

# PRESENTERS : :

## Saami Ansari : : PANELIST

Saami Ansari worked as a Bangladeshi Community Settlement Worker at Sydney Multicultural Community Services since June 2005, and in 2006 the position became Generalist under the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's Settlement Grants Program. He provides casework, referrals and settlement information to the community with a low English profile. He has organized workshops for Bangladeshi and multicultural communities and plans to develop a Bangladeshi playgroup "to unstring the shackles of isolation for Bangladeshi mums".

## Sarjoh Bah : : WORKSHOP PRESENTER / PANELIST

Sarjoh Bah is currently working as the Multicultural Service Officer for Mount Druitt Centrelink. He is of a Sierra Leonean background who studied in Egypt at ElAzhar University and Cairo University. He holds a BA in Education and is also studying Social Sciences with UWS since his arrival to Australia as a refugee. He has worked with refugees both overseas and in Australia as a worker and a volunteer. His experience includes his work with Auburn Migrant Resource Centre as a refugee youth worker, a Community Liaison officer with Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW and with the National Multicultural Service Branch of Centrelink as a project officer with the African liaison unit. He is currently the vice chair of Sierra Leone Australian Student Union. He is a dad of a 4 year old girl.

## Shikha Chowdhary WORKSHOP PRESENTER

Shikha Chowdhary has been working as a Programs Manager at the Ethnic Child Care, Family and Community Services Cooperative since 1995 managing various programs of the Cooperative in Children's, Disability and Aged Care programs. She has twenty years of experience in adult education, developing and conducting training sessions to children's services sector on issues related to multiculturalism in various positions. She has a registered trainer's qualifications with background in Adult education and Philosophy.

## Mary Dimech PANELIST

Mary Dimech has worked for the past 34 years with migrants and refugees in both the government and non-government sectors in Sydney, Melbourne and London. Before coming to DoCS in early November 2003, Mary worked with refugees at STARTTS – as Manager of the Early Intervention Program. Prior to that Mary worked for 6 years as the Director of the Race Discrimination Policy Unit at HREOC for the Race Discrimination Commissioner. From 1989 –1995 Mary worked as the National Program Manager of the Arts for Multicultural Australia Program at the Australia Council and Principal Policy Officer, Ethnic Affairs Commission. Mary has been instrumental in setting up many CALD organizations, has written a number of publications and been involved in numerous government and community committees representing issues relating to CALD communities.

## Anh Do WORKSHOP PRESENTER

Anh Do currently works in the position of Vietnamese Child Protection Worker for Centacare since 1995. She has a Diploma in Community Welfare. Her current work includes providing services for: individual counselling, protective behaviours education, court support , group work, community development and information & consultation to Vietnamese children and adolescents and their families



## Hashim Elhassan WORKSHOP PRESENTER

Hashim Elhassan is currently working as a Team Leader of Volunteer Co-ordination Unit, Mission Australia for the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS). Hashim has worked with refugees and humanitarian entrants since his arrival to Australia in 1994 on purely voluntary capacity. He has been a pioneer in organising many activities for the settlement of refugees including the development of “Hey Dad Group discussion” in partnership with GMCC, Centacare Broken Bay, Auburn MRC, Harris Park Community Centre, ECLOS in Western Sydney and interested fathers in the African and Arabic Communities. Hashim is a father of two children 26 year old daughter and 10 year old son.

## Osai Faiva WORKSHOP PRESENTER

Osai Faiva is originally from Tonga from where he came in 1981 as a young overseas student. He subsequently got married and fathered 5 children in Australia. Osai is a well respected community leader and he currently works at May Murray Neighbourhood Centre.

## Sene Gide PANELIST

Sene Gide is a muslim migrant woman, who is a mother and a teacher and a director of a child care centre. She arrived from Turkey 14 years ago. Sene studied many courses: English, WOW, Cert III, Diploma in Children’s Services, Bachelor of Education (BEd. ECE) and Master of Education in Early Childhood Education, whilst working in various roles in early childhood education. This included working as an untrained and trained teacher, acting director and as a director in different child care centres. Sene works at Boundary Lane Children’s Services. She has 3 children (13, 11 and 4 years). Sene has been using childcare services for many years as a parent, and strongly believes that childcare educators have a big role and responsibility to prepare young children for the future, especially children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

## Miriam Giugni SPEAKER

Miriam Giugni had been working in early childhood education for 15 years. In this time she has been a teacher, director, trainer, consultant and university lecturer at the University of Western Sydney and Macquarie University. Currently, Miriam is researching the troubles and enchantments of working for equity, social justice and activism in early childhood education. Miriam is an active member of the Social Justice in Early Childhood group and the founder of the Critical Curriculum Community. Miriam is beginning to publish her research both nationally and internationally with a focus on equity, social justice and activism in early childhood education. For this she is grateful for the many early childhood professionals who inspire her and support her to share ideas and to continue learning.

## Maria Lemos WORKSHOP PRESENTER

Maria Lemos has almost 20 years experience in community development. Currently at May Murray Neighbourhood Centre and previously with Portuguese Welfare, she finds community work one of the most rewarding experiences.. She is from East Timor, studied in Portugal where she met her Guinea Bissau husband and now has two grown up daughters. Other interests include reading, movies and fashion styling.

## Anne Macinante WORKSHOP PRESENTER

Anne Macinante has been in the Early Childhood industry since 1992 as an Early Childhood Teacher (ECT). She has worked in Singapore for over three years as an ECT and an English Language Teacher with British Council. On returning to Australia, Anne completed her Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and currently works with Ethnic Child Care, Family and Community Services Co-operative Ltd as a Project Officer for the CALD Children’s Services Project.



## Julie McCrossin HOST

Julie McCrossin talks to people for a living. She presented the radio show Life Matters on ABC Radio National for 5 years until 2005, initially with Geraldine Doogue and then as solo presenter, covering countless health, welfare and educational topics with a frequent rural focus. Julie began working for the ABC in 1983 and she's presented many Radio National programs including "Background Briefing" and "Arts National", as well as stints on ABC Rural Radio and 702ABC Sydney. Currently Julie presents a travel program called Up and Away for Qantas in-flight entertainment on Radio Q, writes for the new ABC magazine Life Etc and facilitates conferences and training seminars nationally. For over 20 years Julie has hosted hundreds of public events including the Alcohol Summit Youth Forum for the Commission for Children & Young People as part of the 2003 NSW Summit on Alcohol and the Childhood Obesity Summit for the NSW Government with Co-Chair Richard Walsh. Julie has worked as a children's entertainer, literacy teacher and community legal educator. As well as university qualifications in the arts, education and law and she is an Ambassador for NAPCAN (The National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect).

## Dewi Putru PANELIST

Dewi Putru works for the Indonesian Welfare Association Inc. as settlement service worker to the Indonesian Community. She provides settlement information to the community, group development, casework, and referrals. Currently she runs two Indonesian women's support groups in partnership with Schools as Community Centres in Marrickville and Punchbowl. She has been in her position for seven years. Last year she interviewed the Indonesian women in the groups regarding parenting practices in Australia. She presented on child rearing practices at the Ethnic Childcare Family and Marrickville CALD Working Party based on the survey. She has been living in Australia for 30 years where she has raised two children, a boy and a girl, and experienced some of the difficulties raising children in Australia.

## Dr Shanti Raman KEY NOTE SPEAKER

MBBS, FRACP, M App Epi

Dr Shanti Raman is the community paediatrician for Sydney South West Area Health Service (SWSAHS) – Child Protection and has a conjoint appointment with the University of New South Wales. Dr Raman is a trained paediatrician, with sub speciality training in public health. Her research and teaching interests include poverty and health, health of ethnic minority populations, and international health. Dr Raman was Chair of the Ethnic Access Committee at the Children's Hospital at Westmead (CHW) and has trained child health workers in cultural awareness and cultural competence. She is an advocate for refugee children and families and has set up a holistic Refugee Health Clinic for Children in Western Sydney. She was a member of the National Health and Medical Research Committee (NHMRC) working party on Cultural Competence and an active member of the Paediatric Policy Committee of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. She is currently doing a PhD examining the role of cultural identity in children's wellbeing.

## Jill Sergeant PANELIST

Jill Sergeant is the Treasurer and a founding member of the Australian African Network. AAN was formed in 2006 and so far has run a seminar, set up a playgroup, and hosted a party and regular picnics for mixed African/non-African couples and families in Sydney. She is the single mother of a 12 year old boy whose father is an Ashanti from Ghana, and has retained close ties with her son's father and his second wife and children. In her professional life, Jill has worked in the HIV/AIDS sector since 1990 in a publications and communications capacity.



## **Beatrice Sesay** WORKSHOP PRESENTER / PANELIST

Beatrice Sesay arrived from Sierra Leone to Australia 5 years ago. She is married and is mother of two children. Beatrice is presently studying Diploma in Community Services at Granville TAFE, and is working for the African Communities Council Inc. as a Community Settlement Services Officer (CSSS). Beatrice has also worked with the Salvation Army and Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS). She is currently Chairperson for the Sierra Leone Women's Wan Word Association. Beatrice loves her job because she's got the passion to help people, and it gives her joy when some of the needs of clients are met, especially since she has been through the settlement difficulties in a new country herself. Her hobbies are dancing, music, reading, watching soccer and sports – athletics. .

## **Bernadette Stevens** WORKSHOP PRESENTER / PANELIST

Bernadette Stephens works for Pacific Island Women's Advisory and Support Service Inc (PIWASS) where she is the MANA Parenting Co-ordinator. MANA is a parenting supplement that was developed around the needs of Pacific parents. The supplements are: Discipline and Strengthening Family Unity, Time and Money Management and Resources for Pacific Communities. Bernadette is from Fijian background and is a parent of a 9 year old.

## **Rugmini Venkatraman** SPEAKER

MA PHD

Dr. Rugmini Venkatraman is a trained Sociologist and has considerable research experience on women's issues, both in India and in Australia. She has a PhD in Sociology (University of Madras, India) and a Masters degree in Women's Studies (University of New South Wales), and has worked extensively in the migrant community sector, particularly in the area of women's welfare and development. For the past, almost, ten years she has been with the NSW Strategy to Reduce Violence Against Women, now hosted by the Communities Division, of the New South Wales Department of Community Services. She works as the Senior Regional Strategies Officer, Violence Prevention, for Western Sydney region. Rugmini is also the chairperson of Immigrant Women's Speakout Association Inc.

## **Amrit Versha** SPEAKER / WORKSHOP PRESENTER / CONFERENCE CONVENOR

MA Bed MBA

Amrit Versha, has a background in education and Business Administration along with qualifications in Workplace training and assessment. Amrit, currently manages a private business, works as a freelance consultant and a part-time TAFE teacher, after departing from her extremely successful role in the community sector. Some of these included her last position as the manager of Auburn Migrant Resource Center. A few other roles that Amrit held over the years are as a Manager of Multicultural Family Planning Association, Coordinator Disability Employment, Sups children services program worker and the Project Officer for the Department of Community services (DoCS). Amrit is known in the community sector as a driving force behind very successful projects and organizations that have built capacity of under represented refugee and humanitarian communities.