

AuSud Media Project

A collection of writings 2012



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

CENTRE FOR
ADVANCED JOURNALISM

A collection of writings from the students of the 2012 AuSud Media Project

The AuSud (meaning 'lion' in Arabic) Media Project was born out of concerns over media representations of Sudanese Australians, and a desire to find practical ways of addressing the issue. The AuSud Media Project is a journalism training initiative for Sudanese people in Australia. Our aim is to give members of Australia's Sudanese community the skills to make their own media and have a greater voice within mainstream journalism.

The training covers key areas of modern journalism practice. It is conducted by highly respected journalists from media organizations including the ABC, The Age, and Leader Community Newspapers.

Each participant of the AuSud Media Project has a journalist mentor and an AMES English tutor. Our mentors are top journalists from respected news outlets. They help the students with their writing and offer insight into the journalism industry.

Through the training the students learn the fundamentals of journalism, develop relationships with mainstream media, and are likely to become sources for journalists when relevant issues arise. Our aim is that eventually AuSud students will run and maintain their own online news site.

If you would like more information about the project please email aussud-caj@unimelb.edu.au.

About the AuSud Media Project

The AuSud Media Project is offered through the Centre for Advanced Journalism at The University of Melbourne and is supported by an ARC Linkage Grant. We are working in partnership with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the Australian Multicultural Education Service (AMES).

This research project is overseen by Michael Gawenda and Violeta Politoff from the Centre for Advanced Journalism at The University of Melbourne, Dr David Nolan from the School of Culture and Communication at The University

of Melbourne, Associate Professor Karen Farquharson from Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences at Swinburne University of Technology, and Professor Tim Marjoribanks from the Graduate School of Management at La Trobe University.

The views expressed herein are those of the students and do not necessarily reflect those of The University of Melbourne, the Centre for Advanced Journalism, the AuSud team, the Australian Research Council, the ABC or AMES.

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A life in radio

By Abdel Karim Elnadaif

Alison, who works at the ABC, never thought she would be a journalist.

Alison is a Canadian and has Australian citizenship. She was born in Canada and went to a public primary school in Canada for boys and girls. Then she moved to Australia with her family where she went to a Quaker School in Tasmania starting in year 9. This was a private school. Here she became active in a program called Friends and Peace. After she finished High School, she went to Melbourne University and studied international relations. While she studied, she worked at Coles Shopping Centre to support herself financially.

It was her first job. Her second job was as a waiter in a coffee shop. She also worked at a pharmacy while she was still a student at Melbourne University.

In an interview, I asked Alison how she became a journalist with ABC radio? She saw a job advertisement in a newspaper for a position in the ABC. She sent her photograph and resumé. She went to the interview and did very well. She had to do a screen test. She was successful and has been working in ABC radio now for 23 years. She loves her work – she meets so many people from different backgrounds.

I asked Alison what she would do if she was the head of the ABC. She laughed, and said if she had the power she would give broadcasters more money and add an Arabic radio program.

“...if she had the power she would give broadcasters more money and add an Arabic radio program.”

Alison has experience working with the Somali community, where she produced a radio program on this community. Knowing about a new cultural background was interesting for her. She also did a story about the South Sudanese referendum and interviewed some Sudanese leaders for ABC radio.

I was very proud to meet Alison and to interview her. It was an opportunity for me to establish a relationship between ABC radio and the Nuba community.



Abdel Karim Elnadaif

Cultural interview

By Ahmed Ali

I interviewed Wanqing. He is from Beijing, the capital city of China. Wanqing said the population of Beijing was almost the same as Australia. He migrated to Australia in the year 2000. His wife and child arrived in 2003.

Wanqing said China has the highest population, so the government will not allow people to have more than one child. Because of the high population, jobs are also competitive. It is hard to get a job and if you have one the wages are very low. Wanqing was working when he was in China, but because of his low income it was hard for him to manage life. He decided to migrate to Australia. He said in Australia he was working hard and he has good wages but in China he worked hard with few wages.

In China Wanqing's parents believed in Buddhism. When he was young he followed his parent's beliefs. He said when he grew up he decided not to believe in any religion. In China there are festivals for the Chinese New Year on the 5th of April, in spring. When Wanqing was in China he celebrated all the holidays. In Australia he lives far from the community and he works so he does not celebrate holidays. But the Chinese communities in Australia celebrate the Chinese New Year in clubs or community centers. When Wanqing was in China on the 5th of April, Chinese New Year, he visited his dead parents and left gifts at their cemeteries.

In China, because their traditional clothes were not comfortable for work, most people wear casual clothes. People wear traditional clothes in holidays or celebrations. The traditional food was rice, bread and noodles. Rice and noodles were cheap in China, so most people ate rice and noodles. Wanqing said in Australia he eats different kinds of food. But he likes rice most.

Wanqing arrived in Australia in 2000. The most difficult thing for him was the language and the new culture. Because of the language barriers he was totally dependent on his friends. Wanqing said people in China are very social, but in Australia everyone is independent.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I am Ahmed Ali. I finished high school in Sudan. I did my degree in law at Garyounes University in Libya. I came to Australia in 2000. My hobby is writing journalism. I have written many articles, reports and news in newspapers and internet in Arabic.

In Melbourne I published articles in Alwasat, The Migrant, and The Ambassador newspapers. The Ambassador newspaper is published monthly by The Horn of Africa Organization in Australia. I also worked at 3CR radio since 2005. I have interviewed community members from Australia and overseas on different issues and I also broadcast news.

I joined the AuSud training because I want to get more knowledge about media.

It was hard for him to know his neighbours. He said he felt lonely and isolated.

In China he used to listen to Chinese music but in Australia he listens to a mix of Western and Chinese music. In Australia he connects with friends and relatives by telephone. He said all of his friends and relatives were studying and working.

Wanqing said he likes Australia because it changed his life. He had an income to help him manage life. Australia was more civilized than his country. Also in Australia there was a good chance of better education, so his son will have a good chance of education and a good job in the future.

The interviewee was responding to the questions. I felt he was helpful in clarifying the answers. I also started to compare my culture with his culture and I found we had things in common, for example the social life we leave back home.

Peace among the tribalism

By Angelo Tat Mapial Managuen

I took a trip to Southern Sudan this year. Upon my arrival, my tribe Luacjang was attacked by the Nuer tribe from the Unity state. They killed many people including my brothers, women, children and elderly people. They also looted a lot of cows, goats, sheep, and other valuable items they found and ran away with.

Now both communities are suffering.

The Nuer is one tribe in Southern Sudan which has a long rivalry with the Dinka tribe; they border with my Dinka community (Luacjang community). Since the war with North Sudan, some factions still engage in cattle raids and stealing each other's belongings.

Because of the tribal conflict between the Luacjang and the Nuer communities, the people of Luacjang are very badly affected. Many people were killed; many people were wounded. Some died due to lack of help from medical workers, some died later of injuries that could have been treated if medical services were available.

The Luacjang areas have no paved roads or any kind of development compared to some other regions in South Sudan today. There are no roads, water, hospitals, schools or youth centres. There is no development and no NGOs to help them start small businesses.

We need to change the communities from their traditional way of life that involves cattle keeping, which is the cause of war between them. We should have strategies that will help them to learn some other way of life, such as running a business and farming and how they can sell their products in the shops.

I believe these people need to be taught how to live peacefully with each other. The only way they can live together peacefully is by visiting each other. Dinka (Luacjang people) need to visit Nuer lands and Nuer have to visit Dinka areas to see it as a common nation. Then peaceful integration will come to these great communities, particularly as these two communities should be sharing their interests.

I am sure both of our communities have been suffering as a result of the cattle raids. There is not enough education about the war. I worry that Khartoum is happy when we are having a war amongst ourselves, when we have just achieved Independence, a new nation. The world too will blame us when we continue to have war.

Here in Victoria, we live together peacefully, with no problems.

I have been thinking and came up with an idea, which I put to a community meeting. I asked everyone there a question: why do we have peace with our brothers and our sisters here in Australia, but back home we are having a war with our neighbours?

My community said to me, go ahead and make peace. So I met with a Nuer community Elder in Footscray. He agreed with my idea that we should learn from what we have here in Australia, and therefore we can send messengers to our homelands to resolve their differences.

We should be looking for peace because no development has taken place in the Luacjang community. If we in Australia decide on peace and prosperity, we can create projects with the aim of building unity in Sudan after peace has taken place.



Angelo Tat Mapial Managuen

How to preserve your culture in Australia

By Fawzi Mahmoud Adam

A couple of months ago when we went to the park in Shepparton where we live, we met a Sudanese family. I introduced myself and my family to them and we had a good time chatting. I noticed when I was talking to their children that they couldn't reply to me in Arabic because they don't know Arabic very well and sometimes they didn't understand what I was saying. Their parents said they don't know what to do about this issue.

I really felt very sad for the children because it seems like they are losing their culture. Language is so important because it is a link to your culture. If you can't understand the language of your people it is really hard to learn about your culture and really fit into it. The Arabic language is part of their heritage and I believe it is important to keep it up. By losing their language they miss a chance to communicate with family from Sudan and they will feel alone in Australia like they can never go back to Sudan and fit in there. They might not think now that this is important because they are just kids but later they might regret it.

Migrants can easily become overwhelmed with their new surroundings, culture and language and Sudanese parents feel this just as much as people from any other country. When you feel so overwhelmed it can make you feel good to come home and relax with your family and talk in your language. Many people think that when they get to Australia, they should stop speaking their first language and just speak English. It is important to be able to speak in English in Australia, but it doesn't mean you forget your language.

Another reason why the language is so important is because Arabic is the language of Islam. It is really difficult to learn Islam properly if you don't know Arabic because the Quran is written in Arabic. It would be very bad to lose your religion because you lost your language.

Even though it is hard and lots of families lose their language there are ways to keep the language in a foreign country. I have a cousin living in Melbourne, she is sending her kids to Arabic school on Saturday to study Islamic and Arabic

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Fawzi Mahmoud Adam was born in 1974 in Sudan. As a child he was spotted doing gymnastic tricks in the street and asked to join his town's first gymnastic club. He finished his education in Sudan and later became a teacher.

He then moved to Saudi Arabia for work. While visiting family in Egypt in 2006 he met an Australian girl on holiday who he later married. They moved together to the United Arab Emirates where Fawzi worked as a teacher-aide and gymnastics instructor. He now lives with his wife and son in Shepparton, Australia.



language, and the family have made a rule that they are only allowed to speak Arabic in the house.

Also I have seen some examples of communities that are doing good things to preserve their culture. I really like what I have seen of the Chinese community in Victoria. Last week, when I was going to the Multicultural Hub, I walked through Chinatown. It was wonderful, as if you were in China, everything about China and Chinese: shops, restaurants, architecture, toys, posters, ornaments and you could hardly see any other nationality represented. Another way that the Chinese community keeps their culture alive is through their festivals and celebrations. I went to part of the Easter festival in Bendigo and saw the Chinese New Year celebrations. I was really surprised to see how many people were interested in this.

It is also important to keep a link with your country by visiting from time to time to let your children see what the culture is really like and to try to see why their language is important.

The most important thing is that parents stay close to their children and think about how they are going to stop this trouble from the start, even before they have kids.

Wardi's Blue Nile event

By Nadia Elbana

Thousands of Sudanese people followed the funeral of Mohamed Osman Wardi, who died of kidney failure at Khartoum hospital on 19 February, 2012, at the age of 80. Wardi was an important Sudanese icon who popularised Nubian music, a gifted linguist and musician who composed his famous songs in both Arabic and Nubian languages.

Despite his strained relationship with the country's Islamist government, his body was draped with the Sudanese flag. His funeral was aired live on state television early Sunday morning as the procession moved from the Khartoum hospital to the Farook Cemetery surrounded by presidents, his entourage, leaders of political parties, ministers, media agencies and artists.

Mohammed Wardi was born in 1932 on the Island of Sawarda in far northern Sudan. In 1957, Omdurman Broadcast registered Wardi as a new singer. In 1960, he performed his first song called *ya tair ya taayir* which means 'hey you flying birds'. In 1973, he studied music for two years at the High Institution of Drama and Music in Khartoum, but because of certain circumstances he didn't complete his Bachelor's degree.

His repertoire included love songs as well as more politicised pieces favoring Sudanese independence and later uprisings against military regimes in 1964, 1983, 1989, which profoundly influenced the lives of ordinary Sudanese citizens.

In the mid-eighties, he opted for self-imposed exile in Egypt for almost a decade during which he became a strong believer of the new Sudan. He registered his membership with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and toured all over the world, singing for the freedom of marginalised Sudanese people.

As a great human rights fighter, Wardi remained faithful to the struggle for freedom until he passed away. As early as 1950, Wardi came to Southern Sudan where he gave great performances. He never followed any stereotypes and as such he was the first musician of Northern Sudan who people from the South called their true son and brother from the North.

His fame extended to neighbouring African countries such as Libya, Egypt, Chad, Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea; where Wardi has an immense influence among his huge admirers who call him (The African Icon, The Legend). He is also well known in the Middle East, Europe and lately, in the USA.

Mohammed Wardi, through his long singing journey, introduced many new methods and meanings to Sudanese songs. Orchestally, he added new instruments such as the guitar, double bass, trumpet, trombone, tambour and drums. Spiritually, he used to sprinkle pleasure, joy, astonishment and refreshment on every single love song that he composed and highly rehearsed.

As a singer, Wardi hailed the Nubian culture. He played traditional instruments such as the stringed oud and tambour, but he also sang supported by more modern instruments. Wardi, who spoke candidly about the Sudanese music industry, challenged new artists and urged them to be mindful of the country's diversity in their songs and asked them to incorporate a Southern Sudanese style of singing in their lyrics. As a patriot, Wardi's national songs are more popular than the national anthem, in my view. Every Sudanese patriotically sings his national songs. To mention a few: *the Independence, the Green October, or wattanna*.



Nadia Elbana

With friends and family, I attended most of Wardi's shows, but one of the most beautiful performances, full of a world of meaning, was the unforgettable event at the Friendship Hall, which is located on Nile Street in front of the fabulous Blue Nile river at Khartoum.

On that night Wardi performed a new patriotic song and another love song. The patriotic song was called *wattanna*, which means 'our home country'. In the second part, he sang

"In front of your honour and dignified majesty, we should bow and sit down..."

At this point Wardi respectfully bowed to the audience and squatted on the stage, while he continued to repeat this part again and again. For five minutes, the audience strongly clapped, shouted and whistled as soon as Wardi stood up to bow again. What a giant icon! What a fabulous legend! But what a great greatness of such audiences!

After the break the orchestra played the music of a magnificent masterpiece of Wardi's love songs called *Between Longing and Love*.

My lungs started to fill with air, my blood pumping rate increased, my heart beat to such an extent, especially when Wardi sang:

"They said that you have been in love, we said, yes! What then?! Hand by hand, we walked together onto our passion route, and our hopes turn out to be true, so we wish all the best for every lover..."

I went up to the stage, where I was surrounded by security guards. Suddenly, I saw Wardi pointing to them to let me up. Then I stepped up to the stage, took the microphone and performed a long *zaghroota* to express how strongly I felt my happiness. Everybody in the hall clapped their hands in time with this scene.

Whenever I recall this event, it retrieves all the pleasure into my soul, it brings delightfulness and smiles to my heart, it improves even my posture, breath and relieves my stress, as if it is therapy.

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I believe that Wardi's songs work as a great reminder of sincere love and appreciation for your lover and yourself.

I believe that Wardi's songs work as a great reminder of sincere love and appreciation for your lover and yourself. His patriotic songs have a pioneering role and the first contributor in showing Sudanese citizens how to adore their beloved country. Yet his love songs, they are superior, outstanding, harmonious and pouring like a charming spring of lyrics, tunes and rhythms. Hearing them again means a lot. I feel refreshment, delightfulness, pleasure, joy, passion, love, and much, much more.

May God rest his soul in eternal peace.

African community radio

By Osman Shihaby

3CR radio station was established in 1976 and provides a voice for those denied access to the mass media, particularly the working class, women, Indigenous people and the many community groups and issues discriminated against in and by the mass media. The station is financially independent, relying on memberships and donations for financial support. 3CR began digital broadcasting in 2011 at 3CR Digital.

African Community Radio is part of 3CR Community Radio. The African Program was established by a group of women in 2000 as a program to represent the voices of the young community members living in Melbourne.

The show goes for one hour and includes discussion about health, food, and sport as well as community affairs both here and in Africa.

I started volunteering in 2005 as a control panel operator, although my role has now grown, and since 2007 I am also the program's co-ordinator and reporter as well operating the control panel.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

My name is Osman Shihaby and I grew up in Kassala city, Sudan. When I finished primary and secondary school I left my family and went to Egypt where I started technical high school, finishing with a Diploma in welding. After I finished school I went to Tafe College, studied telecommunications, and got a Diploma.

After I finished my studies I looked forward to continuing

My job is to manage the telephone calls from listeners that ring in to share stories or give information on an event or activities that may be of interest to our audience. As a coordinator and reporter I have introduced a number of dedicated volunteers who are now a core group of the radio program.

One of the interesting features of the program is that we present it in multiple languages. So my job means I can be speaking in a number of languages at any given time when coordinating the program and managing the control panel.

Although my radio show starts on Monday evenings, my job actually involves working a number of hours at home, mixing audio and music on my computer.

For example in the audio area this involves producing a sound track of a 12 year girl who introduces the show while in the background there's some classical music that I own. The classical music has a very rhythmic feel, like much African music.

at University but I had a financial problem and the time came to leave Egypt. I was very lucky to come to Australia in 1993. I started a new life without my family in Adelaide and I went to school for English. After five years I came to Melbourne.

I started working nonstop until now. I also do a lot of volunteering with the African Community in Melbourne. I'm a cameraman, editor, photographer and am doing a course as a cameraman at RMIT.

I volunteer as part of the unity cup, harmony cup and in community radio 3CR. I also joined the AuSud Media Project. My life is great now with my son and my wife in Melbourne.



After this introduction is played, my main role is then to assist the two presenters.

I do this by taking calls, quickly finding out what the person ringing in wants to talk about and then slotting them in where appropriate.

I also make contact with potential guests, find out what they are going to speak about, and arrange for them to either come into the station or call.

This involves me asking them questions to make sure they can talk on the radio and making sure they have an interesting story to tell. Some of the guests have told interesting stories, such as a woman who won an award from the city of Hume council for her community work.

Youth this time

By Felimon Asel

I understand that everyone's life is different, but I think the world is seeking a better life. I interviewed Koutar from South Sudan. This is what he said:

"In the time of war that broke out in our region, I was just a little boy and I couldn't know how old I was because there was no birth certificate to help me to know. My cousin and I, we fled across the border to Kenya. It was the hardest time in my life and I will never forget. But we were the lucky ones to survive in that war. We spent about two weeks walking, with no food but a little water to drink. Finally we were taken to Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya.

"I spent six years at that camp waiting for a visa that might allow me and my cousin to travel to any peaceful country. I finished primary school at the camp, although we had difficulty having enough food to eat.

Although I love my voluntary work, there can be some issues. Sometime a caller will hang up when I ask a question if they feel it is too personal. Depending upon the topic some people will agree or disagree – sometimes with a lot of passion.

I can honestly say that my seven years working with the community and giving my fellow Africans a voice right here in Melbourne has not only been enjoyable but also a great and rewarding experience.

I have learnt skills and made friends and look forward to many more years working on this radio program.

Felimon Asel



"At the end, we came to Australia in 2006. We didn't have much understanding of what Australia looked like. We're very lucky that Australia is a multicultural country that has more opportunities. This is my second home now, here in Australia... There is a lot of food we can eat here, instead of eating leaves to survive."

The Sudanese wedding ceremony and the bride dance

By Sakena Kambal

A wedding is a big event in Sudan, like a festival. It spreads over several days or weeks.

Sudanese culture is a rich mix of ancient Arab and African cultures, where no culture is dominant, despite the indoctrination policies of various governments. We find different customs, traditions, and cultures for each region in Sudan, but they find acceptance and approval by all. Although each culture of Sudan's regions (North, South, West, Central, and East) has specific traditional ceremonies, activities, costume, food, and music, the majority share some of each.

Pharaohs and ritual ceremonies were passed to Sudan over thousands of years. In the old days, the bride would dance in a grass skirt and nothing else to show the in-laws how fertile she would be. Now the bride is clothed, but in a modern way.

Nowadays, the bride has to dance for the women in both families, but no other men except the groom and one of his close friends, beside the bride's close family. The show is about the beauty of the bride. She shakes it like Shakira! It is great fun with more than 20 different tribal dances, including Ethiopian shoulder shaking.

Everyone pitches in at a Sudanese wedding. Dozens of family and friends all work to prepare exotic dishes and design elaborate decorations. These strong family bonds have kept the Sudanese people together.

Relatives living abroad send packages with vital ingredients, from hair extensions for the bridal dance to perfumes, huge quantities of gold jewellery, and dresses. The bride is expected to do nothing really.

For at least three months before the wedding a Sudanese bride is locked up at home, scrubbed daily with concoctions of turmeric, coffee, crushed almonds, rice and sandalwood. She is then placed aloft over a pit of burning perfumed wood to give the skin a beautiful colour and scent.

All her body hair is removed, and her hands and feet are painted in intricate designs of henna. When she emerges on the first day of the wedding her skin is dazzling, and she looks very beautiful, shining like a star. The bride appears in different beautiful dresses, and a lot of gold.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

My name is Sakena Kambal. I worked in the past as a reporter for (suna) Sudan News Agency. I also worked as an editor for Sudanese opposition newspapers in Cairo, Egypt, and as a reporter for some of the local Sudanese newspapers in Khartoum, Sudan. In Melbourne I am a broadcaster for the Sudanese Community Radio (3ZZZ), SBS Radio, and 3CR. I write for The Migrant Newspaper, Melbourne. I am currently doing a Master of Social Work at RMIT University, Melbourne.



Friends and families are invited from around the world to the wedding. More than 3,000 people attend the white dress night.

The groom must pay Dory (money and gold) to his bride, and buy clothes and other things as well. He must also spend at least between \$3,000 - 10,000 as a party preparation, according to the groom and his family situation.

Young brides in Northern Sudan have been performing the bride dance on their wedding nights for thousands of years. Today, many educated young women have rejected the bride dance because the main purpose of it was to present the charms and the beauty of the bride.

They believe that it reduces the status of the bride, and ignores the other merits of awareness, humanity and intelligence, and accounts only for the beauty of the body. It is seen as a violation of women's humanity.

During the 1990s when a hard-line government enforced its strict version of Islamic law, the racy bride dance was one tradition they did not dare touch. It is one of the ceremonies that respects cultural and religious differences. The wedding is a major event covered by the local media.

“ When she emerges on the first day of the wedding her skin is dazzling, and she looks very beautiful, shining like a star.



The role of Australian media in educating, informing and promoting diversity

By Santo Tom

The Australian media has been set and designed based on the political, economic and social interests of Australia. It is not necessarily to inform, educate or promote diversity.

To be more specific we may have to highlight the different types of media in Australia such as government, commercial and community media. We also have to look to some of the issues that face the Australian media and which determine its performance. Issues such as ownership, licensing and audiences (pressure groups) all put limitations on the concept of free expression and free media.

This topic comes to our attention and has stirred up many discussions and debates among the students of the AuSud Media Project training (run by the Centre for Advanced Journalism at The University of Melbourne). The aims and objectives of the AuSud Media Project are to get Sudanese, and some new emerging communities, voices in the Australian mainstream media through empowering the communities with skills, knowledge and networking.

The debates asked: does Australian media reflect the diversity of Australian society by informing, educating and getting their voices into the mainstream media? It also sets a range of questions such as: has the media structure in Australia been built in a way that allows minority groups to have their voices heard in the mainstream media? What are the audience percentages of community media if we take into account that community media is the only media that represents the diversity of Australia?

To what extent are decision makers in news rooms influenced by an idea of multiculturalism and diversity in Australia which allows them to escape their narrow mindedness in covering news and stories?

To balance this argument someone might say that news coverage abides by international standards and values that influence reporters (for example, closeness to home, unexpectedness and negativity), making it unnecessary to run after news from Africa or elsewhere.

But the fact is that the decision makers in news rooms do not consider covering stories an informative service to the diversity of Australia. Their only focus is on providing white Australian society with news and stories, even when we have had news from Afghanistan or Iraq. It is sad that comments and analysis always come from experts and academics rather than giving the Afghani or Iraqi communities in Australia the chance to express their feelings and describe how the incident looks.

This fact is giving us permission to say that the Australian media's real audience is white Australian society, which means that most of the stories are designed to serve them and reflect their interest. For instance, if we take the percentage of the audiences we find: government media is 25%, commercial is 70% (white Australian society), while the percentage of community media is 5%.

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It is sad that comments and analysis always come from experts and academics rather than giving the Afghani or Iraqi communities in Australia the chance to express their feelings...

Again, the percentage of minority groups getting their voices into these three types of media are: 8 out of 10 commercial, 5 out of 10 government, and 1 out of 10 community media.

These figures are sending clear messages to the AuSud Media Project students about the impossibility of getting their community voices into government or commercial media. These figures also suggest that community media is the only tool to promote Australia's diverse and multicultural society. This means media tools with no audiences.

In conclusion, we may say that the political, economic and social interests of Australia govern and determine Australian media. We can sum up that the idea of media diversity and representation is just propaganda with no effect on Australian society.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mr Santo Tom is a South Sudanese born Australian. He graduated in 1999 from Eljezzira University, and School of Communication Science, Sudan. He received a diploma of Media and Communication from MIBT Deakin University Melbourne, Burwood. He loves reading and writing with a special interest in history and religion.

Luacjang Social Day

By Thokgor Reech

Let me begin with the important features of Luacjang Social Day.

Luacjang Social Day is a gathering day whereby the Luacjang community share traditional African food, traditional dancing and traditional song. We also learn about past events, Luacjang children play several games and sing songs. Luacjang Social Day is a day of thankfulness and remembrance. It is held annually at the Richmond community hall, Victoria, Australia. There were an estimated 180 people in attendance during the 2010 and 2011 Luacjang Social Days from diverse communities, including Aussies, various tribes from South Sudan and the wider African community.

Luacjang Social Day activities involve the following:

- Luacjang history in both reading and writing
- Traditional dancing
- Luacjang children dancing and playing competitive games
- African music
- Luacjang songs and other music

The Community chairperson's welcome speech is followed by welcome speeches read by Luacjang children, both boys and girls.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

My name is Thokgor Reech (Wisdom). I am Australian and South Sudan citizen by birth. I was born at Makuach village, Tonj East County, South Sudan, in 1984. I grew up there until I left to travel to Kenya in 2003 because of the civil war between South and North Sudan. I lived in North Kenya for four years and seven months at the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) Kakuma Refugee Camp. I lived in Kenya with my cousins and other friends until I moved to Australia on 28 November 2006. I arrived in Australia and I began an English Foundation course at Victoria College. In 2007 I enrolled in a Victorian TAFE training course, Certificate IV in Logistics and Supply Chain Management, which I completed

The history of Luacjang is put on a PowerPoint presentation for everyone to learn more about the past and present. I participate in organising the Luacjang Social Day with other Luacjang members as a team. This includes organizing the event venue, the day's activities and the management and distribution of invitation cards. We also collect money from families and individuals as a contribution because we have limited funds from Victorian Multicultural Consumer Affairs. After the event, we clean the hall as a team. I also participate in traditional dancing and provide clarity on Luacjang's history if there is any uncertainty.

Luacjang Social Day is a social gathering which is historical and traditional. However, the day has changed, and this has left many people feeling isolated and sad very quickly. Luacjang Social Day is a day of social interaction. Social Days help the Luacjang community to reduce individualism and levels of anxiety in society. This helps protect people's health by keeping the Luacjang people attentive towards loneliness.

in 2008. I continued my studies with a Diploma of Logistics, which I completed in 2009. In 2010 I enrolled in a higher education program and am currently doing my specialization year in a Bachelor of Business, majoring in Global Logistics and Transport, at Victoria University. I expect to complete this in November 2012. As time has gone on, I have needed to learn more about media as I find it would be a very interesting career, which I have never thought of before.



Socialising is essential, even if Luacjang Social Day is complex. We believe that it is vital for both the emotional and physical health of the community. Luacjang Social Day has existed for over a decade as an oral interaction. In 2010 a few Luacjang youths who had moved to Melbourne came up with the idea to form a social day as an annual event. Angelo says that "some of us want to help lead this new movement for social change."

Social change is very important today because it is a combination of the past and present and enables future generations to learn about their background. Luacjang is a name derived from the Luacjang group at Tonj East County, Warrap state, South Sudan. The Luacjang people have lived there for around 13 centuries. Luacjang is located in the centre of South Sudan and neighbours Agar Pakam in the east, Nuer in the north and north east, Rek in the south and Gok Arol in the south east. Luacjang is a sub-tribe that consists of 12 sub-clans and chiefs in Tonj East County.

Luac is a sub-tribe from a large tribe in South Sudan called Dinka or Jieng. Social Day is a special day for all of us because it brings the community together. This is the day where we learn about numerous things, which include most importantly, chiefs' stories, kids and young adults dancing, and Luacjang divine. It is a very important day for many of us who were born outside Luacjang areas. Social Day is a very interesting day for both the young and old, as we share traditional food. It is an essential day where we show our traditional dancing. This activity has encouraged many children in the community to learn how to dance and to speak their mother tongue in public.

Social day

We believe Luacjang Social Day will bring change to the community, since most of us need to match our present lifestyle with the open and sharing traditions of the past, rather than individualism. It is also good for us here in Australia, as people are very busy with their daily activities, we need to fight against loneliness and depression in the community. This is a day where we can reflect on public values.

We have found out that social networks are vital for many reasons, including building trust and helping societies which have come from a long period of sadness. Since there are many single parents and single youths in the Luacjang community, we believe not gathering as a community for a long time will have an impact on individuals' lives, and rates of isolation may increase.

In reality, people's lives need a lot of support from the community as well as family. In Dinka culture hand checking is an incredible thing, both emotionally and physically. Social networks are essential today, as thousands of people around the world commit suicide because of isolation. Thus, we are aggressive towards loneliness, where people feel isolated in the community and unhappy in their lives. It is the best thing to do today because many people are facing financial problems, especially those living in remote areas and those who are unemployed. Social Day is a very relationship focused day and important for the development of tradition in society.

Luacjang Social Day is important as it encourages interaction, and is a place where people can share their feelings. There is also good evidence that Social Days have a wide range of impacts, including happiness, wellbeing, faith and unitedness. Social interaction is a complex development which has an interesting impact on human ethics. Social interaction is good and everyone values time on gathering day. Luacjang Social Day has played a significant role in the community as a good way of building friendships and family relationships. It is a good source of support that can help people against the harmful effects of anxiety by helping the Luacjang community to cope well. The complex nature of social situations makes it challenging to isolate social interaction as the only cause of improving health. The fact that all Luacjang traditional cultures value this interaction is strong evidence of the power of Luacjang Social Day.

Save people's lives, not oil

By Yahya Ameer Arko

Every year the school could only accept 70 students out of the 200 wishing to be enrolled in grade one. I was lucky to be one of 70 children enrolled to enter grade one at Dissa primary school. I was nine years old at the time and really keen to get a place because I was motivated by my cousin, who was six years older than me and studied in grade 6 at the same school. He was the only person in the village who could read or write a letter at the time. The other person who really wanted me to go was my father, who had never been to school. I recall his frustration from stories he told me. He intended to fill that gap, that frustration, by educating us. I could tell that he was ready to pay the price and face the obstacles that may come along the way; he knew that on the other side there is always hope.

But my good fortune somehow turned into a nightmare. When one of the teachers asked my name, I told him my real name, a name that every single person in my community knows, Yahya Ameer Arko. He laughed at me and said this is not an Arabic name, it does not meet school law; no strange names are allowed in an Arabic school. He called my father and gave him two options, either he changes my name or I lose the chance of enrolling in school. Both options were difficult for my father but he finally agreed to change my name. Even though my father is illiterate, he knows the value of education.

Thus, I went to school with hope and passion but things did not go as I expected, we were told not to speak our mother tongue under any circumstances. However it is not easy to give up your native language. That is why they created the forbidden language lock; it looks like a bicycle lock. Whenever they heard you speak your language they put it on your neck like a necklace, and they would ask that whenever you found someone else speaking their language, you had to put the lock onto them.

At the end of the week, the teacher would ask for whoever carried the lock, and who had it before them. In this way they gathered all the students who had spoken their language to punish them.

I know many students left the school because of this treatment. It is a policy established by the regime to destroy non-Arab tribes and their culture. Ironically, most teachers were from the local area, they were not allowed to speak their own native language in school because they may lose their job. Students and teachers were all in the same box, no one could survive this Arabism policy.

The school was very far from my village; I had to walk two hours every day. As a child I never complained about the distance, every day I woke up fresh and I made my journey to school, but the only thing that concerned me was that forbidden language lock. I always knew in my heart it was unjust and wrong and it should not be there. I remember one day, one of my classmates asked a very smart question about why the Arabic language is better than our language, but we could not find the answer because we were too young to know what was going on, and we were afraid to ask our teachers who had zero tolerance for this sort of question.

War began in Darfur in 2003 as a reaction to a rebel revolution that claimed proportional political representation and fair access to the country's economic resources. The Sudanese regime started a brutal military operation against the people of Darfur. The regime armed Janjaweed militias, and backed by the Sudanese Air Force made aggressive attacks on villages all over the region. The villages occupied mostly by native African tribes were destroyed completely. The villagers were raped, murdered and forced to leave their homes and seek refuge inside and outside Sudan.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

My name is Yahya Ameer Arko. I was born in Northern Darfur, Sudan. I fled from Darfur in 2005 and lived in a refugee camp in Ghana for two and a half years. The Australian Government granted me a humanitarian visa in 2007. Now I am an Australian citizen. I am the Secretary of Media for the Darfur Community Association of Australia and a board member of Darfur Australia Network Organization. My humble slogan for life is 'the flame of hope always burns and tomorrow will be better than today.'



United Nations officials have described the Darfur crisis broadly and constantly as the worst humanitarian disaster in 2004. Different reports estimate that since the eruption of the conflict in 2003 between 200,000 – 400,000 people have died as a consequence of fighting, malnutrition and disease. Three million have been displaced and four million people continue to be completely reliant on limited humanitarian assistance.

The marginalized people of Sudan do not have any means to protect themselves from the despotic regime of Sudan's gunship airplanes and its proxy, Janjaweed militias.

People are considered merely objects or beasts in a zoo; people have no say about their lives. People are not allowed to express their ideas. Therefore, I believe that I have to speak out on behalf of Darfuri and other marginalized people of Sudan who have been carrying the burden of suffering for 50 years. I have shared my own experience and I have tried

to recall some stories from when I was a child to describe what is going on in Darfur, Western Sudan.

I believe that we as people can do our part to save countless lives of children, women, elders and the disabled. I urge everyone to wear the Darfuri people's shoes and think deeply about the tragedy for a while, because there is no difference between mankind in terms of suffering and pain. We as people have the power to send a clear message to the international community to meet its obligations and to save human life instead of saving oil. We as people can tell the international community to impose the resolution of a no fly zone over Darfur's sky and other marginalized areas. The children and elders need us to take concrete action to rescue them from the tragedy they are experiencing on a daily basis.

For more information see: <http://www.darfuraustralia.org/darfur/background>

A collection of writings from the students of the 2012 AuSud Media Project. This project is a journalism training initiative for Sudanese people in Australia. Our aim is to give members of Australia's Sudanese community the skills to make their own media and have a greater voice within mainstream journalism.



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