

# Relationships Australia

NEW SOUTH WALES

Media release

Tuesday December 13 2010

## Hearing the Experiences of Refugee Families In Western Sydney

Today Relationships Australia hosted an event with the African Refugee Community in Western Sydney, the UNSW Centre for Refugee Research and SydWest Multicultural Services Inc to hear about the refugee experiences since settling in Australia.

"Refugees arrive in Australia with high hopes of gaining freedom, respect and acceptance. Soon after arrival many become fearful for their children due to the different cultural traditions and beliefs and because they cannot navigate the Australian government systems and child protection authorities," Anne Hollonds, Relationships Australia NSW CEO said.

"Today's event was held for the refugee community to present ideas about how the system could better assist refugee settlement and transition into the Australian community," Anne Hollonds said. "It's also an opportunity for them to build confidence and skills in raising children in a new culture and to strengthen their relationships with their children."

The event was attended by representatives from NSW Police, Community Services, Centrelink and the NSW Department of Education. It was held in response to a community consultation held in October titled, "*Children's Rights Parents Rights*". The community consultation and subsequent report found that family issues are often made worse by the many other issues refugees face including inadequate and overcrowded housing, language difficulties, unemployment and financial stress. There was also considerable stress about the different family roles in Australia, especially those of women and children, which were often very different to African countries.

To find out more about Relationships Australia services call 1300 364 277 or visit and to [www.nsw.relationships.com.au](http://www.nsw.relationships.com.au).

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### **About Relationships Australia NSW**

Relationships Australia services include counselling for individuals couples and families (face-to-face, telephone and online); parenting and relationship education; support for families going through separation; specialist services for people who have been in care, refugee families and Aboriginal communities; workplace counselling and training; employee assistance programs and consultancy for companies; and training for family support professionals. Relationships Australia NSW is part of a national network of over 200 centres.

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Individual, Couple & Family Counselling, Relationships & Parenting Courses, Post Separation Services, Children's Contact Services, Family Relationship Centres, Adolescent Services, Family & Workplace Mediation  
Corporate & Business Consultancy, Professional Training & Consultation

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