



CENTRE FOR
ADVANCING JOURNALISM

The AuSud Media Project 2011-2013

Final Report

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Executive summary

This project had its genesis in a 2008 conversation between Mr Michael Gawenda, who was then founding Director of the Centre for Advancing Journalism at the University of Melbourne, and a member of the Centre's advisory board, Professor Michael Parks, from the University of Southern California (USC). Professor Parks told Mr Gawenda about a series of projects USC had undertaken to provide a voice to newly arrived and otherwise voiceless immigrants in southern California.

Their conversation occurred against the backdrop of several negative developments for the Sudanese community in Australia. Since 2005, the Sudanese community in Melbourne had become a target of a high-profile police operation against robberies and violence. This had led to a number of young Sudanese men taking legal action against the police under the Racial Discrimination Act (1975), a case ultimately settled out of court.

Then in late 2007 a 19-year-old Sudanese student, Mr Liep Gony, was fatally bashed by two white men at a railway station in the Melbourne suburb of Noble Park. When the story first broke, the media inaccurately reported that Mr Gony had been murdered by members of a Sudanese gang. In the aftermath, the then Minister for Immigration, Mr Kevin Andrews, observed that some immigrant groups 'don't seem to be settling and adjusting into the Australian life as quickly as we would hope'. He then announced a cut from 70% to 30% in the share of humanitarian visas that were to go to Africans.

Upon learning from Professor Parks about the projects in southern California, Mr Gawenda decided to explore whether the Centre for Advancing Journalism could do something similar in Australia for the Sudanese community. He enlisted academic researchers from the University of Melbourne, Swinburne University of Technology and La Trobe University to lead research relating to media representation and cross-cultural communication, as well as to provide expert advice on the creation of community-based organisations.

This project had four key goals:

1. Analyse media representations of Sudanese people in Australia.
2. Discover how this affects their everyday lives.
3. Train them in media skills so they could make their own voice heard.

4. Assess whether such an approach could be effective in empowering a newly arrived immigrant community.

A pilot project funded by the Myer Foundation and the University of Melbourne's Social Justice Initiative was conducted in 2009. This provided the basis for a successful application to the Australian Research Council for funding to carry out a Linkage project (LP110100063) over the three years 2011-2013. The project was funded for \$253,000.

Research

The research element of the project involved three key fields of investigation:

1. How Sudanese people were portrayed by the Australian media.
2. How media portrayals influenced the lives of Sudanese migrants.
3. Whether the media training devised for the project was effective in meeting the project goals.

The researchers held roundtable discussions in June 2010, 2011 and 2012, as well as 13 focus groups with participants of the training program, to find out what Sudanese people thought about how their community was portrayed in the Australian media, what they thought about the training proposal, and how they thought it might be delivered.

These discussions revealed three key themes. First, participants felt that they had been represented both inaccurately and negatively by the news media. Second, participants said they felt socially *integrated* into Australian society, but not socially *included*. Third, many participants attributed the social exclusion they had experienced to negative and inaccurate media portrayals.

The negative media had affected them personally and continually. The Liep Gony-Kevin Andrews case had had continuing material effects, from a reduction in the number of Sudanese migrants entering Australia through the humanitarian program, to everyday expressions of racism directed at them.

In addition to this qualitative research, content analysis was carried out to identify how Sudanese Australians were portrayed in a sample of Australian media outlets. The findings

showed that by far the most common stories in Victorian metropolitan newspapers about Sudanese people had them linked with crime and violence. This reached a spectacular peak in the federal election year of 2007, when immigration and asylum-seeker policies were of high political salience and Kevin Andrews made his remarks.

Training

The training element of the project was designed initially so that the Sudanese participants would have a large say in how it was done and what it should consist of. A steering committee was formed for this purpose, but complications arose over the decision-making process, and in effect the research team took over.

This raised questions both about the degree to which participants felt genuinely empowered to determine the direction of the program, and about ownership. These were to have consequences for the long-term sustainability of the project.

In addition to giving the participants journalism skills, the training program was designed to involve working journalists and media experts as trainers, and so create links between the media and the Sudanese community which it was hoped might influence the ways the journalists reported on the community.

This was done through two primary means, first by having journalists involved in the training, and second by a mentoring scheme in which each student was paired with a volunteer mentor, who was an experienced journalist.

The results of the mentoring scheme were mixed. Some relationships flourished, but many foundered because of a lack of understanding by both sides about how it should work, and there was a lack of structure to provide guidance. However, the mentoring system did yield two important results: it educated and sensitised the journalists about the Sudanese community, and it gave the Sudanese participants relationships that they valued, both for the support they got and more generally because it contributed to their sense of belonging in Australia.

As for the content of the training program, the research team thought the best way to meet the needs of the Sudanese community was to train the participants in the skills and methods of journalism, in particular *news* journalism.

This, as it turned out, was not what the Sudanese Australians wanted to do. Some of the methods of news journalism – approaching strangers for interviews, analysing what they said and converting it into news – were foreign and confronting to most of them. They were self-conscious about their English-language skills, and – given the history – understandably shy about approaching strangers in the street.

Moreover, news journalism requires impartiality, the capacity to put the story ahead of personal or community allegiances. With such a history of discrimination, they were understandably reluctant to write stories that contained any negativity about their community, lest it be picked up by the mainstream media and turned against them.

The biggest challenge of all was how to make the project sustainable beyond the funding period. This was where the lack of ownership and the consequent lack of empowerment at the outset had consequences. In late 2012, efforts were made to shift the training content from a total focus on journalism to a focus on creating a Sudanese-run organisation to continue the project and place it in Sudanese hands. This involved exposing the participants to discussions about potential audiences, governance, and fund-raising.

This created deep anxiety, and participation in the training fell away sharply in late 2013. A steering committee was formed to take the project forward, but by the time the project ended, the momentum had been lost.

For all the difficulties and challenges encountered, however, the training project did deliver some positive outcomes. It provided trainees with a carefully designed introduction to journalism basics, a point noted in many of the evaluations provided by the trainees. It also provided a considerable number of newly arrived people, many of whom had had traumatic experiences and who had mixed levels of English-language proficiency, with some enhanced skills in writing, and improved oral and written English-language skills.

More generally, it gave the participants some connections with, and insights into, the institutional life of their new society, and provided them with the foundations for developing a sustainable media platform for their community. In these ways, the project did contribute to the empowerment of an oppressed community. It also generated a degree of amity among the disparate elements of the Sudanese community who participated, and a touch of healing in their feelings towards the wider Australian society.

The main lesson is that a top-down process like this runs into ownership problems, and these can be fatal to sustainability. Conversely, a bottom-up process, where the design is driven by the articulated needs of the community, and where it is hooked into an existing community-based resource, is likely to avoid the ownership problem and therefore is more likely to be sustainable.

1. Introduction and background

Sudanese people constituted the largest single national group of Black African migrants to come to Australia over the decade to 2010. In late 2007 a 19-year-old Sudanese student, Mr Liep Gony, was fatally bashed by two white men at a railway station in the Melbourne suburb of Noble Park. When the story first broke, the media inaccurately reported that Mr Gony had been murdered by members of a Sudanese gang. The then Minister for Immigration, Mr Kevin Andrews, made a public statement commenting on Mr Gony's death. Even though it was two white men who were charged with Mr Gony's murder, Mr Andrews commented that some immigrant groups "don't seem to be settling and adjusting into the Australian life as quickly as we would hope". He then announced a cut from 70% to 30% in the share of humanitarian visas that were to go to Africans.

In a febrile political atmosphere created by an election campaign in which issues of race, immigration and asylum-seekers had been ventilated in sometimes extreme and discriminatory terms, this event and the subsequent statements by Mr Andrews reverberated throughout the Australian community. It reverberated with particular force among the Sudanese community in Australia.

This was reflected in media coverage of Sudanese Australian people and their community.

The media perform a crucial role in shaping how different groups in society are seen by the society as a whole, which in turn can influence attitudes towards them, affect their civil rights, influence government policy towards them, and may influence how individual members of those groups fare in everyday relationships with the wider society (Cottle, 2000). At this time there was a great deal of media focus on violence in the Sudanese community and on the dysfunctional relationship that had developed between the Sudanese community and Victoria Police.

The troubles in this relationship had begun in 2005, when police in the Moonee Valley area, in the north-western suburbs of Melbourne, noticed what they called a spate of robberies, armed robberies and assaults which the victims had said were committed by "groups of 'dark-skinned' or 'African' youths". In 2006, police at the Flemington police station, just south of Moonee Valley, launched Operation Molto as a response to these developments. This was to lead ultimately to allegations that police were "racially profiling" young men from Sudan and other

African countries. According to Professor Chris Cuneen, a criminologist from James Cook University in Townsville who had studied policing of Aboriginal people, “racial profiling” occurs when police initiate contact with people on the basis of their race or ethnicity.

In November 2010, 17 young men of Sudanese or other African background lodged an application in the Federal Court under the Racial Discrimination Act, 1975, alleging systematic racial profiling by Victoria Police. In February 2013, two weeks before the matter was due to come to trial, the matter was settled. As part of the settlement, Victoria Police agreed to hold two inquiries, one into its cross-cultural training and one into the way officers dealt with people they stopped in the street.

Discrimination has been shown to have measurable negative effects on people’s health, economic success, educational attainments and relations with various authorities and institutions, including police and the criminal justice system. In addition, discrimination has been shown to adversely affect subjective feelings of belonging and well-being, with significant consequences for mental health, civic participation and social conduct (Gifford et al, 2007).

The AuSud Media Project was born out of concerns over media representations of Sudanese Australians, and a desire to find practical ways of addressing the issue. Ausud, meaning ‘lion’ in Arabic as well as combining elements of ‘Australia’ and ‘Sudan’, seemed a suitable name.

The project had its genesis in a conversation between Mr Michael Gawenda, who was then founding Director of the Centre for Advancing Journalism at the University of Melbourne, and a member of the Centre’s advisory board, Professor Michael Parks, from the University of Southern California (USC). Professor Parks told Mr Gawenda about a series of projects USC had undertaken to provide a voice to newly arrived and otherwise voiceless immigrants in southern California.

This conversation took place in 2008, in the aftermath of the events of 2007. Mr Gawenda came to the view that the newly arrived Sudanese immigrants were getting a bad deal from the media, and on learning from Professor Parks about the projects in southern California, he decided to explore whether the Centre for Advancing Journalism could do something similar in Australia.

Mr Gawenda discussed with Dr David Nolan, a senior lecturer in the University of Melbourne’s School of Culture and Communication, the possibility of applying for an ARC Linkage grant for a project that would both research the way the Australian Sudanese community was portrayed in

the mainstream media and organise training in the basics of journalism for Sudanese people so that they could have their own 'voice' and not have to rely entirely for their portrayal on journalists who often had no knowledge of the Sudanese community, its culture, its challenges and the backgrounds of the community's members.

Mr Gawenda enlisted academic researchers to lead research relating to media representation and cross-cultural communication, as well as to provide expert advice on the creation of community-based organisations. These were Dr Nolan, Associate Professor Karen Farquharson, Associate Dean (Research and Engagement), Faculty of Health, Arts and Design at Swinburne University, and Professor Tim Marjoribanks, Head of the Department of Management in the La Trobe University Business School.

The four key goals of the project were to:

1. Produce a detailed, longitudinal analysis of media representations of Sudanese people in Australia over the period 2000 – 2012.
2. Enhance understanding, through interview and focus group research, of how media representation affects the everyday lives and experiences of Sudanese communities, the communication needs of these groups, and the degree to which these needs are effectively met.
3. Develop, in consultation with Sudanese people and with the involvement of industry partners and journalists, media training and the development of web-based journalism produced by Sudanese people to help meet their media needs.
4. Through a participant-observation study, analyse and assess the processes through which this training initiative was developed and implemented, its successes, challenges and outcomes relative to the overall project goals.

Mr Gawenda's first contact with the Sudanese community was through the Adult Multicultural Education Service (AMES). Through them, a meeting was convened with a diverse range of Sudanese Australians. Through the good offices of Mr Don Edgar of the Brotherhood of St Laurence and Ms Grace McQuilten of The Social Studio, regular meetings were established to discuss this research with Sudanese Australians, leading to the formation of a steering group of representatives of different groups within the Sudanese community to work in consultation with the research team and industry partners to develop the training program and media initiative.

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) was invited to become involved, as were a number of professional journalists, in the training of Sudanese people in how the media worked and in the development of media skills.

Despite initial concerns by the Sudanese community that they would be exploited for academic research purposes, 15 Sudanese Australians volunteered to participate in the initial training program and in the parallel research project. Over the life of the project 32 Sudanese Australian people participated.

A pilot project funded by the Myer Foundation and the University of Melbourne's Social Justice Initiative was conducted in 2009. This funding supported:

- an initial analysis of newspaper coverage of Sudanese Australians, which formed the basis for a refereed conference paper¹;
- a preliminary training program, and
- a roundtable event in April 2010 at The University of Melbourne, at which the issue of media representation of the Sudanese community in Australia was the focus of discussion.

At this roundtable, and at subsequent focus-group discussions among program participants, the Gony-Andrews matter was repeatedly and spontaneously raised, even though it had occurred three years previously.

The final report on the pilot project stated that while the pilot had been a success, several issues had been identified that would need to be addressed in the substantive project.

The successes were that the pilot project had:

- attracted a group of young Sudanese who stayed with the training program for eight weeks;
- signed up an outstanding list of journalists as volunteer trainers, all of whom reported how much they enjoyed the experience;

¹ Marjoribanks, T., Nolan, D. & Farquharson, K. (2010), "Media Representations of Sudanese People in Australia: An Initial Analysis. Media, Democracy and Change: Refereed Proceedings of the Australian and New Zealand Communication Association Conference 2010, pp 1-13. Canberra: University of Canberra.

- given the trainees an introduction to journalism basics;
- brought mainstream journalists in to develop a relationship with the Sudanese community through mentoring, and
- generated good co-operation between the Centre and its partners, the ABC and AMES.

The issues to arise from the pilot were:

- It was unclear how representative of the Sudanese community the trainees were and, as a result, the project appeared to lack community involvement.
- The eight weeks of training barely scratched the surface in equipping the trainees for producing their own journalism. There had not been enough out-of-class work, and not enough texts or other educational resources.
- The substantive training program would require much more intensive work, more hours spread over a longer period and a detailed program.
- The mentor system did not work properly. It proved difficult in many cases for mentors to make contact with their trainees. Mentors were not clear about their role; trainees were unsure how to use mentors, and many were reluctant to approach their mentor. There was a need to devise a new mentoring system.
- The different levels of English-language competence among trainees was a problem. Some of the trainees needed basic English grammar, spelling and general language training, and all would have benefited from some training in English.
- There was some progress towards getting the trainees to organise themselves, with a core leadership group developing. This needed further encouragement. The blog created for the project needed to be run by the trainees and the leadership group needed to be directed towards organising community outreach for the project.

The pilot project provided the basis for a successful application to the Australian Research Council for funding to carry out the training and research over three years. It was funded by the ARC as a Linkage project (LP110100063), the Linkage partners being the ABC and AMES.

The Linkage grant was awarded in November 2010. The grant was \$83,000 in 2011, \$85,000 in 2012 and \$85,000 in 2013, a total of \$253,000. The partner organisations provided both financial and in-kind support throughout the duration of the project. The title of the project for which the grant was given was *Media Treatment and Communications Needs of Sudanese Australians*.

The project was initially led by Mr Gawenda. The other Chief Investigators (CIs) on the project were Dr Nolan, Associate Professor Farquharson, and Professor Marjoribanks. In mid-2012, Mr Gawenda's term as Director of the Centre for Advancing Journalism expired, and he withdrew from formal involvement in the project. His place as a CI was taken in August 2012 by Dr Denis Muller, Senior Lecturer and Senior Research Fellow in the Centre. Mr Gawenda's place as project leader was taken by Dr Nolan.

Mr Reece Lamshed was engaged to manage and co-ordinate the training, and Ms Violeta Politoff assisted with organising both the training and research. Academic research assistance was provided by Ms Politoff in the first year and by Dr Alice Burgin and Dr Aisling Bailey in subsequent years. Ms Louise Wilson provided administrative support and advice throughout the project, and Ms Lucy Chancellor-Weale arranged many of the associated events.

2. Research Methods

The research element of this project involved three key fields of investigation.

The first involved analyses of how Sudanese people were portrayed by the Australian media. The second centred on how media portrayals influenced the experiences of Sudanese migrants in their dealings with institutional authorities (including journalists) and the Australian community generally. The third focused on the processes and outcomes of the media training delivered with the assistance of industry partners through the Centre for Advancing Journalism at the University of Melbourne.

While the focus of this study was on Sudanese Australians, it provided a case study with wider ramifications. In the decade preceding the research, Australia experienced significant levels of immigration from a diverse range of African migrant groups. Sudanese Australians were both the largest of these, and one of the most diverse. Thus, they present an important case study for examining how to develop avenues for representation for migrant groups that are characterised by substantial ethnic, linguistic, regional and biographical diversity. Sudanese migrants were also among the most publicly visible representatives of this migration trend, as a consequence both of bodily characteristics and of media coverage that linked violence and criminality with ethnicity and race (Due 2008, Windle 2008, Nunn 2008, VEOHRC 2008: 27-29).

More broadly, this study addressed the pressing global issue of the representation and experience of groups at a time when there were increased levels of forced migration (Castles and Miller 2003). Previous research suggested that media representations could have powerful impacts on how migrants are viewed and treated (Hartley and Pedersen 2007). Internationally, research suggested that negative representations could also result in those groups internalising such perspectives, leading to poor self-esteem and diminished wellbeing (Williams and Williams-Morris 2000).

Stage One: Media analysis

The first element of the project analysed how Sudanese people were being represented in the Australian news media. The research provided a longitudinal picture of news media coverage of Sudanese migrants in Australia between 2000, the year in which Australia shifted the focus of its Humanitarian Program towards Africa, and 2012. The focus was on major national,

metropolitan and local newspapers, and on major television stations, both public (ABC, SBS) and commercial (Channels 7, 9, 10). A content analysis of coverage provided a perspective on both the amount of attention Sudanese Australians received, as well as indicating when this media focus was particularly intense. Content analysis was also used to establish which sources were quoted in news stories, providing insights into which perspectives and voices came to be heard in media debates about Sudanese Australians.

These data were also subjected to a frame analysis (Reese et al 2001), to provide insights on the narrative frames within which Sudanese-Australians were represented to the wider population: for example, the degree to which Sudanese-Australians were positioned within 'law and order' frames centred on violence and criminality.

Following this, discourse analysis of media language and imagery, drawing on news stories generated at key moments identified in the content analysis, was conducted to gain insight into the understandings of Sudanese Australians that were generated in media discourse. Through this process, the analysis assessed the degree to which, for example, media tended to rely upon and reproduce myths regarding 'African gangs'.

Newspaper material from 2000 to 2012 was available to the researchers through on-line databases such as Factiva and Lexis-Nexis. Full content searches were conducted of newspaper material, based on key word searches. Television news was similarly available for download via Informit, an Australian online database available through university libraries. News programs focusing on Sudan and/or Sudanese people were downloaded for the period August 2007 to August 2010, the time frame then available on Informit. This period was relevant as it began in the months before the 2007 federal election, when news reports on the ability of Sudanese refugees to integrate were prominent.

Stage Two: Interviews and focus groups

The second stage of the project, conducted at the same time as the first, involved conducting interviews and focus groups with Sudanese-Australians and journalists.

The focus-group interviews with Sudanese-Australians focused on their views of the media coverage of their ethnic group. Participants were asked to discuss their experiences of media representations; any experiences they had had in engaging with the media; how media

representations made them feel about belonging or exclusion; their perspective on how media coverage affected their treatment by others, and whether they had ideas for how media representations could be changed.

Participants in the training were also interviewed individually. These interviews focused on their views regarding the training program itself. Twenty-three graduates of the training agreed to be interviewed for the project.

Eleven journalists, from a range of media who reported on the Sudanese communities, were interviewed. These interviews focused on the challenges of covering Sudanese-related stories, including asking about access to the Sudanese community, making decisions that accorded with their organisation's news values, the importance of institutional sources such as the police in gathering material for stories, and the nature of the information they needed to be able to cover communities such as the Sudanese community in a way that met their professional obligations.

Interviews were also conducted with 20 journalists who acted as mentors for the training program. Those interviews examined journalists' views regarding the training and mentoring aspects of the AuSud project.

The interviews and focus groups were recorded and analysed thematically. The findings are summarised later in this report.

Stage Three: Journalism Training Program

The third element of the project involved the development and implementation of a journalism training program for Sudanese-Australians. This is described in detail in section 4 of this report.

Stage Four: Outcome Evaluation

The fourth element of the project involved an evaluation of the outcome of the training. Other outcomes examined included an assessment of the impact, if any, the training had on participants themselves as well as journalistic coverage of Sudanese people.

Throughout the project, an ethnographic study of the processes of developing the training and the website, and of the research around these processes, was undertaken by members of the

research team. Using participant-observation techniques, and drawing on the interviews and focus groups, the ethnographic study examined how participants were mobilised, how the training process developed over time, how the website was developed and utilised, how trainees and journalists interacted over time, and whether and how the journalists' involvement in the process influenced their professional work.

This part of the study had two main outcomes. First, it provided rich empirical data about the processes of engaging with key issues around voice, inclusion and belonging. Second, when combined with the outcome evaluation of stage four, the research provided systematically reported findings that other researchers can seek to apply, with variations as required, in other contexts.

3. The research program

Issues researched

1. Sudanese Australians and the media

In March 2009, the Australian Human Rights Commission produced a discussion paper relating to African Australians' experiences of rights and access to key services (AHRC 2009). This paper raised concerns about media debates focusing on 'the numbers, "integration potential" and settlement needs of African Australians' on the grounds that 'the media usually focuses on crime or on political commentary about African Australians – and has often been negative or critical, and sometimes misleading' (AHRC 2009: 7).

Despite this, in its focus on the rights of African Australians, the AHRC did not place an onus on communication rights, instead focusing on rights in other domains (employment and training, education, health and justice). However, rights to freely communicate and achieve representation in the public sphere are not subsidiary to the achievement of social rights in other areas, but rather directly affect the degree to which these can be addressed. For example, research has demonstrated that negative coverage can serve to stigmatise migrants, affecting how they are treated by others, while such coverage may also contribute to both an unwillingness to participate in public debate and an internalisation of criticism, with significant consequences for individual and group wellbeing (Pedersen et al. 2007, Article 19 2003).

For these reasons, forms of media representation are important. Media potential to generate a sense of belonging and promote norms of social inclusion, while informing Australians about migrant groups and the collective challenge of enabling their participation in, and contribution to, Australian society (Ang et al 2002, 2006). Conversely, media can also serve as a key basis for the generation and perpetuation of beliefs that contribute to discrimination, particularly through forms of representation that position particular ethnic groups as a threat to other Australians (ADB 2003).

While people of African origin have long had a presence in Australia, in recent years there has been a dramatic increase in arrivals as a consequence of a shift in the regional focus of the Australian government's Humanitarian Program (Perrin and Dunn 2007). The majority of those

arrivals have been Sudanese people. Indeed, in the decade between 1997 and 2007, Sudanese people made up more than half (54%) of all African Humanitarian program arrivals, more than any other African country by almost ten-fold (ABS 2008). Sudanese Australians also experienced significant levels of social disadvantage across a range of measures, and a key factor in this disadvantage was the experience of discrimination (VEOHRC 2008).

Discrimination has been shown to have measurable impacts upon Sudanese Australians' health, economic success, educational attainments and relations with various social authorities, including police and the criminal justice system. In addition, discrimination has been shown to adversely affect subjective feelings of belonging and well-being in ways that have significant consequences for subjects' mental health, civic participation and social conduct (Gifford et al, 2007). As discussed below, a key factor influencing such measures of disadvantage is the issue of belonging, that is, the degree to which Sudanese people experience a feeling of belonging in, or exclusion from, Australian society (La Trobe Refugee Research Centre 2009).

Research has suggested that, to date, there have been significant shortcomings in media coverage of Sudanese Australians. Nunn (2010) has noted that Sudanese Australians, while highly visible in public space, are largely invisible in media representations, particularly in sociable media genres such as soap operas or game shows, which purport to reflect Australian life. Where Sudanese people do achieve representation it is mainly in media forms such as news, which represent 'problem spaces' for collective life. Here, research has particularly highlighted the manner in which the problem of 'integration', referring to the degree to which Sudanese people adapt to Australian life and values, has served to generate representations linking Sudanese people to divisive social problems and behaviours.

In addition, research has suggested that the use of particular frames, such as unfounded accounts of Sudanese 'gangs' and the identification of Sudanese people as refugees, have served to link representations of Sudanese people with those of other groups characterised as threats to collective life (Windle 2008).

2. Voice, media representation and belonging

The findings noted above are consistent with an established tradition of studies that have focused on issues of media racism and 'racialisation' (Poynting et al 2004, ADB 2003, Cottle 2000, Jakubowicz et al 1994), as well as the tendency of media coverage to position ethnic minorities as problematic 'others' to an unmarked, 'white', normative self (Gabriel 2000, Shohat and Stam 1994). Such studies have also noted how, by focusing on otherness as inherently

problematic through its racialised association with social deviance, such coverage fails to situate the well-being and rights of ethnic minorities as a collective responsibility. For the most part, however, this tradition of work has tended to focus on identifying problems in media coverage rather than solutions. While a smaller emerging range of studies have generated initiatives aimed at empowering marginalized voices (Nunn 2010, Manning 2006, Butcher and Thomas 2003, Dreher 2003), in recent years work concerned to address marginalisation has questioned 'a politics of speaking up which leaves the primary responsibility for change with those who are subject to media racialisation' (Dreher 2009: 447).

A significant implication of the shift from the 'politics of voice' to the 'politics of listening' (Couldry 2009, Dreher 2009, 2010) has been to suggest that empowering marginalised voices, while important, is of limited significance if such voices cannot be heard. This has highlighted the importance of developing strategies that not only enable racially marginalised communities to gain capacities and resources to articulate their perspectives and viewpoints, but also to confront media conventions and representations that portray them as 'problem groups' and render their perspectives and concerns inaudible (Threadgold 2006:235). To develop such strategies, 'a critical but collaborative relationship between professional journalists, media researchers and people working with racialised communities is vital' (Dreher 2003: 135).

This perspective is also supported by recent work that has centred on belonging, not only as a subjective experience, but as a resource linked to the effective capacities of agency available to social subjects (Noble 2005, Wise 2005, Savage et al 2005, Yuval-Davis et al 2005, Hage 2003). Research has found that the effects of discrimination not only influence the availability of key rights and services for marginalised communities, but on subjective feelings of wellbeing, an issue that has particularly affected Sudanese communities (Tempany 2009). Furthermore, previous work has demonstrated a link between discriminatory media coverage and the unwillingness of marginalised groups to speak publicly due to fear of the consequences of so doing (Article 19 2003), effectively producing a vicious circle of marginalisation.

It follows that gaining an effective voice that can be heard by the wider Australian community is essential if the problems of discrimination and social exclusion are to be effectively combatted.

3. Challenges arising from this situation

A major challenge to arise from this situation is how to make real the ideal of social inclusion, where newly arrived immigrants are concerned, how to ensure that they achieve adequate

forms of representation, that they are fairly portrayed to the rest of the Australian population, that their voices are heard and that there are better relations between Sudanese communities and journalists and other institutional forces in Australian society.

At the time this research was undertaken, impediments to achieving these aims stemmed from a lack of systematic in-depth research on representations of Sudanese people in the media, a lack of mutual understanding and dialogue between journalists and Sudanese communities, and limitations in the capacities and resources of Sudanese communities to represent themselves, both within their communities and in their relations with mainstream media. It was considered that a greater understanding of the communication needs of such communities, and the impacts of existing media coverage on them, was vital for developing strategies to address such concerns.

It was also considered that by engaging with the question of how this could be practically achieved, a better understanding would be gained of the challenges and possibilities for mutually beneficial dialogue and practical steps to improve representation.

Research results

The research results are summarised here thematically. Detailed results are contained in separate academic articles, some of which had been published at the time this report was written, and some of which had not.

Theme 1: Sudanese Australians and the media

Qualitative element

The researchers held roundtable discussions in June 2010, 2011 and 2012, as well as 13 focus groups with participants of the training program, to canvass the views of Sudanese people on the question of how their community was portrayed in the Australian media. The roundtable was attended by about 50 people, approximately two-thirds of whom were Sudanese Australians.

The focus groups were designed to elicit the attitudes of participants in the training program on this question, as well as their views about the training program itself. Each focus group had about 12 participants, and since the focus groups were held among the trainees, many of the participants in the focus groups were the same each time. The focus groups were held on three separate occasions in late 2010, five in 2011 and a further five in 2012.

The participants in the roundtables and the focus groups tended to have good English skills and most of them were highly educated, having completed at least some university education. Many of the roundtable participants from the Sudanese community were also community leaders. Most participants in both the roundtables and focus groups were male.

Analyses of the roundtables and focus group discussions revealed three key themes. First, participants felt that they had been represented both inaccurately and negatively by the news media. Second, participants said they felt socially *integrated* into Australian society, but not socially *included*. Third, many participants attributed the social exclusion they had experienced to negative and inaccurate media portrayals.

All the focus group and roundtable participants who had had media exposure said they had been represented in a negative light. For example, one roundtable participant said that the Sudanese and other African Australians were repeatedly described by the media as refugees. He said that when a news report is referring to an African Australian, 'he' is:

... not called an African Australian or Sudanese Australian, he's called a refugee . Even if he's been living here for decades he is still called a refugee. That's the language. It gives a cue to the readership.

For this participant, when media categorised people, others also categorised them that way. So if media described 'black' people as refugees -- a negative framing in contemporary Australia (see Saxton 2003; Klocker and Dunn 2003) -- so did everyone else.

A focus group participant noted that the Sudanese were treated differently from other ethnic and racial groups in news reports of crime:

[I]f a Caucasian, or Anglo-Saxon, whatever it is, committed a crime, that person will be described according to what they wear, for example, blue jeans and a white T-shirt, and baseball cap. If I committed a crime, they would say a Sudanese guy, a refugee Sudanese guy, commit a crime.

The consequence of such representations was that the Sudanese became associated with crime, and, according to participants, it meant that the crimes committed by dark-skinned people were likely to be attributed to the Sudanese, even when the crime had nothing to do with them. One participant said:

In reality there are lots of examples that these have been Somalians or Ethiopians who are committing crimes, and when identified by the police, they pass [themselves] off as Sudanese. We are being used as a scapegoat for things we haven't committed.

There was consensus among the participants that the media portrayed the Sudanese poorly. Several said that the reporting about their community was inaccurate. The Liep Gony case, in which the media wrongly attributed his murder to 'Sudanese gangs', was seen as an egregious example of this problem. Respondents said that even when it became clear that Mr Gony had in fact been murdered by 'white' men, the damage had been done.

The participants in the roundtables and focus groups said that negative media discourses affected them personally and continually. The Liep Gony-Kevin Andrews case had had continuing material effects, from a reduction in the numbers of Sudanese migrants entering Australia through the humanitarian program, to everyday expressions of racism directed at the Sudanese:

[W]hen Kevin Andrews came out with the immigration thing, it eventually led up to visa cases being cut off for the Sudanese community, and that led to a down intake, a 70% decrease in those going to come to Australia. It also led to tighter restrictions on Sudanese people coming into Australia and being allowed to bring people into Australia.

One roundtable participant attributed violence against Sudanese to the portrayal of Gony's attackers as a Sudanese gang: There were:

... a lot of attacks afterwards [after the Gony murder]. There were a lot of attacks on Sudanese young people. So these things can actually have very real consequences for the people in the communities, besides the fact that newspapers are selling the story.

A focus group participant said:

No single Sudanese, or no single Southern Sudanese was not traumatised by that [the Liep Gony case]. And the humiliation, the embarrassment. If you go outside, the fact that you are black and you just feel not to be in public, you feel just degraded. So it actually devalues you, your ambitions, and you feel that there is a greater sense of racism whereby the community is not accepting you.

Several participants said that the negative media images made it harder for them to find work:

Another side on that, the impact on this, is on employment . . . So I think being a Sudanese in the news, in the public, it has a great impact.

[O]ne young lady who was also Sudanese applied for a job as a waitress, and because her name was similar to the Asian names, she was called. At the moment she went and was asked, "What nationality are you?" she said she was Sudanese. And that was the end of the interview, and she wouldn't get the job.

A number of people reported being ostracised in public places. For example, a focus group discussion centred on their experience that no one wanted to sit next to them on public transport. And several people reported being the only person singled out at a train station by ticket inspectors to have their ticket checked. Another described how he felt when he was pulled aside for extra screening at the airport:

For me that was a very bad day. Because you don't feel like you belong among the rest, being used as someone who is likely to be a victim of something.

The participants directly attributed these experiences of social exclusion to negative representations of Sudanese people in Australian society, including those presented through the media. They reported feeling that such negative representations contributed to negative experiences they had in their daily lives:

Media have influence on everybody else, and it impacts on us.

Discussion

Research into the politics of recognition argues that misrecognition is closely connected to disadvantage and social exclusion. These findings suggest that the Sudanese Australians participating in this research experienced negative experiences in their daily lives, and that these were attributable to negative portrayals in the media. For example, one of the key issues raised by the focus group participants was that much of the association of the Sudanese with perpetrating violence was inaccurate, but led to negative views in the wider community about the Sudanese as well as contributing to violence against them, and worked against their social inclusion.

Like the British refugees interviewed for the Article 19 project, a project which looked at media coverage of asylum seekers and refugees and how it was received by the refugees themselves, (Article 19 2003), our participants overwhelmingly perceived that the negative media coverage of their group directly contributed to their everyday experiences of discrimination and racism. Although such 'media effects' are notoriously hard to prove, evidence of media representation that focuses on Sudanese people in a negative manner would lend some support to such perceptions. It is to this area we now turn.

Content analysis

In addition to the qualitative research, content analysis was carried out to identify how Sudanese Australians were portrayed in a sample of Australian media outlets. The research question to which the content analysis was directed, was: How do the Australian print media represent Sudanese people?

To answer this question the research team analysed the content of the three main newspapers read in Victoria: *The Australian*, *The Age*, and the *Herald Sun*. *The Age* and the *Herald Sun* were Victorian newspapers, while *The Australian* was a national newspaper.

Content analysis for the pilot phase 2007-2008

In the pilot phase, items were collected from 1 September 2007 through 30 April 2008, the eight months surrounding the 2007 Australian federal election held on 24 November 2007. The issues of refugees and multiculturalism have historically been highly salient election issues in Australia. This research was published as Nolan et al (2011).

Using the database Factiva, all articles that included the words Sudan or Sudanese were included. This yielded 207 articles. After coding, four broad themes emerged:

1. Difficulties in Sudan
2. Violence
3. Human interest/new beginnings
4. Nationhood.

'Difficulties in Sudan' encompassed discussions about the difficulties of life in Sudan, including the continuing war and its consequences. 'Violence' included discussions of violence committed in Australia by or against Sudanese people. 'Human interest/new beginnings' stories were about

new beginnings in Australia and were often positive. Finally, ‘nationhood’ articles included those that discussed migration policy, citizenship and the integration of Sudanese people into Australian society.

Outcomes were tabulated, using frequencies and percentages. It should also be noted that, in many cases, articles contained discussion of more than one theme. In such cases, the article was coded as having several themes, meaning that the total number of coded items was larger than the number of articles.

Results

Table 1: Themes by newspaper

Theme	<i>The Age</i>		<i>The Australian</i>		<i>Herald Sun</i>	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Nationhood	52	58	26	59	34	43
Violence	36	40	23	52	49	62
Difficulties in Sudan	38	43	15	34	16	20
Human interest/new beginnings	21	24	4	9	12	16
Total articles in paper	89	100	44	100	74	100

Note: Percentages are of the total articles published on Sudanese in each newspaper. Articles can have more than one theme therefore percentages do not total 100.

The most common theme present in articles on Sudanese people was that of nationhood. Articles in this theme included those that questioned whether Sudanese people should be allowed to come to Australia, whether they would be able to adapt to Australia, and whether they would be loyal to Australia. These negative framings were particularly prevalent prior to the 2007 Australian federal election, placing the broader question of African migration at the centre of election politics.

The second most frequent context was violence and placed Sudanese people as either perpetrators or, more typically, as victims of violence. Either way, Sudanese people were associated with violence in a large number of articles, supporting Windle’s (2008) argument that African youth have been constructed as a problem group, even when they are the victims of violence. Coverage that constantly claims that Sudanese people are involved in violence invokes negative stereotypes of non-whites as a violent ‘other’.

The ‘difficulties in Sudan’ theme also placed Sudanese people in the context of violence through discussions of war, genocide, and child soldiers. Discussions of Sudanese people in the context

of difficulties in Sudan position them as potentially damaged by their experiences prior to relocation. A powerful message that emerges from such coverage is that these negative experiences might make it difficult for Sudanese people to adapt to Australian culture and integrate into Australian society.

In this way, discourses of nation and violence intersected and raised questions about whether we (implicitly white) Australians should encourage Sudanese (implicitly black) migrants to come here. In this regard, the combined coverage of issues around nation, violence and life in Sudan, and the dominance of such coverage in the time period analysed, created a particular representation of Sudanese people that portrayed them as 'different' and as the 'outsider other' in contrast to the 'normalised' white majority who 'belong' in this national space. In this way, and without being overtly racist, the 'subtler, flexibly managed and locally contingent discussion of problems' (Simmons & Lecouteur, 2008, p. 667) that is evident in media representations of Sudanese people served to create a continuing concern about protection of the national space.

More positively and supporting previous research (Dreher, 2010; Budarick & King, 2008; Lynn & Lea, 2003), there were competing discourses present in the articles that challenged concerns that Sudanese people would be unable to integrate. There were also challenges to assertions that Sudanese people were violent. Articles in the 'human interest/new beginnings' theme also represented Sudanese people as resilient and able to overcome diversity.

These findings showed that the contexts for media coverage of Sudanese people tended to reinforce a white Australian 'we' and a non-white 'other' who was not genuinely Australian. While media representations of Sudanese people were not overtly racist, by locating them within a few critical areas of human experience, a particular image emerged which was at odds with the image of the dominant White group in Australia.

The portraying of Sudanese Australians in ways that suggested they were outside the Australian mainstream characterised this media analysis, as it did the analyses of previous researchers studying media discourses of refugees in Australia and overseas (e.g., Saxton 2003; O'Doherty and Lecouteur 2007; Khosravini 2009).

Content analysis for the total period researched 2000-2012

In this section, results are given for the content analysis over the entire period researched.

Table 2: Main topic of story by year of publication

YEAR	Crime/criminal violence	Asylum seeker/refugee issues	Australian immigration, citizenship, human rights duties	Sport	Migrant 'done good'	Multiculturalism/Cultural Diversity	Race/Racism/Anti-migration attitudes	Law and/or policy	Sudanese community Issues
2000-2004	1	19	14	0	11	6	0	1	0
2005	12	13	5	5	5	2	3	0	1
2006	27	12	7	3	2	6	4	1	1
2007	89	28	27	5	6	11	26	10	2
2008	46	5	7	0	3	10	1	3	2
2009	26	4	3	20	14	7	2	1	0
2010	21	11	4	15	7	4	3	2	0
2011	30	7	4	22	11	12	3	3	4
2012	37	16	4	28	9	0	3	4	1
TOTAL	289	115	75	98	68	58	45	25	11

As Table 2 shows, by far, news reports in *The Age*, the *Herald Sun* and *The Australian* most commonly placed Sudanese people in the context of crime/violence. Crime/violence was the number one topic every year from 2006 onwards. This was followed by issues about refugees and seeking asylum, which was particularly common in 2007, still well behind crime, but a popular theme in that election year, along with issues of immigration and citizenship, and with race and racism. The next two most common contexts were refugee/asylum seeker issues and then sport.

Table 3: Violence sub-themes

Year	Mentions violence/crime/deviancy committed BY Sudanese Australians in Australia	Mentions violence/crime/deviancy AGAINST Sudanese Australians in Australia	Suggests that violence/crime/deviancy in Australia is racially motivated	Invokes troubled backgrounds as an explanation for crime committed by Sudanese Australians in Australia
2000-2004	2	3	1	0
2005	14	7	7	7
2006	32	6	6	18
2007	105	72	37	45
2008	29	40	19	16
2009	13	29	15	5
2010	13	17	9	5
2011	30	35	19	12
2012	31	20	9	12
TOTAL	269	229	122	120

There was a spectacular peak in crime and violence stories in the election year of 2007, when immigration and asylum-seeker policies were of high political salience. Thereafter, while a substantial focus on crime was maintained, a large number of items suggested that crime was racially motivated. An almost equally large number suggested that Sudanese Australian commit crimes due to troubled backgrounds.

The news coverage shifted over time to an increasing focus on sport. This followed the entry of an Australian Sudanese football player, Majak Daw, into the high-profile Australian Football League. Most of the sports articles focused on Daw.

Table 4: Total articles 2000-2012 where Sudanese were the main topic (n)

The Age	275
The Australian	154
The Herald Sun	357
Total	786

Table 5: Articles by year (n)

Year	Articles
2000	3
2001	2
2002	9
2003	14
2004	24
2005	46
2006	63
2007	204
2008	77
2009	77
2010	67
2011	96
2012	104
Total	786

Table 6: AuSud participant quoted/paraphrased

Year	AuSud graduate quoted/paraphrased (n)
2000- 2004	1
2005	0
2006	1
2007	4
2008	2
2009*	4
2010	3
2011	5
2012	6
TOTAL	26

*AuSud training program began

Some AuSud program participants were sources for media stories prior to the inception of the program, as a number of program participants were and are community leaders. Since the program, more were quoted in mainstream media. The differences were not large but the more positive direction was consistent.

Table 7: Social inclusion sub-themes

Year	Mentions difficulties in Sudan	Mentions difficulties of life in Australia for Sudanese people	Suggests troubled pasts can be/are expected to be overcome in Australia	Explicitly discusses racism/ anti-migration attitudes	Describes Sudanese as problematic for Australia	Challenges description of Sudanese as problematic	Describes Sudanese people as good for Australia	Uses the term 'difference' to describe Sudanese/ Sudanese Australians
2000-2004	37	22	25	7	1	0	23	6
2005	26	23	29	7	16	8	20	7
2006	39	38	32	11	33	12	19	7
2007	95	131	83	105	116	75	75	28
2008	29	49	21	23	35	18	20	3
2009	43	43	39	16	17	16	50	5
2010	30	31	29	12	13	6	35	4
2011	34	38	21	29	30	15	29	4
2012	53	43	34	17	28	19	39	4
TOTAL	386	418	313	227	289	169	310	68

Clearly, stories about the difficulties of life in Australia for Sudanese people were more common than any other single category of story, and once again the peak in 2007 stands out, when there was so much political focus on the alleged difficulties Sudanese were having ‘fitting in’. This is shown too in the category of stories that Sudanese people were problematic for Australia, which also peaked sharply in 2007. The accentuation on ‘difference’ also peaked that year.

Theme 2: Voice, media representation and belonging

The concept of belonging is ‘about experiences of being part of the social fabric’ (Anthias, 2008, p.8; see also Yuval-Davis et al., 2005). It is closely tied to social structures that confer exclusion or inclusion, as well as access and participation (Yuval-Davis et al., 2005; see also Anthias, 2008). One such structure is the media (Morley, 2001).

Contemporary research indicates that, in Australia, Sudanese people experience forms of discrimination and social exclusion that limit their capacity to belong, and that media representations are an important part of creating this circumstance (Nolan et al., 2011; Windle, 2008). A question that then arises is whether forms of media representation, and of media voice, can be changed so that the media become a means of promoting forms of belonging.

Voice refers to the capacity to have one's views represented in the media. In recent years, some research has been done on whether the media can be changed in ways that give marginalised communities a voice (Dreher, 2003; Manning, 2006; Nunn, 2010). This work has been based on the premise that participation and engagement in society requires access to the media as a means through which diverse perspectives can be presented to society.

While examples exist where interventions in media have succeeded in providing voice (see Dreher, 2009, for an overview), a new question has been raised about whether it is fair to place the primary responsibility for change in the hands of those who are subject to media racialisation (Dreher, 2009, p.447; see also Couldry, 2009). This line of argument states that while voice is important, successful dialogue and interaction also requires listening (Couldry, 2009). Therefore, a shift is required from a politics of voice to a politics of listening. This shift would place the onus on dominant groups to learn how to listen rather than on the marginalised to work out how to be heard (Dreher, 2010, p.99; see also, Threadgold, 2006).

One way to test this argument is to facilitate increased linkages and dialogue between marginalised communities and mainstream media so that mainstream practitioners gain a well-grounded awareness of these communities, while marginalised communities develop resources through which they have an increased potential to engage with mainstream media.

In this project, the researchers aimed to develop a training program that would fulfil both these requirements. To do so, the researchers decided they needed to answer the following questions:

What forms of training and relationship building through training might facilitate movement towards enabling voice and listening?

What qualitative and quantitative measures would provide a useful assessment of these outcomes?

What measures might indicate whether the program contributed to a sense of belonging?

This case study showed it is possible to meaningfully intervene in media representations through the provision of training and development of relationships between members of disadvantaged communities and working journalists.

Intervening is one thing; whether the intervention makes any difference to media representations is another. The answer to that question is unclear. However, there is evidence that the program has empowered a group of Sudanese Australians and provided mainstream non-Sudanese journalists (both trainers and mentors) with insight into the Sudanese Australian community. A longer-term study of media representations, in particular by journalists involved in this program, would be needed to effectively answer the question of whether the intervention made a difference on this criterion.

The training program provided insights into how both voice and listening could be improved. For example, the blog that was the main publishing platform during the training, provided a place for trainees to speak. In addition to posting entries, a number of trainees took greater control by editing the content and by encouraging others to participate. People were also able to exchange material through the blog, creating possibilities for forms of listening. Most of these exchanges occurred among the trainees, with limited involvement of people outside the group.

One means of measuring the effectiveness of the program against the criterion of voice-and-listening would be to record who is contributing, and on what issues.

On the question of the extent to which the program promoted a sense of belonging, one measurement would be to map the relationships formed between trainers and trainees, between mentors and trainees, among trainees and between trainees and others outside the program, both within and beyond the Sudanese community. The researchers analysed interviews with mentors and trainees to see whether participation had an impact on trainees feelings of being heard, and more broadly of belonging. That project (reported in Bailey et al. forthcoming) found that many trainees felt heard through their interaction with their mentor. Interestingly, they were not particularly interested in having their mentor assist with their writing, but they very much valued the interactions with working journalists who were keen to listen to their stories.

4. The training program

This part of the report summarises the training program in each of the three years in which it ran. It begins with a brief description of the course development process and then summarises each year of training. The summaries for each year are divided into the topics of Participation, Content and Delivery, and Evaluation and Feedback.

Course development

Sudan is a diverse nation, and Sudanese migrants to Australia come from all parts of Sudan. In attempting to engage the Sudanese community, the research team aimed to include representatives from all parts of Sudan on the steering committee that was the main means by which the Sudanese community was consulted about the training program. The team also wanted a gender balance. Both of these proved to be challenging, and it was particularly difficult to involve women and people from Darfur. Indeed, few committee members attended more than two meetings, making it difficult for the steering committee to have continuity in its discussions and decisions.

Questions also emerged about the decision-making capacity of the steering committee, and where final decision-making capacity regarding the program lay. In developing the project, the team had initially intended that the steering committee should drive it, but that did not eventuate. Those who attended steering committee meetings were interested in the project and how it might engage them and their community, but in hindsight more structure should have been provided to give the steering committee the tools to genuinely drive the direction of the program. As it was, the research team ended up deciding that the steering committee would have an advisory role but not final decision-making capacity, which remained with the research team.

This raised questions both about the degree to which participants felt genuinely empowered to determine the direction of the program. In addition, while such empowerment was an ambition of the program, this also raised questions about the degree to which this was a reasonable expectation of voluntary participants who had wider employment and family commitments outside the program.

Eventually, as it became increasingly difficult to schedule meetings, the steering committee was disbanded as a formal entity. The people who had participated continued to contribute to the project through other meetings and consultations. While the steering committee itself did not last for a long time, it showed the importance of consultation and engagement, and these were processes that the research team remained committed to throughout the development and implementation of the training program.

In addition to the steering committee, as a way to expand the consultative process for program development, a half-day roundtable discussion was organised to engage with a wider number of individuals and organisations, particularly Sudanese Australians and non-Sudanese mainstream journalists, as well as non-Sudanese people working with the Sudanese community. Titled 'Australian news and the representation of Sudanese migrants in Victoria' and held in April 2010, the goal of the roundtable was to seek input about possible goals of the training program, to gain insight into people's perceptions and experiences of media coverage in the context of Sudanese Australians, and to seek to broaden community engagement and the recruitment base for the program, in relation both to trainers and trainees.

The goal of this program was to not only develop participants' journalism skills, but also to start the process of shifting negative Australian media representations of Sudanese Australians (Marjoribanks et al., 2010). By involving working journalists and media experts as trainers, the research team hoped to provide them with links to the Sudanese community and in so doing influence the ways they report on that community. The team also hoped to enable trainees to contribute stories to the mainstream media and to develop a blog to share their stories.

Another goal was to create an opportunity for Sudanese Australians to develop professional connections and relationships with members of the mainstream media. This occurred through two primary means. First, during class sessions, students interacted with journalists working in the mainstream media. Both during formal delivery time and during breaks and after classes, students had the opportunity to talk with the journalists; similarly, the journalists were able to engage with the students. Second, each student was paired with a volunteer mentor, who was an experienced journalist. This provided a means for trainees to gain a more in-depth and personalised engagement with mainstream media personnel through a one-on-one relationship. While the role of the mentor was not specified precisely, it was anticipated that they would meet with students to discuss journalism processes and practices and, if appropriate, to show students around their workplaces and to introduce them to colleagues.

Year-by-year summaries of the training program are set out next. The summaries are derived from contemporaneous reports by the training staff.

2011

Participation

The first cohort consisted of 15 participants, one from North Sudan, two from Darfur and the remainder from South Sudan. All but one had post-secondary qualifications, and one was doing a PhD. At least six of this first cohort continued in the training program for the three years, and many of them became members of the management committee established in 2013 to take over the running of *The Gazelle* website, the online media platform developed as part of the training program, and which supplanted the initial blog.

Sixteen professional journalists volunteered as mentors. Fourteen of these were from the ABC, including some very senior reporters, and two were from Leader Newspapers.

Content and delivery

The training began on 2 September 2011 and consisted of a semester-length (12-week) program, which ended on 19 November. It provided an introduction to the nature of news and the nature of the Australian media industry, and instruction on news writing, dealing with sources, media law and ethics, feature writing, and editing/moderating. These sessions were given by experienced journalists such as Margaret Simons, James Button and Natasha Mitchell.

The curriculum topics were based on the findings from the previous pilot course, focus-group discussions with the trainees, and conversations with trainees who attended the pilot session. The course focused primarily on *writing* as an outcome - for print, online or audio /video formats.

A Learner Guide was prepared for the trainees, with space in them to use for notes and writing exercises.

All sessions except the last (which went for a full day) were of four hours' duration. Typically, the lectures lasted about two hours, and the participants were then given practice assignments

to do, such as going outside the lecture room and interviewing people. They then had a further period of an hour or so to write, with direct assistance from Michael Gawenda, from the training manager, Reece Lamshed, and from the guest lecturers.

A Trainer Guide was prepared to ensure that each trainer had a clear understanding of the scope of each topic and to reduce any duplication. Suggestions were made for relevant class exercises and activities that could be 'assessed' by the trainer. The Trainer Guide also identified the key goals of the project in the following terms:

Ultimately, our aim is to develop the students' journalism to the point where they can run and manage their own quality group blog, and eventually a news website.

Key Goal: A Sudanese-run news website

One of our key aims of this project is to have those who complete this training become contributors to Australia's media landscape by running and maintaining a Sudanese news website. We envisage this taking place in three phases.

1 – **The private student training blog:** a private training blog has been set up for use during this 12-week journalism training. It will be used for assessments and will help the students learn to contribute and manage content in an online context.

2 – **The public AuSud Media Project blog:** this blog is public and will be the space where students will publish their best work. Once the training is complete, the students will work together to decide upon a blog management structure and take charge of content and moderation of this blog. When future students complete next year's training, they too will become part of this management system.

3 – **The Sudanese-run news website:** as this project continues, we will be developing a website which, once we have enough dedicated participants (who are experienced and committed to managing the blog) we can migrate over to this the website.

Once we have enough dedicated and trained people, the hope is that this Sudanese-run website will become *the* place for information about those issues that are important to the Sudanese Australian community.

A *WordPress* training blog was set up where trainees could post their stories. These were written either in the last one or two hours of the training session in a dedicated computer room, or as homework. Each student had a dedicated area in the blog.

The blog had a 'Comments' function on each trainee article that enabled the trainer (and other students) to post comments on their work.

The blog was restricted by password access so that it was not accessible to the general public.

Evaluation

At the end of the first semester of training, Mr Lamshed reviewed the training program. He recommended some minor changes to the Training Guide, but nothing substantial. Importantly, though, in the light of subsequent events, he wrote:

We previously discussed having (in the final session) the students work out a strategy for the future of the AuSud blog – with an eye on the future goal of a website. I think we should still include this – particularly as this group could (after completing the training) develop an editorial structure and self-manage the current public AuSud blog. A Sudanese-run and managed news website is the key aim of this project. Our idea with the blog/ website is that it will develop through a three-step process:

1 – The students use the private training blog to improve their skills, and learn to add and manage content. They need to understand the basics of proofreading, editing and moderation before they can take control of the AuSud blog. This training blog will be where work in progress and less polished work will be published.

2 – The (existing and public) AuSud blog can be used throughout the training as well. This could be used as a space where the students' best work is published. Once the training is complete, the students should work out a blog management structure and take charge of content and moderation from then on. This will mean commitment and effort beyond the completion of the training. When future students complete the training, they too will be added to this management system.

3 – Once we develop the website and have enough participants (who now are experienced and committed to managing the blog) we can migrate over to (and launch) the website.

The goal of starting this website (and the process this entails) needs to be understood by the students. Hopefully this way we'll get them committed to building a top notch blog, and later a website!

Mr Lamshed also reviewed the curriculum and stated:

Generally, the structure and content of the curriculum worked well, although it is recommended that in future courses, visits to media outlets (community, commercial and public) take place earlier in the training schedule.

Concerning the blog and the teaching, Mr Lamshed wrote:

The blog worked very well because it reinforced the notion of public writing and enabled the course support team (admin, trainers, researchers, mentors and ESL tutors) to view the drafts and published versions of the trainees' work.

One or two students were not proficient in using the training blog, so it is important that at the start of the course, they are thoroughly trained in using it.

A trainer (or two) was assigned for each topic. These trainers were active journalists – independent, community or from *The Age* or ABC.

Their sessions were extremely well prepared, and most trainers used PowerPoint presentations and/or provided a set of class handouts. They conducted practical exercises in class including role plays (interviews that the trainees had to watch and take notes on which to write articles).

The trainers used the Trainer Guide as a guide to their topic, and added or modified this as required. They did not necessarily use the suggested exercises and activities provided in the Trainer Guide, but made up their own relevant to the topic they were teaching.

2012

Participation

The 2012 cohort of trainees consisted of 16 participants, only one of whom had been in the 2011 cohort. Of the 13 trainees who completed the course, six came from South Sudan, three from Eritrea and Sudan, two from North Sudan, one from Darfur and one for whom the place of origin was not recorded. Generally, 12 to 14 trainees attended each session.

Eighteen mentors made themselves available, 10 of whom came from the ABC, five from Fairfax Media and three from unrecorded places. In addition to the mentors, 13 people, mainly journalists, made themselves available as ESL tutors, and each trainee was assigned a tutor.

There were 14 trainers, including all who had provided training in 2011.

Content and delivery

The course was once again delivered over a 12-week semester, with each session lasting four hours. The semester ran from 18 February to 12 May.

The sequence of lectures followed the same pattern and covered broadly the same topics as in 2011, with the addition of a master class on managing and editing the AuSud blog/website. At this stage, the website was still in development, and the blog was being used as a training platform.

The curriculum was slightly revised to encompass feedback from the previous semester. This was primarily to do with the structure of the sessions rather than the content. Consequently, the session was divided into two parts: the first a period for trainer instruction and the second when the students would go to the computer space to write their articles on the training blog. This was designed to encourage students to practise their writing skills.

As with the previous semester, a Trainer Guide was prepared to ensure that each trainer had a clear understanding of the scope of each topic and to reduce any duplication. A Learner Guide was also prepared for the learners, with space in them to use for notes and writing exercises.

A curriculum was devised for four master classes: television interviewing, radio interviewing, online moderation and editorial policy and practice. These were proposed to be conducted on a Thursday evening 6.00 - 9.00 pm. The master classes were open to all students who had attended the training courses.

In the event, it was decided that the television training was too difficult and costly to implement and that the online moderation was covered to an adequate degree in the basic course.

Three radio sessions were held at the studios of 3ZZZ. The students paired off to conduct 7 to 10-minute interviews with one another. The trainer listened to the interviews, and provided critical comments and advice on how the students could improve their interviewing techniques. The students generally had sufficient time to have a second go at an interview.

Most students in the current semester attended the sessions, and four from previous sessions also attended.

The interviews were recorded and edited, and given to the students as a record of their performance.

The *WordPress* training blog was set up again for trainees to write their material. The writing was done either in the second half of the training session in the dedicated computer room, or as homework.

Each student had a dedicated area in the blog to post their articles, which then could be viewed by other students, trainers, mentors and ESL tutors.

At the end of the semester, a graduation ceremony was held, and the 13 trainees who completed the course in 2012 were presented with certificates of completion.

Evaluation

Attendance was generally good, and 78 articles by the trainees were published over the course of the semester.

Mentoring was an important part of the course, as it created a network for each trainee beyond the course into the real media world, and opened opportunities for programs and work. Some students continued to meet with their mentor beyond the training period, but in other cases the mentor-mentee relationship did not develop beyond introductions, partly because some trainees were somewhat inhibited in trespassing on the mentor's time and partly because some mentors were more pro-active than others in encouraging contact.

An ESL tutor was assigned to each student. Some ESL tutors had more than one student. As with mentors, it was left up to the student to arrange with the ESL tutor how their articles would be corrected. In some cases, strong arrangements were made, but in others it was ad hoc and probably not adequate.

The training sessions were held at the Multicultural Hub (MH), premises owned by the City of Melbourne and managed by AMES in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne. This included a meeting room (first two hours) and a computer room (last two hours). The fact that there were two separate rooms to conduct this training always posed a problem, as when the changeover was made, students tended to drift off home. It was difficult to maintain a focus across the whole training day. See: <https://www.ames.net.au/multicultural-hub.html>

Three one-hour sessions were dedicated to research team focus groups. Trainees enjoyed the focus groups, feeding back their opinions on the course and other matters.

Industry visits

Three organisations agreed to tours - SBS, ABC and Leader Newspapers in Blackburn. However, due to lack of numbers, the Leader Newspaper visit was cancelled. Most students were interested in SBS. The organisations put a lot of effort in to these tours, with senior staff talking to the students about different aspects of their operations and access to the studio facilities. The tours were conducted over a two-hour period. Not all students were able to attend a tour.

2013

Participation

The 2013 cohort of trainees consisted of 21 participants, three of whom were newcomers to the training program. Thus, there were 15 participants in 2011, 16 in 2012 and 21 in 2013.

The pattern of participation over the three years is as follows:

Combination of years	Number of participants
2011 and 2012	None
2011 and 2013	8
2012 and 2013	11
All three years	1
One year only	12

It can be seen that of the 32 individuals who participated in the training, 17 (53%) participated in two years of the program. Those who ultimately volunteered for membership of the steering committee that was established in 2013 as the self-governing body for the continuation of *The Gazelle* website consisted mostly of those who had participated in 2011 and 2013, plus the person who participated over all three years and one who participated in 2012 and 2013.

In 2013, 18 mentors and four ESL tutors were available.

Content and delivery

Again the course was delivered over a 12-week semester, from 18 August to 10 November 2013. However, the content changed significantly, shifting the focus from journalism skills to a mixture of journalism skills (in particular design, editing and moderating) and management. This reflected a perception among the research team and the training manager that if the trainees were to be equipped to take ownership of *The Gazelle* and to be able to run it themselves, then this broader suite of skills was required.

As before, the course was delivered in four-hour sessions, where the first half was devoted to classes on the day's topic, followed by a period of writing and editing. A professional sub-editor

was engaged to attend these sessions and assist the trainees improve the quality of their writing.

Evaluation

The shift in emphasis from journalism to self-management caused some unease among the participants. Many found it daunting because it took them into areas such as fund-raising, organisational structuring and governance of which they had little experience and for which many had little inclination. As a result, the level of participation in the training sessions fell away, leaving a core group of about eight. These people showed considerable determination to keep *The Gazelle* website going and to capitalise on the skills they had acquired.

However, with the passage of time since the project began, many had become established in Australia, with jobs, families and community responsibilities all making calls on their time and energy. They found it increasingly difficult to commit to the *Gazelle* project the effort needed to sustain it without support from the researchers, trainers, mentors, sub-editors and ESL tutors to which they had become accustomed.

Justifiably, they felt that they did not have the connections with the wider society that would enable them to open doors and obtain sponsorship or other forms of financial support, such as philanthropic donations. While they were too gracious to say so in as many words, they clearly felt as if they were being cut adrift, and this disheartened them. They accepted an offer from two of the Chief Investigators in the research team to sit as advisers on the management committee that had been established to manage *The Gazelle*, and one or two meetings were held. But over time, the effort flagged.

5. Discussion

The training program

This section of the report is based on interviews with Reece Lamshed, the training manager, Carolyn MacDonald, Head of Strategic Marketing, ABC Research and Marketing, who was the main contact person at the ABC during the project, and Denis Muller, who took over from Michael Gawenda as the Chief Investigator responsible for the training program.

Objectives and ownership

One of the four objectives of the project was:

Develop, in consultation with Sudanese people and with the involvement of industry partners and journalists, media training and the development of web-based journalism produced by Sudanese people to help meet their media needs

The consultation took the form of a series of roundtable discussions at which Sudanese Australians were invited to say what their objectives were in becoming involved in the project. Carolyn MacDonald attended the first roundtable, held in April 2010. She recalled:

The overwhelming message was that people wanted to vent their frustration at the way the media portrayed Sudanese Australians: the coverage of issues in Dandenong and the police. They wanted to talk how to make that happen less.

They wanted the media to have access to different stories that were more true to that culture and that group. And they saw this as a way to start that conversation rather than becoming their own website or channel.

The research team, having consulted the Sudanese community, then devised a training program that they thought best answered the needs of the Sudanese community. They considered that the best way was to train the participants in the skills and methods of journalism, in particular news journalism. Reece Lamshed explained:

The project was to train people basically in print journalism, to give them the tools by which they could stake their position in Australia and understand the broader media and

make contact with them through the mentoring program. It was primarily to give them the tools to enable them to speak on their own behalf.

The practice of news journalism is a discipline with very specific requirements concerning how and where to gather information, verify it and then report it impartially, without fear or favour. This, as it turned out, was not what the Sudanese Australians wanted to do. Some of the methods of news journalism – approaching strangers for interviews, analysing what they said and converting it into news – were foreign and confronting to most of them. They were self-conscious about their English-language skills, and – given the history – understandably shy about approaching strangers in the street.

News journalism also requires impartiality, the capacity to put the story ahead of personal allegiances. With such a history of discrimination, they were understandably reluctant to write stories that contained any negativity about the community, lest it be picked up by the mainstream media and turned against them. Reece Lamshed said:

They had a care for their community, and they felt really motivated to find ways in which this course could perhaps help them do work internal to the community.

Thus, while both the Sudanese Australians and the research team shared the objective of giving the Sudanese community a voice, and doing something to redress the injustices being perpetrated on the community by the mainstream media, there was an underlying misunderstanding between the two on how this could be achieved.

As the providers of the training, and as the acknowledged experts in media, the research team's understanding prevailed. Asked whose program it was, the researchers' or the participants', Reece Lamshed was in no doubt:

It was our program. The parameters were set clearly by us, and they understood that. They weren't resentful. In the main they appreciated what was being done. A high level of appreciation. But ownership – I don't think they could think about ownership.

I tried when I came in to talk to them about what did they want. But I still brought my understanding of what I thought they should need. Because it was on the level of 'we need to train you in Western-style journalism, then this is the way you do it'. No ifs or buts. So I did it that way.

Carolyn MacDonald also observed this underlying misunderstanding about how the objective was to be met:

They were not truly interested or hungry to be a journalist. It was being run through the Centre whose core function is around journalism and media, so it was only natural that, perhaps problematically, we reached the conclusion that we needed to deliver a journalism training course, because that is going to help address that issue.

Denis Muller, who joined the research team when Michael Gawenda retired from the Centre, also observed this. However, he took the view that if the participants really wanted to make any headway on the single biggest issue of concern – the relationship between the Sudanese community and the Victorian police – then they had no option but to apply the skills and methods of news journalism to that issue.

I didn't mind what they wrote for the blog or The Gazelle website, but I did try to impress on them the reality that if they were going to be taken seriously by Victoria Police as a vehicle for communication between the police and their community, then they were going to have to apply the methods of news journalism to that issue, even if they didn't apply those methods to anything else.

I explained that the police were not going to be interested in commentary, bald assertions, or personal reflections, but that they would engage with fact-based and impartial reporting.

The police were co-operative. After a bit of pressure from the research team, they gave The Gazelle accreditation with the police media unit, which meant The Gazelle would get media releases and be able to submit questions to the police. They sent an acting deputy commissioner, Andrew Crisp, along to an afternoon tea that the university organised. He was the ranking officer on this issue, and in a lengthy on-the-record interview with the leadership group of the Sudanese participants, he gave frank and constructive answers.

In fact, he came to the afternoon tea direct from Sunshine police station where he had been dealing with an incident in which a small number of police there had distributed beer-can holders bearing an anti-Sudanese racist emblem. He was open about this and answered many questions about how the police force was dealing with it.

On another occasion I went along with one of the participants to a community forum at Flemington run by the Kensington and Flemington Community Legal Service, where the

issue of police profiling and other issues were discussed, and demonstrated on-the-ground journalistic news-gathering practices: collecting documents, taking notes, interviewing people, getting their contact details.

But I could not get anyone in the group to convert any of this material into news copy. I then accepted that news journalism was not what they wanted to do, even when the issue was as salient as this. The process was too foreign, and the subject-matter too upsetting. I also realised that while we had done many good things in the training, we were not going to turn them into journalists. This was not a fault; it just reflected a disjunction between their needs and what we were providing.

Content

Reece Lamshed mapped out a formal curriculum for the training course, based on the pilot project and consultation with the people who had been through the pilot, as well as with the researchers. It was oriented towards news and current affairs: how to construct news for digital as well as print and broadcast media platforms, and including media law and ethics.

Michael Gawenda had been the driving force:

He was a mentor in the truest sense. The group always looked to him for guidance, leadership and vision. He didn't teach, but he had this presence that just seemed to permeate, which gave them great confidence in the project. They loved him. He came every Saturday.

Behind the scenes, he was the one who had the contact with the trainers. He was connected to a brilliant network of practitioners and he brought them in.

Mentoring

A central feature of the program was the involvement of professional journalists, mainly from the ABC, as mentors. Efforts were made to match mentors and mentees in ways that it was hoped would maximise the chance of the relationship flourishing. However, the results were mixed, and Reece Lamshed reflected on this:

I don't think we got on top of it, and I don't know quite why. Even though they had terrific mentors, some on the mentee side didn't quite understand that they were the ones who had to drive the relationship. It was a big step to go off to the ABC.

Some made really strong connections. And even though I put out guidelines to mentors and mentees and had an introductory session at the start of each semester, I don't think it got there. I don't think there was enough structure so that people knew what the outcome would be.

Some saw the mentor either as way of getting a job, or as another trainer, or not see the value in it at all.

We did a survey afterwards, and the mentors were strongly supportive, but it needed much more attention and management.

However, the mentoring system did yield one important result: it educated and sensitised the journalists about the Sudanese community:

The journalists who were mentors were heavily impacted by this group. They learnt a lot. They started to understand the community in a real sense for the first time.

Carolyn MacDonald from the ABC, who with Frances Green was central to recruiting the mentors, agreed, adding that the ABC staff had readily agreed to become involved:

People were very enthusiastic. They were interested in making contacts in that community, understanding the community more. That makes you a better journalist. If you've got good contacts, you might get a story that someone might not get or see. But I think it was also a genuinely altruistic view that they felt there was something they could do – to give of their time. And often it was their time – weekends and out of hours.

Staff had two roles: delivering training sessions, and the mentoring, where students were paired with a journalism mentor. Those relations really varied. Some would send their stories through and they would be subbed and reviewed by the journos here at the ABC. Have discussions about story ideas and almost one-on-one training.

I reckon we might have had 50 [altogether] either directly or indirectly, either as trainers or as executives spruiking it in the newsroom, and in the International Division. We had

people from Innovation talking about social media, digital media and online. Producers, program-makers. Lots of journos, but almost every division of the ABC contributed.

Some of the mentees weren't sure what they should be asking for and some of the mentors weren't sure how far they should push.

She also agreed with Mr Lamshed that the relationships varied:

Partly it was about the motivation of the mentee: their desire and whether they thought it was worthwhile. And we made it clear it was up to the mentee to drive it.

Some people just got along better. One staff member became friends with the mentee and even went to the mentee's child's christening.

Time was important on both sides. Sometimes the mentors if they were on deadline might be a bit abrupt. So the awareness of [newsroom] culture. Also Sudanese culture. Sometimes the mentees might have been a bit timid.

As mentioned above, trainees very much valued the mentoring aspects of the program. As a subsequent analysis of the mentoring program showed, the participants valued their relationships with their mentors both for the support they got and more generally because it contributed to their sense of belonging in Australia (Bailey et al forthcoming).

Transition and sustainability

One of the most difficult periods in the training project occurred in late 2012, when Denis Muller replaced Michael Gawenda on the research team as the CI responsible for the training side of the project. Dr Muller attempted to push the Sudanese leadership group into assuming responsibility for the project and to begin planning for its sustainability beyond 2013, when the research funding would run out. He tried to accelerate the transition from a training program to a program that would be self-sustaining and owned by the Sudanese participants. Reece Lamshed recalled this period:

Michael was trying to make that transition when Denis came in. We had [already] decided there would be no more training, but a simulated newspaper environment [would be created]. If you worked on a newspaper, the editor would sit down and ask what the stories were. They had elected their editor, but I don't think he felt confident to take on that role. And Michael, without wanting too, was running it like a newspaper news conference.

And it took a month or two longer than we wanted to get the website up and running for them.

And I don't know to this day whether they thought the website was worth it, because they'd been taught the media were the ABC, The Age, the Herald Sun, SBS. So was this real media?

The hardest time was when we asked them to define, in relatively academic terms, who was their audience, who were they writing for, what organisation they were going to build. That put them in a space where they felt intimidated and it had a negative impact. The consequence was that a few thought they just wanted to do the work, but not hassle with the big picture.

Asked if that was a mistake, Mr Lamshed replied:

Yes, and the momentum that was building at that time was lost. But it should not be overplayed. It was just one factor. I think it was in Michael's mind to make the transition, but it was difficult for a lot of reasons. One is there was always a reluctance by the group to actually do anything. That's not a criticism of the group. They were very keen to talk about things, especially on ethics and media, but getting them to do something, even in the training phase, was not easy. We'd get one or two or three stories a week out of 12 [participants]. Part of that was that they were writing in English, and their English was not good, and some were very embarrassed about that. We brought people in from AMES as English language tutors. But it was a big ask to have people who were fluent in Dinka or Arabic to come in and write in English.

So I think there was a seed of that right from the beginning about ownership of the project.

Ms MacDonald, who also observed this transition period at close quarters, made similar observations:

When Michael left the program it was a little bit of a grey area. Things changed direction. Which was not necessarily a problem but it was less on journalism skills and more on trying to equip the community to drive it in the longer term. But that's almost phase two of the project.

It was clear to me that was what we were trying to move to. I understood the issues with the team not being self-sufficient and we had had lot of discussions about helping them to move to a self-sustaining model.

But the challenge was, when the students first came in, it was about journalism training, and then it changed to you being self-sufficient. And the students weren't ready for that.

It was harder for all of us. The training was terrific and the work that Michael did was fantastic but it was not sustainable. If that had been all we wanted to achieve, we would have achieved that. Get some people in, give them some training, and send them on their way. That was almost like the first stage.

But once that training stopped and there was no facilitation to the second stage . . . And I don't think we ever got to the second stage where the leadership team drove it or partnered with someone or got some kind of funding.

I understood that transition, but it was hard. The first stage was easier.

Dr Muller also agreed that this had been a disruptive time and said that on reflection he probably pushed too hard too quickly.

I observed Michael's last two or three Saturday morning sessions, in which he tried to get the group to run a news conference, where they would identify the stories they wanted to write, assign them or volunteer for them, and set a deadline for submitting them. Even though the group had elected an editor, there was hesitation in decision-making, and Michael in effect took over.

I thought, there's no future in this. Either they start running it themselves or it will fall over as soon as we pull out.

I attended the Saturday sessions too, after Michael had left, and while I tried to encourage and steer their discussions, I wouldn't make decisions for them. I think this led to a bit of drift. And then, after consulting the rest of the research team, I decided that we should devote some of the Saturday training sessions to organisational issues to try to equip them to establish a viable structure for continuing the work, with a board, governance arrangements and fund-raising.

That's when they really got anxious, and I think Reece is right to say a lot of steam went out of it at that point.

It needed to be done, and there wasn't much time, but I didn't do enough groundwork with the leadership group to carry it through. I also think that that is when the original lack of Sudanese ownership and shared objectives came back to haunt us.

Tension between research and training

The project was designed so that the participants would be research subjects as well as trainees, and the consent forms and plain language statements made this clear. However, this dual role sometimes created some confusion among the participants. From time to time, part of their training sessions would be taken up with focus-group discussions for the purposes of the research. Reece Lamshed observed:

There was a conflict in the program. It was a research program, and they were very tolerant of the research that was being conducted on them. And that happened on a fairly regular basis. I was never there for that. It wasn't my business and if it was about the training, I wanted them to have the freedom to talk about it or me.

But at times I felt uncomfortable because we had the training going on and at the same time watching and analysing them. They never said anything, but they were not that sort of people, to complain.

Carolyn MacDonald added:

I observed at times a tension between the heavier research requirements of the project – and you couldn't ignore those – but there was sometimes a sense in the community that 'we don't want to be research subjects' and perhaps not understanding that aspect of the project.

It was a requirement of the project and it had to happen, but it sometimes felt a bit cumbersome, and it would come out of left field at them. It perhaps caused a little bit of distrust.

Outcomes

For all the difficulties and challenges encountered, the training project did deliver some positive outcomes. Reece Lamshed:

I think the project had fantastic outcomes because it was so connected into industry. There was a lot of feedback that went back into the media that otherwise wouldn't have happened, through the mentors and the trainers. That all worked well.

Part of the idea was to change the media's attitude to the group, and that is only going to happen when people cross over the line and make friends and relationships with people. That's when their attitude changes to that group and the stereotypes just disappear.

And it made them [the Sudanese participants] think that there are some really good people in Australia. Some of them had terrible experiences of Australians. You don't know how that has gone back into the community. They said that we were extremely generous people to give so much time and dedication to them. They were surprised by the generosity.

Carolyn MacDonald:

I felt some frustration that we didn't deliver on stage two. We wanted to walk away with an empowered community with a voice, and I don't think we delivered on that.

The initiative was positive for the ABC in lots of ways. It gave us an opportunity to work in partnership with the university. It provided lots of our staff with connections with that community, tested their skills in delivering training and mentoring.

I wasn't sure about the long-term benefits to the community. However, there were probably some unrealistic expectations that we should have managed better about where the participants might be at the end of this. Would they have a job at the ABC? We tried to be clear that that was not going to happen, but maybe we needed to be much clearer about that.

Denis Muller:

This training gave 30-odd people from a newly arrived minority, who were the target of sustained and institutional racism, basic skills in journalism and an understanding of how to interact constructively with the Australian media. It opened doors for them into some big institutions – the University of Melbourne, the ABC, the police. It probably gave at least

some of the individual participants a sense of empowerment and may have hastened the development of their sense of belonging in Australia.

There is some evidence that it educated and sensitised the journalists about the Sudanese community and to that extent built a bridge between the community and mainstream media.

And friendships were made between us and the Sudanese participants. We all learnt something about one another.

As for whether it gave them a voice, it is too soon to say. Certainly The Gazelle website has not become a major platform, but it may be that with their improved English skills and better understanding of how the media work, individuals in the group will now have the skills and confidence to make themselves better heard, and become a voice for their community.

It was a noble idea and for all its difficulties, much good came of it.

Lessons

From this project, some big lessons were learnt about how to meet the objective of giving a newly arrived immigrant group a voice in Australian society.

The main lesson is that a top-down process like this runs into ownership problems, and these can be fatal to sustainability.

Conversely, a bottom-up process, where the design is driven by the articulated needs of the community, and where it is hooked into an existing community-based resource, is likely to avoid the ownership problem and therefore is more likely to be sustainable.

Reece Lamshed put it like this:

Find the leaders within the community who have an interest in providing a voice for the community. Identify who they are. Some are natural and they come forward or would come forward. And some of the people we attracted were those natural leaders.

Unfortunately one of the natural leaders was injured during our time (he had a sporting accident unconnected with the program). He would have changed the dynamic in that group. It was very unfortunate.

Then work through that person into the community. Say, 'Okay, through you, in order to project a voice, bring people in. A small group.' Work through that person. What sort of skills? Be a support to them to build it.

Our strategy was to grab this large group, train them. Some would drop out, some would remain, and then they would take off and do it. I would have gone the other way: find one or two who were interested in doing it, and get them to motivate others. And ask them what they wanted.

The problem is language. It's huge. It depends who they are trying to talk to. They might be better talking in their own language. Our intention was to have them talk to a non-Sudanese community. Maybe at that early stage they would have been better off talking among themselves and starting to get a strength and awareness and start to get more tied to one another as a community. And build their skills in that language, and then come out.

The other thing I speculate on was whether or not to a service for free, which included food, transport, and training at such an exceptional level, is devaluing its worth. At Triple Z [where he had been station manager] we started to charge for training. Just ten bucks. Once they put the ten dollars on the table, there was a commitment to it. Otherwise they didn't have to turn up. I would have had them pay to participate.

Carolyn MacDonald had similar observations:

Don't try to start from scratch. Try to hook that community into some existing infrastructure and models and processes. Tailor it with respect to their community and their issues. People coming from conflict zones have lots of heavy charged politics. That was for me a big lesson. We tried to build too much from the ground up. And then right towards the end we were looking for way to hook it into an existing community framework, and we didn't achieve that because we'd done it the wrong way round. We undervalued the existing systems.

Denis Muller concurred with these observations.

Being a voice for your community and providing a news platform is demanding and time-consuming work. Our participants were a very talented group. Partly for that reason, they had many demands on their time, as well as fulfilling their responsibilities to their families and meeting their professional obligations. With the best will in the world, they could only give a certain amount of time and energy to this project.

If I were doing it again, I would find someone in the community that had already made this kind of work their main professional function, and find out what support, assistance and training would most help them do the job better, or expand their operation.

6. Reflections

Based on the reflections of the research team and feedback from trainers and trainees, the program had a number of important positive outcomes. The program provided trainees with a carefully designed introduction to journalism basics, a point noted in many of the evaluations provided by the trainees. Related to this, the training program involved a number of very experienced journalists from diverse media as volunteer trainers and mentors, many of whom reported on how much they enjoyed the experience.

Further developing this notion of the importance of relationships, there was also good co-operation between the university-based researchers and partners at the ABC and AMES, including sharing of expertise and resources.

Despite these successful outcomes, a number of challenges emerged, and it was notable that they echoed the challenges that had emerged in the pilot project.

First, like the steering committee, participants in the program were not representative of the Sudanese community's class, gender, and geographic location. While this was in no way a reflection on the participants in the program or on the committee, it did raise important questions about how far-reaching the outcomes of the project might be, and about the recruitment process. There were important variations within the community linked to issues such as class background and gender, and whether the participants or their families were initially from north or south Sudan, or Darfur. These were not only demographic in nature but socio-political too. The question of representativeness was important not only for what it said about who had the opportunity to access the program, but also for what issues were given voice. Therefore, these factors have an important bearing on the goals of the project that were associated with the idea of "belonging".

As noted earlier, at times tensions arose from the relationship between the research and the training sides of the project. While the research team sought not to impose on the participants, it was clear that at times the participants did find the research to be an imposition. One way in which the team sought to manage this was through discussions, and to try to connect the research with the training so participants were not asked to give more time to the project or to undertake more travel outside the training timetable.

Based on feedback from trainees and mentors, it was evident that the mentor system did not work well for all participants. A number of mentors and trainees did interact frequently, with some students reporting in their evaluations that their mentor was easy to contact and to talk to. In a number of other cases, however, students indicated that it had been difficult for them to contact their mentor. Email feedback from mentors corroborated this. In large part, these concerns reflected the fact that the research team did not give specific enough instructions to the mentors and trainees about their roles. As a result, while the mentor process was critical to the overall project, there was a need for any new mentoring system to set out the goals of the relationship more clearly up front.

Some issues arose around the editing and management of the blog that was the precursor to *The Gazelle* website. In particular, there were questions about the extent to which the research team and trainers should edit the contents of the blog. This became evident in email exchanges and in meetings, where some trainees expressed concern about the levels of editing their writing was undergoing and the implications of such editing for their own voice.

While editing conducted by members of the research team focused primarily on language expression, in some instances this was interpreted as going too far. On the other hand, some participants welcomed the opportunity to have their work edited. A further complication was that so long as the blog had any publicly identifiable association with the University of Melbourne, the University was potentially liable, as a publisher, for legal actions such as writs for defamation or contempt of court. In these circumstances, the Centre for Advancing Journalism had a responsibility to safeguard the University's interests, and this was a factor in the research team's insisting on a continuing role in the editing process.

The goal of having the blog as an ongoing entity also raised issues around its organisation. In this regard, there was some progress towards trainees organising themselves, with a core leadership group developing. This was important as, in the long term, the blog would only be sustained if it were run by the program graduates and potentially by other members of the Sudanese community.

Finally, as time went by, several developments emerged which exposed some disconnections between the design of the training and the needs of the participants.

For one thing, they really did not want to practise *news* journalism: finding things out, verifying them and writing about them in an impartial way. Instead the journalism they wished to

practise consisted of reflective writing about their personal experiences, or commentary about what was happening back in East Africa, especially Sudan. While these are perfectly legitimate forms of journalism, the training was strongly directed towards the practice of news journalism. This was because those who devised it, and many who delivered it, came from a news background. They knew that the best way to connect with the established media and to make one's voice heard was to understand and be able to practise the protocols of *news* journalism. This was consistent with one of the stated objectives of the project.

Furthermore, newly arrived people, especially those who have had the experience of being refugees, do not feel at ease confronting people in the wider community, even for a short interview on some harmless topic. This is a psychological issue, and the course was not designed to help people overcome it.

Another factor was that many of the participants had come from countries where there was no rule of law and a high degree of fear and distrust of government authorities.

Given these factors and their community's difficult background with Victoria Police, there was an understandable reluctance to engage in news journalism on the single issue where it really mattered: relations between Victoria Police and the East African communities. No amount of direct assistance by way of obtaining access to the most senior echelons of Victoria Police, or hands-on coaching in reporting at public events about this issue, could induce the trainees to write a news story about it. They did not articulate why, but they just didn't. From observation, it was clear that it they found it deeply upsetting emotionally, and they also were concerned that what they wrote might be taken as expressing a community-wide position, something they did not intend or feel qualified to express.

As a matter of practical reality, the time and energy involved in becoming proficient in the skills of news journalism is substantial, particularly for people whose first language is not English. Over time, other priorities take over, and unless the journalistic endeavour is central to someone's life, then the evidence from this project is that it will become a relatively low priority.

At the same time, if they were to make *The Gazelle* project sustainable, the participants needed not just exposure to the skills of journalism, but to the skills needed to create an effective organisational structure with proper governance procedures, and the capacity to raise money. These are very demanding requirements for any community group, and exponentially more difficult for a group of newly arrived people whose first language is not English and who are not

networked into society in a way that enables them to open doors to financial support. The program did provide some training in these areas, but not enough to create a sustainable base.

Overall, the training program provided a considerable number of newly arrived people, many of whom had had traumatic experiences and who had mixed levels of English-language proficiency, with some enhanced skills in writing, improved oral and written-English skills, some connections with, and insights into, the institutional life of their new society, and the opportunity to develop a sustainable media platform for their community. These contributed to the empowerment of an oppressed community. From observations of the way relationships developed, it generated a degree of amity among the disparate elements of the Sudanese community who participated, and a touch of healing in their feelings towards the wider Australian society.

These are not inconsiderable achievements. While it is true that the website project seemed unlikely to be sustained without continuing support from the University or some other external funding source, the research team feels justified in saying that a considerable amount of good was done through this work.

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