the sessions and projects that were run included: budgeting and financial support services, how to propose relatives from overseas, general information on MRC and community services, information for service providers on working with refugees & humanitarian entrants from Africa, tenancy rights, support available for parents, family harmony and the role of DoCS, resume writing and job seeking.

Community Development Support & Funding

One of the main roles of the African Community Development Project is to provide community development support to African community associations and groups. This includes helping to identify needs and issues, coming up with strategies, pathways & programs, organising events and cross-cultural awareness activities, finding office/outreach space for groups, and helping groups apply for funding and other support.

Some of the groups assisted throughout the year include the Horn of Africa Relief & Development Agency, the Twic Mayardit Community Association, the Twic Mayardit Youth Association, the Congolese Community Association of NSW, the Ethiopian Community Association of NSW, the Burundian Women's Association, the African Women's Group of NSW, the Congolese Community Association, the Madi Ethnic Community Welfare Association, the Zimbabwean Community Association and the Association of Liberian Communities in NSW.

The African Community Development Officer has been successful in applying for grants for: the Twic Mayardit Youth Association (Parramatta Council), the Ethiopian Community Association of NSW (Parramatta Council Small Grants), Refugee Week (DIAC), the School Survival Skills Program (Holroyd Council CDSE) and the African/Police Youth Camp (Shell Community Grants).

*Australian
Human Rights
Commission
Consultation
with African
Communities*



Mentoring Volunteers & Students

In addition to supporting community groups and associations, the African Community Development Officer has also provided mentoring support to a number of community volunteers and student placements from Granville and Ultimo TAFE. The students have come to Australia from many different countries including Ethiopia, Uganda, Somalia, Sudan, Nepal & India and have all been passionate about community services work and supporting newly arrived migrants and refugees. Their commitment, interest, hard work and their own knowledge and experience has been extremely valuable.

Advocacy & Cross-Cultural Education

Another key role for the African Community Development Officer has been helping to advocate for clients, assisting community groups to build their capacity to advocate for their members and providing training for service providers on working with people who have come Australia as refugee and humanitarian entrants from African countries. Throughout the year the cross-cultural access and equity strategy has focussed on providing information, creating awareness and encouraging participation. The aim has been to provide opportunities for African community groups and service providers to meet, discuss issues, understand each other better, and work on partnership projects together.

The ACDO has organised cross-cultural trainings throughout the year, has been the guest speaker at interagency meetings and has spoken to Granville & Nirimba TAFE Welfare/Community Services students about strategies for community development projects with CALD communities. Some of the cross-cultural training sessions run through out the year included sessions with workers from High Street Youth Health Service, workers from the St. George Youth Accommodation Network, and the Refugee Week "Refugee Empowerment & Settlement Training" Forum focusing on working with young people. The REST Forum was attended by over 70 people and featured presentations on health & mental health, educational pathways, young people & the law and family relationships. The Forum was supported by a grant from DIAC and run in partnership with Granville Multicultural Community Centre, Merrylands Community Health, NSW Refugee Health Service, Parramatta Police, Holroyd Police, Parramatta City Council and Holroyd City Council.

Contacts have also been maintained and meetings held with the Department of Education, local schools and Intensive English Centres, the police, Macquarie Legal Centre, Department of Fair Trading, the Cancer Council, the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association, Multicultural Communication, Information and Cultural Exchange, the Australian Human Rights Commission, DoCS, and other services to discuss how they can best access newly arrived African communities and how to ensure that their service, project, or resource can be more easily accessed by African clients.

New Projects

The African Community Development Officer has also been involved in a number of partnership projects that focus on specifically on assisting people from newly arrived African communities.

The African Learning Circle project was started over 3 years ago by Metro West DoCS, to provide an opportunity for people from African communities, DoCS and other service providers to meet and discuss issues relating to child protection and the wellbeing of children, young people, their families and communities. The program is now run in partnership between the Hills Holroyd Parramatta MRC, Metro West DoCS and community service providers in Western Sydney.

The African Learning Circle is organised by a reference group which plans 3-4 Learning Circle meetings a year with guest speakers from DoCS, community organisations and other government departments to address specific topics. A very well attended and informative session on Child Protection was held in October and another session on Parenting and Young People is being planned for December 2009. The 2009-10 meetings will be co-facilitated by 2 African Learning Circle Facilitators, Martha Nyamu & David Pasipanodya.

The MRC has also taken on the WSAAS African Employment Pathways Project. The project aims to benefit people from newly arrived African communities living in Western Sydney, particularly those in the Parramatta LGA, by providing an opportunity for people to become better equipped with skills in budgeting/financial management, recognising and addressing training gaps, looking for employment opportunities and marketing their skills, managing events, and grant writing. Sessions on budgeting/financial management, grant writing, opportunities through social enterprise, and event management are being planned for 2009-2010.

The African Community Development Officer has also supported and partnered with a number of organisations to support community groups (Twin Orphans Project), plan events (Celebration of African Cultures Day 2009), give input into projects (Parenting Stories Project), and get people from African communities involved with mainstream service providers (Holroyd Carnivale). Some of these partners include Information and Cultural Exchange, GMCC, HARDA, UNSW, Anglicare, STARTS and Parramatta, Holroyd, and Auburn City Councils.

The African Team would like to extend its appreciation to the many community groups & associations, community services, government departments, schools, universities, TAFE's, Police LAC's, youth centres, and individuals who have contributed to the African Community Development, African Generalist and African Youth projects throughout the year. Your support has helped to build a collaborative, effective and supportive service for newly arrived African clients in the Holroyd & Parramatta LGA's.

Maeve Brown
Community Development Officer-
African Communities

(left) (right)
African Learning
Circle Meeting
on Child
Protection



(left) African
Learning Circle
Meeting **(right)**
DIAC Session
for African
Communities
on Proposing
Relatives





(left) MRC Info Stall at Holroyd Carnivale 2009 **(right)** Multicultural Cancer Council Morning Tea



Celebration of African Cultures Day 2009



Celebration of African Cultures Day 2009 (2)



Housing Information for African Communities

Do you have questions about...

- What to do about rent increases?
- Issues such as eviction, repairs or bond disputes?
- Going to the Residential Tribunal?
- Your rights as a tenant?

For more information, come to a **Housing Information Session** with **Western Sydney Tenants' Service (WESTS)**

Wednesday, March 25th, 2009
4:30 - 6:30pm
at the Granville Youth & Recreation Centre
3a Memorial Drive, Granville

For more information contact Maeve or Priscella on 9687 9901



Housing Information Session (March 25)



THE AFRICAN LEARNING CIRCLE

The Learning Circle aims to help Community Services and Offices Communities work in partnership to support communities.

JOIN US ON THURSDAY, 1ST OCTOBER AT 5:30PM

Light Refreshments Provided

At the Baulkham Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre
1 Horwood Place Level 4 Parramatta

TO RSVP PLEASE CONTACT Maeve Brown - 9687 9901

Understanding Child Protection

The Learning Circle Topic will be...

- What is Child Protection?
- The role of Community Services (DoCS)
- How can we support families and children?
- Group Discussion

A partnership project between



African Learning Circle Invite (Oct 2009)



Horn of Africa/ UNSW Consultation

- Share your story, thoughts & ideas
- Talk about settling in Australia
- What issues have you faced?
- How could the settlement experience be better?

Includes free lunch and payment for your time!!! (\$40 per person)

Saturday, April 18th
9am - 5pm

At the Baulkham Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre
Level 4, 1 Horwood Place, Parramatta

Please contact Maeve to register: 9687 9901



HARDA UNSW Community Consultation (April 18)

REFUGEE WEEK 2009 – FREEDOM FROM FEAR

Refugee Engagement & Settlement Training Forum: Pathways to Better Service Provision for Refugee Young People

Monday, June 22nd, 2009
9:30am - 3pm
at BHHP ARC, 1 Horwood Place, level 4

Come and learn more about...

- THE JOURNEYS OF REFUGEE YOUNG PEOPLE THEIR FAMILIES
- RESETTLEMENT IN AUSTRALIA
- SERVICES & STRATEGIES - HEALTH - YOUNG PEOPLE & THE LAW - FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS - EDUCATION PATHWAYS
- WORKING WITH NEWLY ARRIVED YOUNG PEOPLE

To RSVP, please contact: Maeve or Aurelia 9687 9901



Organised by: The Baulkham Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre, Granville Multicultural Community Centre, Merrylands Community Health, NSW Refugee Health Service, Parramatta Police, Holroyd Police, Parramatta City Council and Holroyd City Council

Refugee Week Forum 2009

Artspark CARNIVALE
FREE ENTRY

CELEBRATING HOLIDAY'S CULTURAL DIVERSITY & CREATIVITY

SATURDAY MAY 16
HOLROYD GARDENS
12pm-5pm FREE ENTRY

Artspark Carnivale is a Holroyd City Council initiative celebrating Holroyd's Cultural Diversity & Creativity. Come along & be a part of the Community Festival on Saturday May 16th 2009. Free Show - All Ages.

artspark carnivale flyer email



Gold Coin Donations Welcome!

You are invited to the...

Multicultural Morning Tea

In celebration of Refugee Week 2009 and in support of the Cancer Council's Australia's Biggest Morning Tea

Wednesday, June 17th 2009
10am - 12pm

At the Baulkham Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre
1 Horwood Place, Level 4 Parramatta

Please RSVP to Maeve, Caroline, Biljana or Shanta on 9687 9901



Multicultural Morning Tea Invite (flyer)

African Youth

African Youth SGP Report

Throughout the 2008-2009 funded period, Thomas Ater, the African Youth Worker, has continued to provide casework, information and referral services, and to run group sessions with African young people in the Parramatta and Holroyd LGA's. The youth worker has developed strong links with young people, their families, and with the broader African communities, in addition to building referral pathways, networks and partnerships with service providers.

Casework, Emerging Issues & Info Sessions

The African Youth Worker has seen an increasing number of clients throughout the year as he continues to build relationships with young people and their families, schools and service providers. Some of the main issues addressed by the youth worker throughout the year have included: housing, education, homework support, employment, social support, legal issues, alcohol and other drugs, understanding Australian systems, family relationships, isolation, and accessing mainstream services.

In addition to casework, information and referral services, the youth worker has also provided information sessions through youth centres, after school programs, schools and other community meetings throughout the year. Some of the topics have included: young people & the law, safety, knowing your rights, healthy relationships and negotiating consent, alcohol & other drugs, weapons, the "Burn DVD", drivers safety, information on MRC and youth services, accessing education and employment pathways, and understanding Australian systems.

Programs and Support Groups

The Granville Girls Group has now been running for more than 2 years in partnership with the Granville Multicultural Community Centre (GMCC) and Granville Youth & Recreation Centre (GYCRC). The program targets girls aged 12-24 years, primarily from newly arrived migrant and refugee backgrounds, including Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Australian born. This year the girls have participated in theatre, dance, fashion, and self defence programs, as well as excursions to the city, Manly and a drop-in program during the school holidays.

The School Survival Skills Program was run as a trial program with Granville TAFE Outreach, GMCC, and Holroyd Youth Services in Term 2, 2009. The program ran for 8 sessions with 4-8 African young people attending. The program focused on working with young people specifically from newly arrived migrant or refugee backgrounds, to improve their study skills, life skills & English literacy in order to do better in school. The program was initiated based on the need for additional support services for young people who are struggling to learn English, understand their homework assignments and fill in large gaps in education. The program is continuing in Term 4, 2009 and will resume in the 2010 school year thanks to a CDSE grant from Holroyd Council.

The African Youth Worker has also been working with GMCC, GYCRC and police ECLO's and YLO's from the local area on the *MaAP project* (the Muslim and African Youth and Police project). The project holds monthly sports, life skills and BBQ evenings with Muslim and African young people in the Granville area, with aim to build better relationships between young people, service providers and the police.

Sports, Drop-in and Life Skills programs have also continued to run at GYCRC on Thursdays and Fridays providing the youth worker with an opportunity to help young people access information, MRC services and support. The youth worker has also been running weekly Basketball and life skills sessions and helped with weekly Drumbeat sessions (with the NAYSS program) and St. Paul's Catholic School in Greystanes. The youth worker has also been supporting and making referrals to the Future Stars of Tomorrow soccer program that works to develop the soccer skills of African young people and link them with professional coaches and training programs.

Partnerships & Cross-Cultural Awareness

The African Youth Worker has been working alongside a number of community services and government departments including the Attorney General's Department, Anglicare Street Outreach & Probation and Parole, and Housing NSW. The youth worker helped the Attorney General's Department to organise a very effective forum on supporting the Sudanese community to deal with legal issues and cross-cultural awareness. The youth worker has also been working with Anglicare Street Outreach to provide information on strategies for working with African young people and families to Probation and Parole officers. The youth worker has also been working with Housing NSW and other service providers to advocate for clients in public housing and provide them with additional mentoring support and referrals to employment pathways and services that deal with alcohol and drug issues. These partnerships have been essential to helping African young people understand Australian systems, negotiate with government departments and services, and improve their overall settlement outcomes; in addition to helping service providers come up with better strategies for working with African young people.

Thomas Ater
African Youth SGP worker



Granville Girls Group



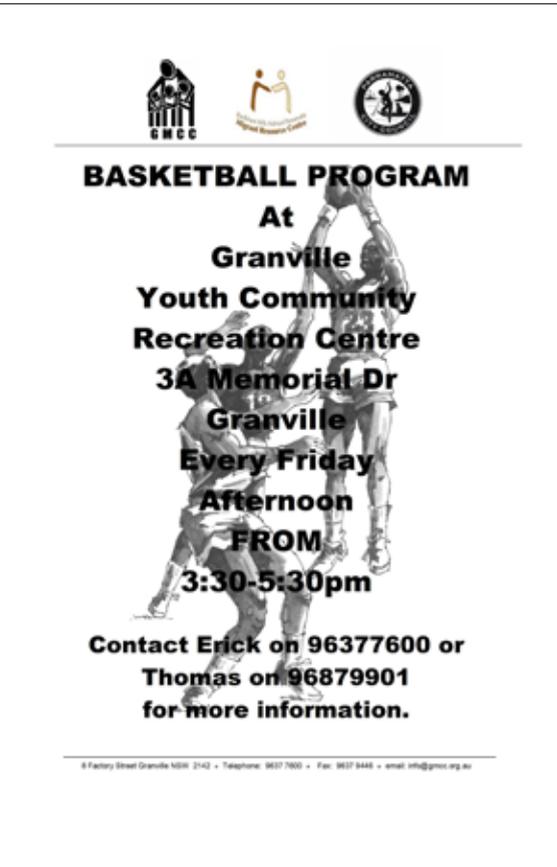
Granville Girls Group After School Program



MaAP Project



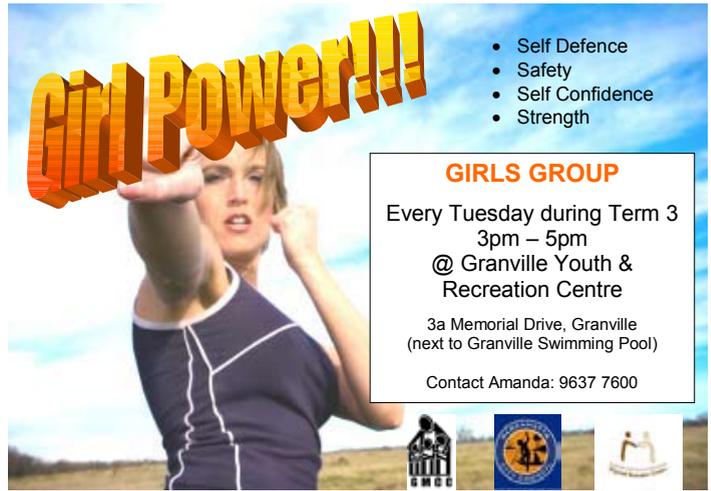
*Future Stars
of Tomorrow
Soccer Program*



BASKETBALL PROGRAM
At
Granville
Youth Community
Recreation Centre
3A Memorial Dr
Granville
Every Friday
Afternoon
FROM
3:30-5:30pm

Contact Erick on 96377600 or
Thomas on 96879901
for more information.

8 Factory Street Granville NSW 2142 • Telephone: 9637 7600 • Fax: 9637 8448 • email: info@gmcc.org.au



GIRLS GROUP

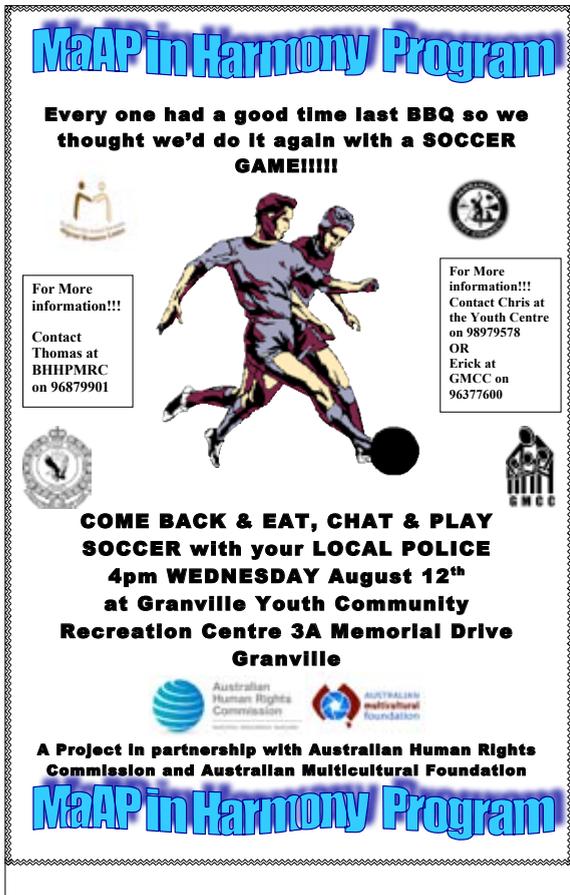
- Self Defence
- Safety
- Self Confidence
- Strength

Every Tuesday during Term 3
 3pm – 5pm
 @ Granville Youth & Recreation Centre
 3a Memorial Drive, Granville
 (next to Granville Swimming Pool)

Contact Amanda: 9637 7600

Girls Group self defence flyer

Boys Basketball Flyer



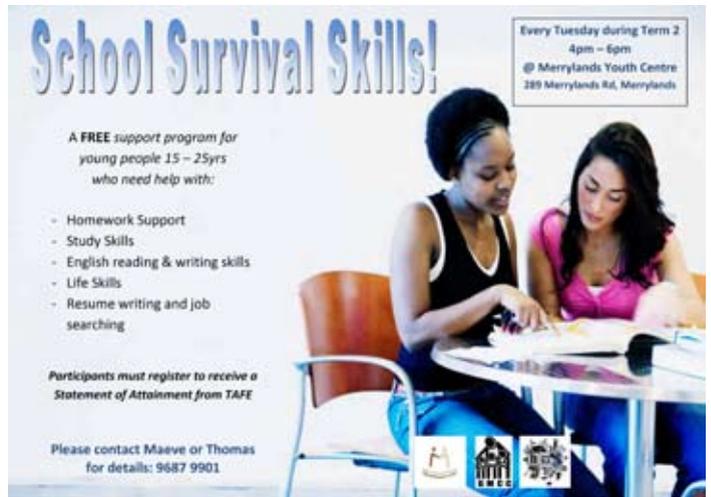
MaAP in Harmony Program

Every one had a good time last BBQ so we thought we'd do it again with a SOCCER GAME!!!!

COME BACK & EAT, CHAT & PLAY SOCCER with your LOCAL POLICE
4pm WEDNESDAY August 12th
at Granville Youth Community Recreation Centre 3A Memorial Drive Granville

A Project in partnership with Australian Human Rights Commission and Australian Multicultural Foundation

MaAP in Harmony Program



School Survival Skills!

Every Tuesday during Term 2
 4pm – 6pm
 @ Merrylands Youth Centre
 289 Merrylands Rd, Merrylands

A FREE support program for young people 15 – 25yrs who need help with:

- Homework Support
- Study Skills
- English reading & writing skills
- Life Skills
- Resume writing and job searching

Participants must register to receive a Statement of Attainment from TAFE

Please contact Maeve or Thomas for details: 9687 9901

School Survival Skills

Police BBQ Meeting Flyer

African Generalist

African Generalist SGP Report

The African Generalist project aims to help Africans to settle effectively in Australia and integrate within the broader community by providing casework, information and referral services, information sessions, and advocacy support to help clients access mainstream services. During the past year, the African Generalist Caseworker, Caroline Muisyo, has continued to provide a large number of clients with support to address various settlement needs and issues, including: accommodation, child protection, health and mental health, employment, citizenship, migration, proposing family members, social participation, education and training, volunteering, material/financial assistance, income support, language, material assistance, document help, financial support, child care, centre facilities, family relationships, and driving.

27 consultations were held during the year to identify the issues affecting African communities in the Holroyd and Parramatta area, areas of interest for training and workshops, and to come up with community development strategies.

24 information sessions were also organised throughout the year on the following topics: housing and consumer rights, travel training, the role of DoCS and the child protection systems, budgeting, community services and the benefits of accessing financial support, understanding drugs and alcohol, intergenerational conflict and family relationships, settlement information, the Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre services, personal and child safety, parenting programs, proposing family members, nutrition, family harmony, drugs and the law and the role of ECLOs. The aim of these sessions was to familiarise African clients with Australian systems, culture, and laws, as well as to assist with access to mainstream services. The information sessions were organised in partnership with Anglicare and Karabi Community and Development Services.

Project Highlights

African Multicultural Social Group

The African Multicultural Social Group was started in 2008 with the aim to reduce isolation and provide an opportunity for Africans from diverse backgrounds and the broader community to learn from each other by sharing culture, knowledge and experiences. The group meets monthly and is run in partnership with Karabi Community and Development Services. One of the highlights for the group was organising an African Morning Tea which provided an opportunity for people to meet in a social environment and identify issues and topics of interest.

African Women Cultural Exchange Program

The African Women's Cultural Exchange Program began in 2009 with the aim of providing an opportunity for African women, women from other culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Australian born women to exchange cultures at a grassroots level, reduce isolation, increase mutual understanding through direct contact and provide an opportunity for African women to integrate with Australian women and others from diverse backgrounds. The first cultural exchange program was an extension of the African Women's Dinner Dance. A group of Australian and African women met in Baukham Hills initially and that was followed-up by a 3 day excursion in September 2009 to Ulladulla. The program was organised in partnership with the African Women's Group of NSW, Anglicare & STARTTS.

Merrylands Multicultural Women Social Group

The Merrylands Multicultural Women's Social Group was formed as a result of the cultural excursions held earlier in the year. The aim of the group is to reduce isolation and provide an opportunity for African women to meet with others from diverse backgrounds, practice their English language skills and learn from each other. The group meets monthly in Merrylands and is run in partnership with the Holroyd Police Local Area Command.

Excursions

Other excursions held this year include a Travel Training excursion to Manly Beach, organised in partnership with Karabi Community and Development Service and the Burundi Women's Cultural Exchange excursion to Gerringong and Fairfield parkland areas organised in partnership with Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Services.

Cultural Celebrations

The African Caseworker was also involved in a number of cultural events and celebrations throughout the year, including helping to organise the Celebration of African Cultures event and the African Women's Dinner Dance. The aim of these events was to unify the diverse African communities in Sydney, to learn from each other and to share different cultures and traditions in a social environment.

The Somali Project

The Somali Caseworker, Jama Mohammed, has worked throughout the year to provide casework, information and referral support to a large number of clients from the Somali community in the Parramatta and Auburn areas. The Somali Homework Support Program has continued to support young Somali students with their education. The sessions attract a great number of students in need of improving their English and maths skills as well as their school performance in general. This has been a very popular and successful program as evidenced by the continued support from volunteer teachers, parents and students. There have also been measurable improvements in the students' performance in school.

**Caroline Mueni Muisyo
African caseworker**



Housing Information Session with WESTS



Budgeting and Financial Services Info Session



(left) African Multicultural Social Group Excursion
(right) Burundi Women's Group Excursion



*Merrylands
Multicultural
Women's Group
- Trip to Ulladulla*



*African
Multicultural
Social Group
Information
Session*



*African
Multicultural
Social Group
Excursion to
Manly Beach*



Housing & Consumer Rights for African Communities

Do you have questions about...

- Your rights as a tenant?
- Your rights as a consumer?
- Issues such as eviction, repairs or bond disputes?
- Understanding contracts, credit, and warranties?

For more information, come to a
**Housing & Consumer Rights
Information Session**
with the Department of Fair Trading

Thursday, May 28th, 2009
at 10am

at St. Anne's Anglican Church, Merrylands
Cnr of St. Ann's & Denmark Streets

For more information contact Amou on 9895 8000
Maeve or Caroline on 9687 9901




Housing and Consumer Rights
Information Session (May 28)



Family Harmony in Australia

For more information, come to an
Information Session
with the Department of Community Services
African Support Workers

Thursday, May 21st, 2009
Starts at 10am!

at the St. Anne's Anglican Church, Merrylands
Cnr of St. Ann's St & Denmark St

For more information contact Amou - 9895 8000
or Caroline - 9687 9901




Family Harmony

FREE!!! *Child-friendly!!!*

YOU are invited to the monthly
African Multicultural Social Group Get-together
This is a great opportunity to meet people from diverse African backgrounds in your local area.

When: 20th February 2009
Friday, 10.30am to 1pm

Where: **Karabi Community Centre**
Cnr Darcy Road & Fyall Ave
WENTWORTHVILLE NSW 2145

This month,
... parents and young ones will participate in 'Bubba time'
... and we'll learn more about
'getting along with our children'.

Snacks provided.

For more info, please contact:
Caroline 9687 9901
Gel 9631 6575






AMSG Flyer Feb 2009

FREE!!! *Child-friendly!!!*

YOU are invited to the monthly
African Multicultural Social Group Get-together
This is a great opportunity to meet people from diverse African backgrounds in your local area.

When: 13th March 2009
Friday, 10.30am to 1pm

Where: **Karabi Community Centre**
Cnr Darcy Road & Fyall Ave
WENTWORTHVILLE NSW 2145

This month, we'll learn how
the Ethnic Community Liaison Officer
can assist us.

Snacks provided.

For more info, please contact:
Caroline 9687 9901
Gel 9631 6575





AMSG Flyer Mar2009

Generalist

This past year has seen a sizeable leap in the capacity of newly arrived communities in our backyard. Just as communities have unpacked their belongings, pinned up flags of many countries up on their lounge room walls, and drawn on their communal strength to survive, they are now reaching out into the corridors of Western Sydney and making their voice heard.

My expectations for the project has been to create a "Lift As You Climb" work ethic: so that the success of one person inspires others in the group. The projects have been building on the social capital of each community – especially young adults and women – through peer support models, scholarship programs, artistic expression pathways and sports outlets.

While some individuals have braved public speaking engagements at conferences, and the lights of theatrical productions, others still remain in the foothills of their settlement journey. Often hidden but not forgotten as we attempt to engage and find common ground, so they too can connect with their Australian neighbours.

Here are some highlights of the year:

Projects

Assist: One Employment Mentoring Program, a partnership with the University of Western Sydney- Psychology Dept. The Project assists with Job Seeking and also gathers research data on Employment Barriers affecting newly arrived refugees. Overall 65 days of service delivery was achieved. This project was voted Winner of the UWS Partnership Award for 2008

Cultural Footprints Book This project was funded by Parramatta City Council and aimed to promote heroes/local achievers within the newly arrived refugee communities, who reside or work around Parramatta LGAs – i.e. a Karen soccer coach, a Sudanese teacher, a Sierra Leone Pastor, an Ethiopian community worker and a Kurdish journalist. This is also an attempt to educate the wider community about this hidden social capital resource and build bridges in the "social coalition" between community/government/business. The Steering Committee for the project comprised the Australian Centre for Languages and Holroyd City Council.

Imagine Theatre Group - a 7 week program was a partnership with Granville Multicultural Community Centre is a theatre access program for young girls – aged 14 to 16 years. These drama workshops were an indirect engagement program which was a useful vehicle to tease out issues with young people in a non-confronting or threatening way. Topics explored included: peer pressure, parental gaps, parental pressures and racism in three performance pieces, *Ghost Whisperer.... For Real*; *Romeo & Juliet (& Julie)* and *Mean Sisters*.

A Day in the Life DVD Project. Partnership with Red Cross Refugee Settlement & Tracing Service. DVD Resource for service providers, especially schools. The film included stories of arrivals from the Sierra Leone, Congolese, Karen and Chinese communities.

Art Xpress Project - Refugee Week Event. Partnership with Anglicare. Karen school children created artwork addressing the theme Freedom From Fear. Many spoke of the freedom they experienced here compared to home. The Karen group also participated in cultural exchange interviews on stage and performed a fashion parade in Karen national dress. Karen students won three out of the seven awards.

Cross Cultural Exchange - Student to Student.

Partnership with UTS. Students exchanged stories with CALD students, networked amongst themselves and gained confidence through storytelling. Three students were then interviewed by the UTS magazine – *Vertigo* and their stories were published.

Mentoring Groups

Communities Pride Peer Support Group

(19-26yrs of age) Mission Statement - Build membership into educated, empowered and self reliant young people; promote education and capacity building in community and support and promote settlement and integration of members into broader Australian Community. Outcomes: - Successful in application for one member of the group to attend **National Student Leadership Forum** at Parliament House in Canberra. 230 students attended from Australia and overseas. The mentee was the only African delegate in the entire conference. The mentee gave a speech in front of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, Opposition Leader and Senior Cabinet Ministers. This forum looked at leadership issues for youth, based on faith & Australian values. The experience was a life changing one for this mentoree, particularly in terms of confidence building and communication skills. Other members completed BCE (Bilingual Community Education) Health Program training with NSW Refugee Health Service and have expanded on the last year's play project **Shine** and created **Walk In My Shoes**, which was performed at Riverside Theatre.

Afghan Youth League. We have been working with the **National Launchpad Grant** with **The Foundation for Young Australians** in Melbourne and in partnership with the *Ghan Lighthouse Institute*. A **GAP Model (Ghan Assistance Program)** was developed which is a mentoring program with educational assistance as entry level point of access to community, followed by settlement assistance for parents.

Weekly classes operate with mentor group, working with students in Years 7-9, with homework assistance, life skills & peer support strengthening exercises. The project works in partnership with 14 schools. The group has successfully delivered 35 group sessions for young Afghans and their parents this year, hosted successful GAP Program Launch for Afghan parents at Auburn, organised an Official Iftar Dinner at Blacktown City Council and one member has been successful in admission to a training program with the Department of Juvenile Justice.

Communities Education Pathways Program

Successful applications for: Future Champions Scholarship Grant, for regional soccer team registrations, and buy training equipment for the Under 10 girls team. **The Regional Cancer Control Grant Program** for the Greater Western Sydney Region, Cancer Council of NSW - a grant for combating Karen Cervical Cancer Program. **NSW Sport and Recreation Scholarship Program** - Sports/ Life skills. Participants from Communities Group took part in Soccer Sports Clinic at Yagoona. Participants attended Girls Football Development Clinic with W-League Sydney FC Team. Participants underwent skills training funded by Granville Districts Soccer Referees Association and are now getting paid jobs as referees at youth matches. Joined stakeholders group for **Pathways to Primary Industry Project** - TAFE course for clients to utilize farming knowledge from their home country and also learning farming practices here. 30 students were enrolled into the course which began in July 09.

Refugee Australia Foundation - Scholarship Grant Program.

The program was for University / TAFE students currently enrolled in a Social Work / Humanities degree who have arrived to Australia under the Humanitarian Refugee Program. Applications submitted for The Patrick Koffa Refugee Scholarship (Males) and The Claudette Elaro Refugee Women's Scholarship (females).

Conferences

United Nations' International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Forum -

Two mentees were invited along to speak. Topic of the paper presented - "Young Women as Leaders Within Matrix of Afghan / Australian Culture". This was a partnership with Parramatta City Council and Riverside Theatre.

International Women's Day Conference -

Holroyd Centre. "Our Voice, Our Education" Holroyd Working Women's Party partnership - Holroyd Council, Merrylands Community Health and Merrylands Police. Speech written by Communities Pride Group Mentors. Paper: "Gender Differences in Attitudes to Education in Sudanese Culture."



(top) SIFE Conference for Assist One Rd 2 09

(right) SIFE Conference 09



Educational Seminars

Who Am I! Refugees in Focus - Cross Cultural training seminar delivered to service providers: Department of Corrective Services, Salvation Army, Northern Beaches TAFE, High Street Youth Health Services, WESTS, Macquarie Legal Centre & Red Cross.

Advisory Committee Member: Australian Chinese Community Association, Karen Advisory Committee, Western Sydney Afghan Network Forum.

Special mention to community partnerships: Karen Youth Association, Hazaras Voice, Burmese Rohingya Community in Australia, Karen Australia Organization, Australian Afghan Hassanian Youth Association, El-Bethal, Bor Youth Association, Kongor Student Association, BAPING Community Development Association, Fiji Australia Community Development Inc, Dinka Literacy Association, Friends of Sierra Leone, Afghan Australia Youth Network, Congolese Community Association, Australian Chinese Community Association, African Women's Advocacy Unit, Sierra Leone Australian Student Association, SPUR, Sierra Unite, the Association of Liberian Communities, Australian Korean Welfare Association.

Special mention to partnerships with service providers: Parramatta High School, Refugee Transition Unit, NSW Refugee Health Services, SWAHS, Family Planning NSW, Cancer Council, Woodville Community Centre, STARTTS, Merrylands Centrelink, Australian Institute of Financial Services and Accounting, Granville Multicultural Community Centre, The Vedanta Centre, Department of Corrective Services, Campbelltown TAFE, Rubicon Migration Consultants, Red Cross Tracing Services, Fragomen Migration Consultants, Ministry of Transport, Mission Australia VCA Unit, ACL, Holroyd High School, Holroyd IEC, STARTTS, Parramatta Council, Holroyd City Council, The Smith Family, WESTS, Macquarie Legal Centre, Merrylands Community Health, Anglicare, Family Relationship Centre, Relationships Australia, Community Relations Commission, The Refugee Council, The Foundation for Young Australians and UWS.

Priscella Engall
Community Settlement & Development Officer



(left) Afghan Home School Forum with Parra HS 09
(right) Afghan Youth League - GAP Program 09



(left) Job Seeking Seminar 09
(right) Communities Mentor Group Consultation 09



(left) Arts Express Project 09
(right) Immigration Session 09



(left) International Women's Day Conference 09
(right) Farming TAFE students excursion for Refugee Week 09

Burmese



(left) Rohingya Health Session at Metro MRC (right) Rohingya Health Sessions for Men and Women

The Burmese SGP Project is funded by DIAC to address the needs of newly arrived Burmese and refugees and humanitarian entrants. It employs two SGP workers with responsibilities for the above mentioned communities in the following way: Elizabeth Philipsz for Burmese and Victor Saw for the Karen ethnic group. However, communities and people interact with each other, cross boundaries and at times clients will be part of programs of both workers.

This year has been an interesting and exciting year, as well as a challenging one as after 4 years being a Burmese Community Worker, a level of trust and relationships have been built up with the community.

As a direct result of this, more Burmese and Rohingya clients are now accessing the Migrant Resource Centres at Parramatta, Canterbury and Auburn weekly for help, advice and guidance on their pathway to settlement.

Casework:

Over the past year there were approximately 600 contacts made with clients, who were assisted with intensive casework, support and referrals in the LGAs of Canterbury, Bankstown, Parramatta and Auburn. This provided opportunities to address issues and problems happening within families and the community while providing educational opportunities.

Referrals:

Referrals for clients were made to the following services: Social Workers at the Westmead and Auburn Hospitals, the Department of Housing, DoCS, Anglicare and Centerlink. These referrals have proved most satisfying, especially for mothers who were then better placed to face challenging situations.

Information Sessions:

Over 25 information sessions were undertaken on the following topics: nutrition, tuberculosis, general women and men's health, family violence, Centerlink, citizenship and job seeking skills. A main focus for the project has been on building stronger relationships within families.

The Early Intervention Coordinator at Auburn Diversity Services and myself were able to run playgroups throughout the school holiday period. These play groups allowed mothers to integrate more smoothly into the wider society, otherwise they would remain isolated and vulnerable.

Special mention should go to Anglicare for working with my project to provide care and support to a great number of Burmese and Rohingya refugee families in need.

I would like to thank the service providers who have partnered with me this year: Auburn Diversity Services, Metro Migrant Resource Centre, Families NSW, NSW Refugee Health Service and AMES.

I would also like to thank the MRC, all my work colleagues and especially my manager, Melissa Monteiro, for all the help and support that she has given me throughout the whole year.

Elizabeth Philipsz
Burmese SGP Worker

Karen SGP Report

This has been my first year as the SGP Worker for the Karen community living in Western Sydney. We are proud to say, we are the only DIAC funded Karen SGP grant in NSW. This grant has proved very beneficial for clients as well as all stakeholders.

At the conclusion of this first year, I feel the majority of Karen clients are more aware of mainstream support services that are available to them. However many still need to have more confidence so that they can act independently.

Casework - 260 contacts with clients have been made in providing casework, information and referral services for the Karen target group. I have delivered my services from key area: Parramatta (the MRC main office), Carramar, Guildford and Fairfield.

In terms of direct casework for clients who have freshly exited the IHSS program, there have been many issues arising on the following topics: -Centerlink & Welfare obligations, Tenancy / Housing; accessing the Health Care System in NSW (including oral health) and accessing Education & Employment Pathways. Tenancy and housing issues have been important as most clients have come from refugee camps where they lived without doors, and there was no privacy or rights.

Projects

Karen School - After school homework & social support program for primary & high school aged children from Karen community). This is a partnership with *Woodville Community Centre at Villawood*. Two weekly classes ran from the centre: one for primary age children, the other for high school children. 30 students attended each week.

Health Access Program: Combating Cervical Cancer in Karen Women Workshops held at Guildford & Fairfield. This has been a *partnership with NSW Refugee Health Service, SWAHS and Family Planning NSW*. SWAHS and Family Planning nurses facilitated the workshops looking at cervical cancer; preventative tests like pap-smear were discussed as well as basic understanding about women's health and the myths surrounding cancer. Only six women had previously undergone a pap smear before session. There was one 69 year old lady who experienced her very first (and last) pap -smear test because of this program.

Karen Health Mapping - This is a *Partnership with NSW Refugee Health Service*. During the 3 formation sessions conducted some of the issues identified by participants were: knowledge about general women's health, access to ambulance services, health information to be translated into Karen Language.

Employment Pathways Program - "Pathways to Primary Industry" Project – Farming. *Partnership with Penrith Centrelink and Campbelltown TAFE*. Two Information Sessions were held on the topic of training and employment opportunities. Our aim was to assist a number of different refugee communities - including the Karen community from Western Sydney- to develop the farming skills they had brought with them from their homeland, and to gain employment in agriculture. 35 students signed up for the Farming Course. During Refugee Week, all the students visited Joe's Rossmore Farm. Participants got a chance to meet previous students and prospective employers and to present their own testimonies during the event.

Karen Youth Camp - Kincumber.

Partnership with DAMEC, STARTTS & Marist Mission.

Over 150 Karen youth from across Australia participated in this camp. Lecturers from *BHHP MRC, DAMEC, STARTTS, the Marist Mission, the Australian Karen Organisation* and also leaders from *the Thai-Burma border camps* delivered information on the following topics: Drugs & Alcohol, Education & Employment Pathways, Refugee Experiences/Dealing with Emotions & Parents, Leadership & Management, Karen History & Politics, Karen Situation Updates and Latest Reports.

Mental Health Support Program - Two programs were held in Sydney and Canberra with the International Organization for Migration. Guest speakers were Karen trainers from the IOM program based in Thailand, near the Burmese border.

Karen Advisory Committee - A number of respected members of the Karen community leaders were invited to be part of this committee including a former camp leaders as well as service providers such as STARTTS, ACL, the DIAC Grant Consultant and members of the Australian Karen Organization. Regular meetings are held with a large number of issues being canvassed.

Karen Settlement Conference - Wedderburn - *Partnership with Karen Baptist Churches from around Australia.* Over 300 Karen people from across Australia participated in this conference. During the event, the worker got a chance to meet fellow Karen SGP workers and IHSS workers from Melbourne, Perth, Brisbane and Hobart and have informal meetings, discussions and share experiences related to Karen resettlement issues in Australia.

Karen Support Group - A support group with Karen community members was formed. One great achievement for the group this year has been sourcing some office space so that the support group can meet in a convenient location. A space became available at Regent's Park, and an application was put in through the "Community Hub" initiative at Auburn Council.

Information Sessions on the following topics were held: Tuberculosis, mutual welfare obligations, immunisation checks and general orientation to the Australian Legal systems, tenancy / housing, budgeting.

Cross Cultural Education - A number of presentations were delivered throughout the year on the "Karen Community Profile / Pre-arrival & Post-arrival Issues" for various service providers.

"Karen Resettlement in NSW"- *Making Diversity Matter* Conference – a state wide DoCS Multicultural conference. The presentation was part of a training program to assist DoCS workers to engage with small and emerging refugee communities. The Conference was attended by DoCS caseworkers and managers from throughout NSW.

I would like to extend my thanks to all the service providers and community organisations with whom I have partnered with over the last 12 months.

**Saw Aung Htut
Karen Worker**



Graduates Cervical Cancer Prevention Program



(left) DoCS
-Making
Diversity Matter
Conference
(right) Making
Diversity Matter
Panel



(left) Karen
School **(right)**
Karen Advisory
Committee



(left) Tenancy
Session
with WESTS
(right) Karen
Cervical Cancer
Workshop



(left) Pathways
to Primary
Industry
Students at
Refugee Week
Excursion
(right)
Pathways
Primary Industry
Tafe Students

Afghan



(left) Son of a Lion Excursion
(right) Afghan excursion to Aboriginal Exhibition at Australian Museum

It's almost 17 months now that I have been working at the MRC. I have learnt a lot during this period about the Afghan community and what their needs are, and met many service providers which have helped me refer clients to the most appropriate person. I have learnt a lot about myself since I started work in the community sector and I look forward to the challenges that lie ahead.

Casework - 585 contacts with clients were made in providing casework, information and referral services for the Afghan target group (Pashtun, Hazaras & Tajiks). I have delivered my services from three key areas – Parramatta (the MRC head office), Wentworthville (Outreach office) and Merrylands Centrelink.

Key service provider referrals include: The Department of Housing, DIAC, Centrelink, ACL, charity organisations, counselling, AMES, Job Network members, TAFE and health clinics. This reflects the key issues facing Afghans: accommodation, emotional distress due to family fragmentation, survivor's guilt, language fluency, educational gaps and high unemployment.

Afghan Women's Support Group - I have been concurrently running two support groups for women this year. The Living Skills Group meets every Friday morning in Parramatta, to learn computer skills and have English conversation classes. The Driving Instruction Group meets every Tuesday morning at Wentworthville to learn how to drive and study for the written test.

A number of Afghan women have said that they would like to apply for their driver's license. This was something that was denied to them back home. This is why learning to drive is so important in their new life in Australia. One of the significant outcomes for the project was that five Afghan women have passed their driving tests which was a great result for those women, and also provided a confidence boost for the other women. These women have never stepped inside a classroom setting before. During this financial year, there were fifty two classes run.

Projects

Afghan Youth Camp at Broken Bay Sports and Recreation Centre was a partnership project with Parramatta, Rose Hill & Holroyd LAC (Police), the Australian Multicultural Foundation, and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. A three day Police/ Youth Camp for Afghani young people was organised to address conflict issues between young people and the police and strengthen the relationship between the two parties. The camp was also organised to provide training for young people on living skills & conflict resolution techniques to deploy when facing difficulties with peers and parents. 44 (30 boys and 14 girls) young people attended the camp, along with six police officers and four ECLO's. The project also offered a number of Afghan volunteers the chance to attend and assist with the sessions. A few Afghan youth have now said to me they are thinking about joining the Police Force after their close interaction with the police.

A number of sessions focussing on health were also organised, including:

- **Health Access Program for Afghans** – this project was run in partnership with Multicultural Health Unit at Cumberland Hospital, Bilingual Community Educator Program NSW Refugee Health Service and Merrylands Community Health.
- **Diabetes, Reduce Your Risk Workshop** – this program was run for women over 3 weeks and delivered information about preventative measures regarding diabetes (nutrition/exercise and regular health checks) and looked at treatment options after diagnosis.
- **New Healthy Women Health Program** – this program was run for women over 8 weeks and deliver information about healthy lifestyle options, how our bodies work, self care options, stress busting ideas and eating food groups. Information was given on how to approach different health services and education videos on health issues such as breast cancer.

No More Conflict Workshop – was a run in partnership with the Family Support Counsellor from Relationships Australia. The aim and objectives of the session were to strengthen family relationships by introducing more modern methods of negotiating conflict between parents and children. It is very important to introduce the concept of counselling to the community, as it is largely an unknown phenomenon. We then ran through some role play exercises to examine how to diffuse conflict – particularly between parents and children. It was also important to distribute literature about where to access counselling services in the local LGA's, and how to address mental health issues. We then screened the Afghan film *The Son of a Lion* which explored tensions between a Pashtun father and a son, who were in conflict over the son's wish to pursue education, rather than following in his father's footsteps. A discussion followed after the film, about the intergenerational themes and how to resolve those issues in Australian Afghan family context.

Afghan Education Forum - Three teachers from Parramatta High School ran a forum at MRC, with Afghan parents attending. Topics discussed included: how we can involve Afghan parents more with schools so that they can help their children with meeting homework and exam responsibilities, as well as helping parents understand the education system in Australia. Overall parents were not being given information from their children, and were not always aware of important school dates, such as when exam periods were on. The students and parents were encouraged to open the channels of communication more. It was decided that the school would create a calendar, in the Dari language, for the families so they could keep up to date with what was happening at school. The forum also let the teachers find out the history of education in Afghanistan, and what school and classroom situations were like back home.

Afghan Parent/Teacher School Forum and Dari School Calendar Launch – A school forum held at Parramatta High School (where Afghans form 12% of school population and are the highest CALD group), with school Principal, Vice Principal, school teachers, the Refugee Transition Unit and Afghan parents and students. The main topics discussed included: how to engage parents more in school activities, how can parents help their children more with meeting their school commitments like homework and exams. Another important topic discussed was the School Patrolling at local train stations, and how the community, parents and the school can do more to stop young people being caught up in criminal activities.

Then we had a Program Launch for the new School Calendar, translated into the Dari language. This calendar will be a great benefit to families, so they can see when exams are held, when parent / teacher night is on and when major cultural & sporting events are happening at the school. This will greatly enhance the ability of Afghan parents to participate more fully in the school and their children's education.

Immigration Information Session – with Afghans & Iranians was run in partnership with Fragomen Immigration Consultants. The aim was to address anguish and mental health pressures experienced in community while family members and loved ones remain trapped in their war torn home country. The Afghan community needed assistance in understanding the Humanitarian Program, filling out appropriate visa applications and assistance with deciding what documentation was needed to support compelling evidence of hardship for applicants.

Refugee Week Aboriginal/Afghan Excursion – 30 Afghan women visited the Indigenous Australia Exhibition at the Australian Museum. We then visited the War Memorial at Hyde Park. The aim of the excursion was to get the women out of the house, to use public transport, and to learn about Australian history and Aboriginal culture. The women felt more comfortable to talk about their own journeys and experiences of migration after hearing about Aboriginal history.

Afghan Connect Program – A youth seminar was held at Parramatta High School and attended by 110 students. The main issues discussed included: relationship difficulties with parents, siblings and peers, education and training, and after school employment.

Afghan Leadership Conference – A night of appreciation was organised in Guildford to recognise the achievements of active members of the Afghan community.

Information Sessions – Topics: Aged Care Services, Centrelink obligations, social isolation, public transport, resume writing, and law and order.

Professional Development

I enrolled in a 12 week Community Leadership Program with Meadowbank TAFE. Every Wednesday morning I attend the TAFE course which had been developed to assist CALD workers with leadership skills.

I was also asked to join the Selection Panel which has been called to select a Geography Teacher at Parramatta High School, as well as attending a training session at Macquarie Boys High School.

I would like to extend my thanks to all the service providers and community organisations I have partnered with over this past year.

Getee Karim
Afghan SGP worker



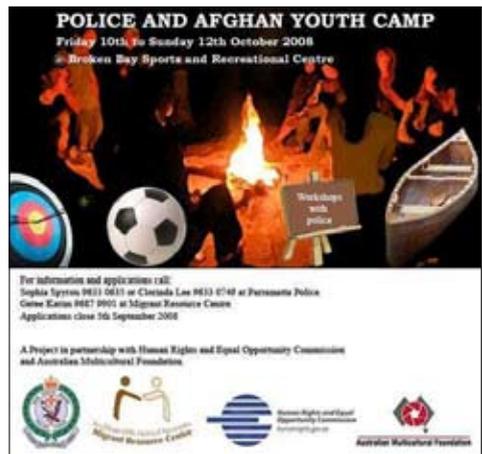
Afghan Police Camp



Afghan Police Camp Forum



BCE Health Program - Diabetes Diabetes



Afghan Youth Camp Poster

Citizenship Support Grants Program Report

From this time forward under God
I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people
Whose democratic beliefs I share,
Whose rights and liberties I respect, and
Whose laws I will uphold and obey*

Australian Citizenship Pledge

** A person may choose whether or not to use the word 'under God'*

The Citizenship Support Grant Program (CSGP) was a one year pilot project funded by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship to assist applicants to prepare to sit for and pass the Australian Citizenship test. I was extremely privileged to be a part of this project. Each week I was inspired by the persistence and hard work of the participants, the creativity and commitment of the bilingual tutors and the sense of pride and achievement of students as one by one they passed the test and were ready to become Australian citizens.

The Need for Citizenship Support

The Citizenship test was a computer based test consisting of 20 questions randomly selected from a pool of questions. The questions were not available to the public or training institutions. Applicants were given a resource book, *Becoming an Australian Citizen*, from which they were to learn about:

- Australia's values;
- Australia's history, culture and geography;
- Australia's parliamentary system of government; and
- The responsibilities and privileges of being an Australian citizen.

The primary issues for most applicants were understanding the resource book (due to the academic language used in many sections), a lack of experience with using computers and the fact that they had to pass three mandatory questions from the section on the responsibilities and privileges of being an Australian citizen.

The Process of Citizenship Support

Information Sessions

Initially it was important to promote to communities that there was a support program in place to assist those wishing to apply for citizenship. Information sessions for the Korean, Chinese and African communities were organised. A general information session also held where the Hon. David Borger MP, Minister for Housing, Minister for Western Sydney, used his own journey from Aussie boy to State Minister, to emphasise the wonderful opportunities and freedoms available to citizens of Australia. He encouraged all migrants to become involved in the various community activities that Australia has to offer.

Julie Owens, Member for Parramatta, acknowledged the enormity of having to choose one's country of citizenship and welcomed the opportunity to join in the celebration with new citizens at their Citizenship Ceremony. The office of Laurie Ferguson, MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services, supported the program with flags and resources that were invaluable to the information sessions.

From these information sessions students were given the choice of joining daytime or evening classes or receiving one-on-one tuition.

Education

Julie Troung, Kit Mei Tsui, Mina Kim and Shan assisted in the preparation of educational resources including games, worksheets and computer tests. Bilingual educators from various ethnic backgrounds including Afghani, Burmese, Chinese, Indian, Iraqi, Korean, Liberian, Sierra Leone and Sudanese were trained in the citizenship process, the content of the resource book and the use of the prepared resources.

Classes were held in Ashfield, Eastwood, Hornsby, Parramatta and Toongabbie, most with evening and daytime options. For many of the people who needed assistance with the Citizenship test the main obstacle was a lack of confidence. Workers intentionally worked with the participants to ensure they understood the test process and were comfortable using computer generated questions.



Citizenship class with the Chinese Community

The Outcomes of Citizenship Support

Valuable partnerships were formed with The Australian Korean Welfare Association, The Chinese Migrant Welfare Association, The Australian Chinese Community Association and Cherrybrook Chinese Community Association to engage these communities. Michael Hiriwo was integral in forming links with the African communities and the SGP workers from Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre were a regular source of referrals.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship was a constant source of support and were intentional in their desire to see where improvements could be made in the testing process. In particular Theresa Curtin and Agnes Kumar ensured the outcomes and recommendations that arose through client and tutor feedback and evaluations were acknowledged. This has contributed to significant changes to the resource book and the testing process from August 2009.

Over the year over 400 people attended classes and information sessions with over 75% of those sitting the test passing on their first attempt. It was encouraging to see the sense of accomplishment and excitement when people passed the test, especially those who entered the program feeling like they could never pass the test and yet wanted to be citizens. To see the pride and appreciation for Australia's history, geography, government and heritage and to be reminded daily of the freedoms and values we as Australians all too often take for granted, made being part of this project an honour.

This project has allowed hundreds of people with various skills, cultures and abilities to become Australian citizens; have a sense of belonging and enjoy the privilege of participating in all facets of the Australian community. This was truly an exciting and rewarding year.

Linda Marsonet
Citizenship Support Grant Program Officer



Citizenship Information Session



*Burmese
Citizenship
Class*



*Citizenship
Class with
the Korean
Community*



Citizenship Class with the Afghan Community



Julie Owens MP and participants at Citizenship Information Session

Early Intervention and Perinatal Report

2009 has been a very busy and productive year. The project has continued to provide and facilitate access for newly arrived migrant and refugee families across the Parramatta and Holroyd LGA's. Families have been provided with culturally supportive programs which have incorporated community development and home visits for families when required.

The Early Intervention Project includes services for families from 0-8 years and the Perinatal Program for families with children 0-2 years of age. During the course of the year, 596 families accessed the project through contact with playgroups, information sessions, referrals from other agency workers, self referral and word of mouth.

Evaluation and feedback and project assessments provided the following results:

- 100% of parents learned something new to assist them with parenting
- 85% of parents noted changes in their children's behaviour
- 80% learned of new services in their area
- 80% used a child related service for childcare or health related services
- 50% of parents made connections within their groups
- 98% of parents showed increased independence in meeting their family's needs

Sharing & Learning Playgroup

The Sharing & Learning Playgroup for CALD families is held at the Salvation Army Hall in Granville.

All early intervention and perinatal workers have now been trained to deliver PPP programs and all parents in the playgroup participated in the Positive Parenting Program, attending seminars and group work programs.

Information sessions were also provided on nutrition and healthy cooking, TAFE course information, employment and communicating with children. As a result, some of the mothers from the playgroup have taken up employment and have also expressed an interest in courses in childcare and enrolling for English classes.

Families who had a chance to meet and share with each other expressed their happiness at being in the playgroup. It is good to note that some CALD families had moved from other playgroups and felt comfortable at Granville.

In partnership with other agencies we have also run the following programs:

- Parenting programs with Korean Group
- PPP program with Little Bunny Playgroup- Chinese
- Holiday Excursion to Sydney Aquarium –all families participated
- Museum Excursion- with all families from the programs
- PPP with Australian Chinese Community Association
- Granville Multicultural Community Centre – parenting program
- Nutrition workshop

Telephone support has also been provided to families from Afghan, Chinese, Korean, Turkish and African backgrounds. This support is part of the PPP parenting program and also families had contacted the Migrant Resource Centre to ask for early intervention services.

Other highlights include Mothers Day events, celebrated with hearts and flowers by the children and a new group which started at Parramatta East Public School.

Comments from participants:

"I learnt communication with different community people and lots at playgroup like power play session and career planning, nutrition etc" – a young Indian mother

"The PPP course has transformed me greatly in thinking and attitude. I have a better relationship with my daughter." – Anonymous

Grandparents as Carers Group

One of the highlights of the year for the Grandparents Group was having their craft skills displayed at the Holroyd Community Centre. The exhibition consisted of printed tale cloths, baby clothes, tea towels, blankets, cushion covers and quilts. This activity was organised partly to recognise their incredible skills and partly therapeutic. After last years exhibition they felt this was a very uplifting experience to display their craft.

Cooking classes were held to give grandparents a taste of food from other cultures.

"I have been cooking Ceviche for 40 years, the preparation is an amazing process, I would advise everybody to try." – Norma Zavala

Grandparents Day was celebrated this year and attended by 9 grandparents who are regulars of the group, the ladies were happy that it was celebrated in the group as their families did not celebrate this occasion.

Information sessions were also held on the issue of the care of grandparents, as CALD grandparents sometimes have a different understanding of care from what was previously done in their families and within their different cultures. For many families the responsibility of caring for grandparents was left with family members until the person passed away, but roles have changed in Australia.

"Back home I looked after my parents till they died, now my children are busy with their life and families, I try to be independent." - Primitiva

An information session called "Let Miss Daisy Do the Driving" was held for grandmothers. It included the discussion of the issues of driving and mobility and manufacturers building cars suitable for older people.



"It is important for me to keep driving, I feel independent and without my car I feel lost, thank you for your advice." - Nelida

A planning day was also held for the Grandparents group to get their input on how the group is run and on what topics and activities should be covered. At the planning day grandparents expressed their gratitude for the group's existence. Some of the comments included:

"It is wonderful of the HHPMRC to continue helping grandparents breaking isolation. We really appreciate it." - Anonymous

After some issues with depression one grandmother stated that her counsellor recommended she continues with the group, she stated the group is good therapy for her. - Anonymous

An information session on falls prevention provided valuable information about how injuries can be limiting to confidence and it's important to stay safe for independent living.

"Since my friend had a fall she does not have the confidence enough to have her morning walk any more." - Prinitiva

Grandparents were joined by young mothers this year and it was a great experience for the grandmothers who interacted and helped with the babies.

"It makes me feel useful and happy to see the beautiful children." – Martha

Premature Babies Support Group

The Premature Babies Support Group was happy to welcome back a mum who had attended the group, but then moved back to Iran. Her babies are now turning 2 years old and it was great to see that the mum had coped well with living overseas and then travelled back to Australia. It was a happy day for everyone all round. The mum thanked us for the support that was given to her since the birth of her twin girls and was thankful for the perinatal program.

Information sessions were held for mothers about creative play and ideas were given to mothers about turning things around the house into creative play ideas. The program also covered the social and emotional behaviour of 2 year olds.

"It is clear that my child is friendlier to other children because now he is used to being with the others." – Amina

A Car Safety for Children session was held and provided information about restraining children in cars and not leaving children unattended in cars.

"In my country I used public transport with my child. Now I drive in Sydney. Good advice!" - Vittoria.

An information session about choosing proper footwear for children was also held, as this is an issue that can affect posture, comfort and physical confidence.

"Small items such as buttons can detach from my child's shoe and be a choking hazard." -Mouniera

Swimming for toddlers was also introduced to mothers, including the importance of teaching children to swim as early as possible to give them confidence in the water.

Home visits were increased this year to mums with new babies, 49 visits were made based on referrals from hospitals and early childhood nurses. There were also some mums who were visited after bringing new babies to the group.

Parramatta West Public School

This year the Parramatta West Playgroup celebrated its third anniversary. The celebration was attended by the school Principal and the Project Coordinator, Zulekha Nazir. It was a great day to see past and present families coming together to join in the celebration and it was good to see mothers who started with the playgroup three years ago attending the celebrations.

20 children, 3 babies, 22 parents and one grandmother attend this group on a regular basis throughout the year. The children have been successful in transitioning into school thanks to the school readiness program run every week along with the playgroup. The Principal stated that the readiness to school program helped the children to settle into kindergarten during 2009. Some of the comments from participants included:

"We are new in the playgroup and my daughter is so excited to come all the time, she especially loved the 'smart schooler practices sessions.'" - Karina

Children have also learned to write, follow print in books when reading and listen to stories read aloud.

"My child goes to childcare centre in the week but she insists on going to playgroup on Friday." - Dipali

A nutrition and health food program was held and mothers were introduced to healthy lunch boxes and were told of the importance of fruit in a child's diet.

"Before it was very difficult for my child to eat fruit, but after the information session he was eager to try it." - Chitukula

The children learnt to use pencils, crayons, texters and scissors, how to balance, run, jump and use equipment such as balls. Games are also used to promote children's ability to listen, take turns and share experiences. Mothers reported their children developed well by listening and overcoming shyness in some cases.

A visit to the group by the Early Childhood nurse was welcomed; she ran a session on child development for the families. A doctor also came to talk about childhood illnesses and answer questions from parents about their children's health.

Sudanese Playgroup

This year 15 children and 8 mothers attended the group regularly. The Sudanese Playgroup is run in partnership with St Anthony's Family Care and Josephite Community Aid. This partnership has contributed to the ongoing success of the Sudanese playgroup.

The children enjoyed a trip to the library at Wentworthville where mothers learned about the toy library and the importance of borrowing books for the children to read. All the mothers borrowed a book to take home after joining.

Information on the Toddler Tantrum Toolkit and 100 Ways to Praise Your Child were provided for parents. Reward charts were also suggested to parents with 100% of them mentioning that they would be focusing on the positive behaviour instead of the negative.

"My husband always says 'Yes' to children, even when I say 'no', I will give him this book to read so he can see that we have to make decisions together." -Teresa

Children and mothers also participated in craft activities. Abuk, a 4 yr old, said: "it's good to have fun with big people."

A readiness to school program has been started through this project. Women from this group were also able to socialise with each other.

"I learn how to help my child if he needs help and I learn how to play with him so he can learn something." – A Sudanese mum.

"I learn English and get children ready for school." – Amou

One on One Positive Parenting has been provided for families. This has proven more effective than running PPP in groups. Parents have said that story time is a positive activity for children, and have also said: *"I find story time very useful for children"* and *"I can't read to them at home because I don't know English well."*

Parents also stated that children learned something new in the group, *"my daughter started to show more interest in joining in different activities."*

Other Activities

- The Darfur community celebrations for Eid, where families enjoyed food and presents.
- 5 Sudanese Darfur women participated in the International Women's Day Event. It made them feel important and gave them the confidence to do a traditional dance in front of 300 women at Sylvania Waters.
- Western Sydney Community Forum presentation day on Collaborations.
- A new CALD women's support group has started at Wentworthville in partnership with the Indian Subcontinent SGP worker. The women are mainly from Sri Lanka, and they are knitting, socialising and also learning cake decorating and vegetable carving.
- A new Perinatal group meets at Parramatta West School on Fridays.
- Early Childhood Intervention Conference presentation by Zulekha Nazir and Norma Boules on Cultural Collaborations following the loss of a baby in Newcastle.



Darfur group - International Womens Day March 2009

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to Melissa Monteiro, the Manager and the Board of Management for their outstanding support and contribution to our project, with ideas and programs.

The project and all involved would like to acknowledge the contributions made throughout the year from our community partners.

The Department of Community Services – our funding body and their representatives: Peter Prants, Barbara Bates and Michelle Saffery.

The Early Intervention & Perinatal Team – Li Hua Chu, Biljana Kulic and Norma Boules for their hard work, dedication and sacrifices they make when working with all our beautiful families and their wonderful children.

The achievements have been over and above our expectations.

The Project appreciates the partnerships we have with:

Parramatta and Merrylands Community Health Centres, Westmead Hospital, Granville Multicultural Community Centre, Parramatta East Public School, Parramatta West Public School in particular the Holroyd City Council's OOSH room where we run our groups, Uniting Care Burnside, Uniting Care Parramatta, Mobile Minds, St Anthony's Family Care, Josephite Community Aid, Salvation Army Granville, Josephine Community Health, Western Sydney Community Forum, Family Worker Training, Dar Aisha, SDN, TAFE NSW, SIDS NSW and other projects from the Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre.



Barbara Bates
-DOCS -visit



Zulekha Nazir
at the Unifam
launch



Pacific
Islander group
performing at
the Institute of
Family Practice
Conference

Zulekha Nazir
Early Intervention and Perinatal Coordinator



(left) Darfur group - International Womens Day March 2009 **(right)** Sudanese Playgroup - Visiting Zoo



(left) Perinatal 2009 **(right)** Parramatta East p.s. playgroup. families from diverse background



(left) Positive Parenting Program in chinese at Westmead **(right)** Multicultural Womens Group - Community Fire Safety



(left) CALD Family Playgroup children Merrylands Community centre
(right) Darfur community - Eid Festival 2



(left) nutrition workshop at Sharing & Learning playgroup
(right) Open 2009 Parra west



(left) mothers and children are engaged in craft activity at Parramatta East. p.s. playgroup
(right) Readines to School Program



(left) Grandparents Group Exhibition
(right) Multicultural Women's Group - Knitting June 2009



(left) Institute of Family Practice Conference
(right) Sudanese Playgroup



Guest speaker at the African Multicultural Social Group



school holiday trip to Australian Museum from Sharing and Learning Playgroup with work placement students

Hills Inter-Connect Project Report

This new and exciting project of the MRC started in January 2009 with funding from the Western Sydney Area Assistance Scheme administered by DoCS.

The “Communities Inter-connect” project aims to create an environment where every person will have equal opportunities to pursue their expectations while respecting social norms and cultural diversity and to establish a balance between diversity and unity.

The primary target group of the project are newly arrived migrant families from CALD background in the Hills Shire area. The project also benefits community volunteers and the wider community from mainstream and CALD backgrounds.

The project adopted a soft entry approach to reach the target group, newly arrived families through social inclusion group sessions. These sessions gave them the opportunity to discuss their expectations and needs.

This group represented different cultures: Russian, Korean, Chinese, Indian, German, Sri Lankan, Scottish and Iranian. Through the networking session they were able to discuss their aspirations and challenges as new migrants and what services are available to address their needs.

The needs they expressed were: improving conversational English, more information on the NSW school system, self esteem and confidence building, which will all stand them in good stead to face the challenges at the work place and employment opportunities. The group requested to have a new migrant family's network meeting every week. This networking session provides them with the opportunity to interact with women who are facing similar problems and allowed them the opportunity to form new friendships and community links.

As improving their fluency and proficiency in English was one of their expressed needs, the project connected new migrants with a volunteer English teacher. This has resulted in once a week English conversation class held at the Centre.

The group has also started a project activity called “New Horizon – My Story” where the families have started a journal to document their story as a migrant. This will be exhibited at a later stage to showcase new beginnings from a migrant perspective.

The above sessions also evolved into an informal mentoring program. During the informal mentoring process two community volunteers, Larry O'Carroll and Anne Coupland, helped the group to understand Australian idioms and English conversation through discussions.



English Conversation Session in Progress

Partnerships Established

The project is currently working very closely with service providers such as Hills Community Aid, Rouse Hill Families Connect, Interrelate Families and Hills Family Services in order to identify newly arrived CALD families.

- Provided referrals to Centrelink, Hills Business Chamber, The Australian Centre for Languages and TAFE
- Attended the Hills Multicultural Network Meeting
- Working on Leadership Development Program for the community leaders including volunteers
- Attended the Hawkesbury-Hills Division of the General Practice Network to get information on their current services in order to connect the newly arrived families to these services
- Attended the Hills Generalist Interagency
- Member of the Families Interrelate Advisory Committee
- Member of the Hills Cultural Festival Committee
- Partnership with the North West Community College to provide Employment mentoring for the Newly Arrived migrant families in the Hills

Project Outcomes

The Project Steering Committee has been established with the following partners:

- The Hills Shire Council
- Community Resource Network
- Western Sydney Community Forum
- The Hills Community Aid and Information Service
- The Hills Family Centre
- Centrelink
- Interrelate Family Centres
- TAFE
- The Hills Community Health Centre
- Rouse Hill Families Connect
- Relationships Australia
- Community Representatives (3)

The Steering Committee meets every month to discuss project progress and implementation strategies. Since the inception of the project, the committee met 4 times with more than 90% of members attending these meetings and providing valuable contributions and guidance.

Reaching Out to the New Migrant Communities

The project promotional strategy was developed and implemented through community networks, contacts and relevant service providers. The media release and flyers were translated in key languages and promoted through community groups, service providers and networks. New families were invited to register with the MRC Hills Outreach Office through newsletter and media.

Strengthening Partnerships

Partnerships have been established with the following agencies through connecting the new migrant families: The Hills Family Centre, Hills Community Aid, local schools (Morning Tea for Migrant Mums Program), Libraries in the Hills (Migrant Story Program), Community Health (Information sessions for Migrant Families and Volunteers), Rouse Hill University of the Third Age Group (U3A), the Hills Shire Council (Harmony Day Celebrations and Cultural festival) North West Community College. Community partnership with groups such as Korean, Indian, Chinese, Middle Eastern have been very valuable to the project.

Services for the New Migrant Families

Apart from improving English language proficiency, the other key need for this community has been employment. Therefore, a partnership was formed with the North West Community College to provide new migrant families the opportunity to learn how to prepare a good job application and resume, learn interview and presentation skills, develop confidence building and communication skills and help identify career pathways. Under this partnership 30 new registered migrants were connected to the service. This partnership has led to positive employment outcomes and strengthened communities through its contribution to expanding social networks and accessing resources.

Development of social capital by facilitating opportunities for new and more established residents to engage with each other through mentoring.

Fifteen community volunteers are registered as Mentors with this project. They are from the Hills Multicultural Volunteer Forum, U3A and Social Clubs such as Zonta Probus, Soroptimist International, Rotary and Lions Clubs. The project held information sessions to introduce the project and to build relationships with between mentors and mentees.

A Community Volunteer Forum was conducted with more than 50 seniors participating. The forum provided the opportunity for the community members to understand the Communities Inter-connect project objectives and to get involved as mentors. This resulted in more than 10 members expressing interest in registering as mentors. They will be provided with orientation and training.

The ongoing Migrant Family Group Sessions continued driven by the mentees and mentors. The established community members who act as mentors get together and share their life experiences and life skills with new migrants as mentees to assist them with understanding the new society and settling into the community. Using community strength, they come together to practice in their second language and discuss cultural norms, arts and crafts and Australian history and way of life.

This is an evolving learning group trying to connect with the Australian social fabric. Some of the activities carried out by the mentors to support the new migrants to break the ice and feel more comfortable in connecting with the wider community are through:

- Information sessions
- Healthy Living through practical nutritional cooking
- Healthy Lifestyle choices
- Employment opportunities and career pathways
- Traditions and rituals i.e. Christmas in Australia
- One-on-One Mentoring

Three (3) families have built relationships with Mentors and have had their first sessions to introduce the family to the Mentor and to discuss the mentoring plan.

Group Mentoring

The mentoring groups meet weekly or bi-weekly to connect with the new migrants to the established community and to understand the services available and to build up their life skills through group activities such as arts and crafts, cultural cooking and healthy lifestyle choices. These programs allow the new migrant families to understand the Australian speaking styles and accent. Currently these groups have 15 mentors and 15 mentees working together as a group to understand the Australian way of life.

A new initiative with the Iranian community was started to help newly arrived families to connect with their community thus addressing social isolation. The first group session was held at Wesley Church hall with 3 new families and 10 established families getting together. The group discussed the important aspects of parenting in the context of the multicultural society of Australia. The new migrant families were provided with the opportunity to connect with their own community as the first step of their journey towards connecting with the wider community and becoming familiar with the Australian way of life.

With such strong basis already in place, the project is looking forward to building upon its achievements in the years to come.

Kamalini Fernando Inter-Connect Project Coordinator



Newly Arrived Migrants Attending a group Mentoring Session



(left) Workshop for the Newly Arrived Migrants on Employment
(right) One-on-one mentoring



Community Volunteers for the Mentoring of New Migrants



(left) Community Volunteers Orientation
(below) Tuesday social group pictures



Hills Outreach Services Report

The Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre has an outreach office at the Castle Glen Community Centre in Castle Hill to provide much needed settlement assistance to new arrivals in the area. This outreach office makes for very accessible service delivery, for casework, group work and other community capacity building initiatives.

The outreach location also provides a community base for a number of groups to meet and hold activities such as:

- Hills Multicultural Support Group
- South Asian Support Group
- Hills Middle Eastern Women's Group

As in past years, the Hills Outreach Office continued to organise various activities for the groups such as: English conversation classes, computer classes, information sessions on a variety of topics including financial management, employment and small business opportunities, healthy lifestyles including exercise and nutrition, personal development, cultural exchange, tai-chi, bushwalking, and yoga classes.

Some of the art and craft activities included exploring various art and craft media, glass painting, card making, henna art, patchwork and knitting. These activities provided the participants with opportunities to break their social isolation, come together and share knowledge, as well as experience and learn new skills. The classes were also the conduit through which educational information sessions were delivered and links created between service providers and the groups.

The Hills Middle Eastern Women's Group

The Hills Middle Eastern Women's group has been meeting every week for the past 3 years in the Hills area. Approximately twenty women from various cultural backgrounds such as Arabic, Turkish, Iranian and Pakistani come together once a week to learn about various services and participate in activities with other groups that increase their understanding and build their self confidence and esteem.

Shirok Shaaban, the group facilitator, organised a series of swimming lessons for the group and encouraged the group to participate in other mainstream activities and join other groups when they had activities. A more recent focus for the group has been a charity drive for the Cancer Council. The group is working on creating various items that they can then be sold at a morning tea. All proceeds will go towards assisting with finding a cure for cancer.

The goal for the group is to empower the ladies to learn new skills, enjoy each other's company and participate in the wider community through various initiatives.

In March 2009, the Hills Middle Eastern Women's Group joined Hills Community Aid, Baulkham Hills Shire Council, Glenhaven Community Centre, Hills Community Health and other services in the area to celebrate Harmony Day, the program focussed on cultural exchange and creating a better understanding of various cultures.

The group also participated in the Healthy Lifestyles program for CALD communities including the Eat Smart Go 2 & 5 program. The aim of the program is to educate community members about the importance of having a balanced lifestyle with exercise and the right dietary intake.

Other activities included recreational outings at the end of each term such as the Fagan Park excursion with other groups in the Hills area.

The Hills Multicultural Volunteer Forum

The Hills Multicultural Volunteer Forum (HMFV) continues to be a well organised and active group of volunteers in the Hills area. The convenor of the group, Lulitta Li, is a dynamic and dedicated worker. During the past year, the forum's volunteers continued to visit frail, aged and socially isolated migrants, shared information on falls prevention, referred and linked people to appropriate services in the area, visited nursing homes, participated in the Hills healthy lifestyle program and provided overall support to members of the growing multicultural community in the Hills area.

The Forum is also part of the Hills Healthy Lifestyles initiative in the Hills to promote the importance of maintaining good health through regular exercise and healthy eating to multicultural communities in the Hills area.

We would like to express our sincere thanks and gratitude to all the volunteers of the Forum who tirelessly and enthusiastically give their time to assist another person in need. We would like to thank the Hills Community Health Centre for their dedicated partnership and support, Hills Community Aid, Hills Community Care, the Cancer Council, Hills Chinese Women's Association, Australian Hindi Indian Association, Hills Middle Eastern Women's Group, Hills Korean Women's Group and last but by no means least, The Hills Shire Council deserve a special mention for their ongoing support and encouragement.



Hills volunteers on a visit to a nursing home



Volunteers visit to Parramatta City Council



Healthy Living Project in the Hills



Launch of Hills Communities Inter Connect Project at Hills Outreach



Chinese New Year Festival with Deputy Mayor Mike Thomas



Leadership training for volunteers



Volunteers Yum Cha gathering



*The Hills
Middle Eastern
Women's Group*



*100 years Active
Women in the
Hills*



Excursion to Fagan Park



Harmony Day 2009 at Parramatta Lake Reserve

Strength to Strength Report

Strength To Strength - Relationships Australia, Western Sydney

This has been a particularly challenging and exciting year for the Strength to Strength project. We have experienced a number of critical changes and responded admirably to the additional pressures on the service. My focus was largely on building team capability to manage change and ensuring we continued to grow and deliver on our commitments while maintaining our focus on our core business and clients.

The program is funded by FAHCSIA and is run in partnership between RA (Relationships Australia) and The Hills Holroyd Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre. The program's objective is to support refugees and humanitarian entrants from Iraq, Sudan and Afghanistan with therapeutic interventions for families with relationship challenges.

The program focuses on family issues which sometimes arise during the settlement process such as adjusting to the new culture, unemployment, lack of affordable housing, refugee experiences, schoolyard bullying, lack of understanding of Australian laws and policies, different child rearing practices etc.

The program is composed of various strategies such as early intervention, individual and family support, community capacity building and educational sessions. All of these are provided through individual and family counselling, organising recreational and educational activities for the target groups, facilitating regular group work and so on. Interpreters are provided whenever required. The workers are based at Hills Holroyd Parramatta MRC and outreach from Auburn and Blacktown.

Strength To Strength Team:

The program has a unique ethno-specific model with bilingual and bi-cultural family relationship support workers. These workers are regularly supervised and have the full support of the clinical staff of RA.

The STS team is composed of 6 part-time bilingual and bi-cultural relationship support/group workers skilled in case management and experienced in community development. The composition of the team is relatively consistent with the ethnic background of humanitarian entrants in the STS target areas.

In Auburn, Nasren Nasrat has been involved with the Afghan Dari speaking community as a family relationship support worker and Fayaz Wazin is involved as a group facilitator with the Afghan youth group.

In Parramatta, Diing Bul has been effectively engaging with the Sudanese Dinka speaking community; Isha Georges who speaks fluently Arabic, Assyrian, Turkish and Kurdish has been a strong family support worker, advocating for the Middle Eastern groups such as the Iraqi and Kurdish communities. George Okwera joined the project in April as a Sudanese Arabic relationship support worker working with Sudanese clients.

Biljana Kulic has been running the Darfur Women's group in Blacktown. Although Biljana is coming from Bosnia, she has demonstrated outstanding cross-cultural competencies to engage with CALD groups and has been successful in building strong rapport with clients.

Achievements:

Engaging Clients at Individual/family and group level:

Clients are engaged in various ways in order to deliver an optimum service. The program has achieved numerous outcomes in all areas of engagement with client groups.

African Project

Individual/Family:
Dinka
Sudanese Arabic
Darfur Women's group

Afghan Project

Individual/Family:
Dari/Persian
Afghan Youth Group Mothers
& Daughters group

Iraqi Project

Individual/Family:
Arabic, Assyrian, Kurdish
Parenting groups

Capacity Building:

Afghan Project

Mothers and daughters group (3 major activities)
End of year celebration - group work reviewing the year and identifying areas of family strengths
Group BBQ- Family laws/AVOs/child protection
Career Workshops - 5 sessions
Afghan Youth Group (weekly meetings)
Group Consultation - highlighting areas of needs

African Project

ACL presentation
School presentations
Darfur Women's group (Weekly Meetings)
Sessions on DV, Parenting, laws/policy on child protection, identifying child abuse/neglect; identifying individual skills /strengths; stress management
Sewing classes (six months)
Quilts expo - Seams for confidence

Iraqi Project

Chaldean Community:
Community Consultation
Computer Class
Parenting in a new culture
Easter celebration
ACL presentation

Networking with Service providers:

The project has established very strong relationships with various organisations. I regularly attend interagency and board meetings. I am also member of the Auburn SDVAG and attend BECAP at Blacktown. We have partnered recently with Burnside, STARTTS and other community organisations for our community capacity building events.

In conclusion, we had quite a remarkable year full of great outcomes in spite of various challenges. This has been made possible with the sheer dedication and compassion of all my team members and the great guidance and support from my manager, David Allan. I would like to thank them all whole heartedly. I look forward to more rewarding years to come and I am striving to take Strength To Strength to the next level of excellence.

Rahat Choudhury
Strength To Strength, Western Sydney



*Relationships
Australia Team*



*Information
Session*



Darfur exhibition

African Sessional Workers Project

Docs African Sessional Workers Project

The African Sessional Workers Project began in July 2007 as a pilot project funded by DoCS. The project, which is based at the MRC, aims to address issues related to communication, improve service delivery, assist in assessments and investigations and to ensure constructive and appropriate interventions and case plans implementations with African families by DoCS.

The 14 Sessional Workers employed to deliver this project are from the following target communities: Burundi, Congolese, Liberian, Sierra Leonean, Somali and Sudanese. These bilingual workers speak 16 African languages, with Dinka (a Sudanese language), followed by and Creole (a Sierra Leonean language) being the most requested languages.

Along with the services provided through referrals, the community education component within the project addresses the general information needs amongst African communities regarding the role of DoCS and rights and obligations under the Child Protection System and laws. The project is focussed on building and strengthening the relationships between DoCS and African families and communities.

Project Achievements:

Following promotion of the project to the various DoCS CSCs and to respond to the great demand, the project has been extended state-wide. The project has now been extended to the Metro Central and Eastern regions of Sydney, as there was a steady increase in requests for services outside the original target region of Western Sydney. Services have also been provided outside of Sydney to Armidale, Bathurst and Nowra.

During the past year, 8 promotional presentations were held across the Metro West and Central regions of Sydney. This promotional drive has helped increase knowledge of project and contributed to the increased demand for referrals.

Some of the significant outcomes for the project include:

- Improved communication and building of trust between caseworkers and clients.
- Improvement in the provision of language and culture support services to DoCS caseworkers.
- Improvement of family interventions, linking DoCS caseworkers with community contacts and support services available to African families.

This year the Sessional Workers completed 70 hours of training including "Identifying and Responding to Risk of Harm" and 2 days of NAATI's "Introduction to Interpreting" training.

Building Cultural Capacity in the community resulted in the region's first trained African Foster carers.

During the year, there have been 63 occasions of sessional support services provided to DoCS caseworkers and African families. The support services are still ongoing and majority of requests come from the Blacktown and Mt. Druitt Community Services Centres.

Three community education sessions on DoCS were delivered and well received by the community. There are many more planned for the coming months due to community demand. The sessions gave information on the role of DoCS, the Child Protection System and the laws in Australia. The sessions also provided an opportunity for community members and caseworkers to work together to bridge gaps in communication and trust, as well as to discuss the impact of culture on parenting (with an emphasis on discipline).

Let me take this opportunity to give a 'SPECIAL THANK YOU' to the project reference group for their guidance and commitment to the project and of course all the staff at the MRC for their great assistance.

Many thanks to Idil Abdullahi who served as the first coordinator from July 2007 to April 2009. Her efforts brought great and positive impact to the life of the project.

Most of all I would like to acknowledge our hard working team of Sessional Workers who have done an incredible job and continue to be committed to the project: Achom Edward, Deng Anthony, Monica Benjamin Biel, Amou Job, Angelina Makeny, Ayen Chol, Gloria Johnson, Malula Chibalonza, Lillian Lukoki, Jean Bosco, Yvette Niyonzima, Naima Abdullahi and Anthony Conteh. The feedback received from the DoCS caseworkers indicates that the Sessional Workers are culturally knowledgeable, proficient and committed to supporting children and their families.

A big thank you goes to the dynamic support personnel who keep supporting the life of this project, they are: Bernice Redman, Fatma Mohamed, Aurelia Rahman and Melissa Monteiro, our tireless manager.

To the African community, thanks for allowing us to serve you; this is your project, make good use of it and give your children a better and brighter future.

Solomon Freeman
African Sessional Project Coordinator



Sudanese Info session 2009



Margaret Oldfield, Regional Director-Metro West at the Foster Care Certificate Presentation at Blacktown DoCS CSC

African Access and Resource Project

Community Access and Resource Project- Horn of Africa Report

This has been the last year of this project. The main purpose of the project was to build the capacities of the new and emerging African communities in order to increase access to mainstream services through the development and delivery of leadership training programs, volunteer training and other activities related to increasing their skills base and building their confidence in accessing services.

The project has links and works across a number of African communities such as: Somali, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria and Sudan.

Community leaders and members of the above mentioned communities are involved in the development and implementation of the project by providing feedback on matters affecting their own communities, training needs, community development projects that can assist with building the capacity of their own community members to participate in the wider community.

Community involvement and participation is a clear indicator of the community's ownership of the project. All activities held by the Community Access and Resource worker enjoyed good community participation from the target groups outlined above.

Key project areas: Community capacity building, Training, Mentoring

Community Capacity Building

The project continued to build the capacity of individuals and community organisations in order to:

- Have better knowledge and understanding and access government and non-government services in Western Sydney areas;
- Increase their participation in a range of programs of government and other service agencies
- Increase understanding of the Australian society, customs, way of life and the legal system.
- Increase development of linkages of African small community organisations to government and non government organisations through organising introductory meetings, cultural awareness events and exploring ways for working together with CALD communities of African background.

The worker had organised a series of consultations with African communities that enabled the project to identify new issues:

- Understanding the Australian way of life
- Addressing behavioural problems in the community (especially youth)
- Career pathways
- Coping with stress
- Fundraising for community events
- Leadership training
- Development of networks
- Recreational activities
- Networking with service providers and other African community organisations

Mentoring

The project had held a series of mentoring programs for community leaders, youth and women's organisations. This has helped to improve their vision and integration in the mainstream communities. The program included: career pathways, leadership skills, employment. During the year over 150 members of the community have benefited from our mentoring program.

Community training

The project promoted a series of leadership training workshops to members of the African communities. The trainings provided a solid base for potential African leaders to better understand leadership in the context of Australia and to assist with a more successful integration through understanding the system.

Other training topics included: public speaking, fundraising techniques, project proposal writing, communication techniques, family support programs, fire safety issues, conflict resolution, advocacy.

Over 200 members of various African communities benefited from the project mentoring and training programs.



Networks, partnerships and beneficiaries of the project

The project maintained and developed partnerships with the following organisations:

- Lions Club of Parramatta
- Granville Multicultural Community Centre
- SydWest Community Services
- Black town Youth Services Association
- Hewitt House Neighbourhood Centre
- Karabi Community Development Service
- Cassia Community Centre
- Nepean Migrant Access
- Centrelink Parramatta, Holroyd, Blacktown, Mt Druitt
- Parramatta City Council
- Holroyd City Council
- Anglicare
- ICE

During the past year, the project continued to strengthen the capacity of the following community organisations:

- The Congolese Community Association
- The Zimbabwean Community Association
- The Sudanese Family Support Association
- Sudanese Evangelical Family Support Association
- African Agricultural Development Association
- Madi Ethnic Community Welfare Association

Community Consultation

We managed to maintain working relationship with the following organisations;

- Great Gogrial community organisation
- Luo Community organisation
- Ethiopian community Association
- Congolese Community Organisation
- Zimbabwean community organisation
- Sierra Leone community organisation
- Dinka Literacy Association
- Awiel Community Organisation
- Equatorial Community and Welfare association
- Duk Community Organisation
- Bor Community Organisation
- Madi Ethnic Community Welfare Association

Key achievements

- Members of the African communities in Western Sydney areas have greatly achieved an opportunity to contribute to and participate in all aspects of public life, particularly through their local councils.
- Members of African communities are continuously making use of relevant activities and programs provided or administered by the mainstream service providers.

- There is improved knowledge and sensitivity of cultural issues within service providers and the general public
- Improved communication between mainstream organisations and people from various African communities.
- Increased knowledge of governance systems and local government.
- Members of the African community organisation have been resourced and are becoming self-reliant.

This has been a great project to work on and I am very grateful to both WSAAS through DoCS for the funding received and to the MRC for the support, guidance and assistance that I have received from our team coordinator, Aurelia Rahman and the Manager, Melissa Monteiro.

Geoffrey Mangwi Mugi
Community Access and Resource Worker



Geoffrey with Maeve and Aurelia



African Workers Network Meeting

Financial Report

for the Year Ended
30 June 2009