



THE FOUNDATION FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

MEDIAting Globalisation: Challenges for International Journalism in the 21st Century

REPORT

Mediating Globalisation didn't come up with many answers, but it did come up with a number of questions that need answering for and by working journalists.

Does the Australian media supply the public with the information on world affairs that they need or want?

Does the globalised Australian media provide the public with the details and explanations on international news that they need?

Can the Australian media actually tell the Australian public what it needs to know on this subject, when so few actually read, listen or watch the "responsible" media?

How important is the "new media" to informing the public?

BACKGROUND

In the course of FDC consideration of issues impacting on international cooperation for sustainable development, the **Media** (global and local) - print, radio, television, the internet – emerges as a critical element in the creation and maintenance of “civil society”. The media is a key player in the promotion of understanding of global development issues and commitment to poverty reduction objectives but can also contribute to misunderstanding by reinforcing negative attitudes and stereotypes.

With a Federal Election pending in Australia, and media coverage of a range of domestic and foreign policy issues already a subject for discussion, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting will focus attention on Australia's place in the world.

FDC believes that a better understanding within the industry of the media's information and analytical role could

- ◆ Enhance understanding of increasingly complex international issues in Australia, particularly with regard to Australia's contribution to development cooperation in the region
- ◆ Lead to active support for official and privately funded international development activities and thus
- ◆ Contribute to sustainable global development and poverty reduction.

With particular reference to international cooperation for sustainable development and poverty reduction, the objectives of the FDC “media initiative” are:

- to examine the role of the media in Australia and in the Asia Pacific region in promoting civil society and sustainable development
- to support those activities which strengthen local capacity for positive contributions in these areas; and
- to contribute to a better understanding among Australians of global development issues.

This initial project was being undertaken in collaboration with The University of Queensland's Center for International Journalism and the commonwealth Journalists Association.

Funding for this project was sought from the Commonwealth Foundation, AusAID, the Neiman Foundation, the Freedom Forum and Australia's major media houses. So far submissions to both the Commonwealth Foundation

and AusAID have been successful, while the media houses have contributed by funding several employees. Thus representatives from ABC Radio and Online services, News Limited, Fairfax and SBS attended and contributed to the conference.

IMPLEMENTATION

"The 2-day event began with a keynote speaker, Mr. Thomas Kunkel addressing the issues of the responsibility of the media in a rapidly changing environment. This was followed by sessions focussing on *Globalisation and Its Impact on News Media, Communication technologies Shaping Global Journalism* and *Australia's Place in the Region*.

The second day focussed on more specific issues that affect Australia and the Region with case studies reporting on *Conflict, Australia Reflected, Trade and Finance, East Timor* and *The Pacific*.

The practical realization of these issues was then addressed during the CHOG the issues raised during the conference in the *Media in a Shrinking World* session.

Promotional material for the event included a press release to all major media webpages, the MEAA newsletter, the MEDIA lift-out of The Australian, Opinions Page of the Sydney Morning Herald and The Courier-Mail.

Responses and feedback have been enthusiastic will all contacted parties interested in the issues being raised and the opportunity to reflect on them. Comments included "topics are great" (Nigel McCarthy, SBS Jakarta correspondent) and "I would have loved to participate in your workshop" (David Salter, Littlemore ABC) and " We at IPS are naturally interested in initiatives of the kind outlined" (Mr. Ranjit Devraj, Inter Press Service, India). While Laisa Taga Editor of the Pacific Islands news believes the event to be a " very worthwhile program



SUMMARY

The conference attracted a total of 60 participants, just over 50 of which were registered participants – the remainder being journalists coming to cover the event. Responses to the event were positive with many participants eager and enthusiastic to continue the dialogue. Comments received informally since the event have been warm and supportive with such comments as:

- "As someone whose college conducts a dozen or so of these kinds of conferences a year... I wanted to say that I thought the conference was a big success in and of itself, and more to the point provides an outstanding foundation if the FDC and your associate groups care to build on it."
- "Looking back on last week I have come to the conclusion that it was a wonderful learning experience for me. I appreciate very much all you did in supporting the conference, which provided me with an opportunity to meet practitioners and academics involved in professional journalism.. thank you and the team for the hard work and the opportunity..."
- "I think, the occasion in Brisbane was so important, I look forward to join in the network (Asia, Australia and pacific hopefully)"
- "...Your conference was much less stodgy than gatherings of journalists-only or journalism educators-only and the exchanges were very relevant to what journalists do."

While there were some disappointments with last-minute cancellations and substitutions which affected the program structure, overall the conference was successful as it raised a number of issues and further developed a dialogue on global development issues in the Australian media.

Dissemination

The conference received a considerable amount of media coverage and exposure. In total, we were contacted by 15 different media outlets and several non-industry parties interested in the event. Aside from the conference and media spots, Mr Kunkel also promoted the project through his appearance at a public lecture held at the University of Queensland on Wednesday the 18th July. The project's media coverage has included:

1. Interview with Mick O'Regan – Media Affairs Reporter – ABC Radio National
2. Interview with Australian Associated Press – wired out to all media outlets
3. Interview with Donna Fields – ABC Radio News
4. Interview with David Costello – Courier-Mail – Queensland Newspapers
5. Interview (and Pieter Wessels) with Vivian Schenker – ABC Radio National
6. Interview with Teresa Holland – DRIVE show- ABC Radio, Qld
7. Malcolm Cole – Courier Mail article attached
8. Ruth Dexter – Dateline SBS TV
9. Published address Opinion Page of Sydney Morning Herald – see attached article
10. Greg Carey's Talk-back – 4BC radio
11. Interview with Caroline Davies from SBS World View Current Affairs Radio
12. Interview with ABC Radio Canberra
13. Pieter Wessels interview with Mike Prezler- ABC Radio Darwin
14. Interview / discussions with Mia Greves from Channel 9's Today Show.
15. Posting of information on the Fairfax and News Ltd Intranet
16. Posting of papers and summary on FDC webpage
17. QUT students to summarize papers
18. National Seniors Association – Sarah Saunders
19. The CJA webpage

Outcomes

Proposed outcomes to emerge from the event were inclusive of both the formal education sector and on-the-job training opportunities. In a long-term strategic perspective, the Journalism Educator's Association talked of changes to curriculum and spoke of programs of international internships for students in regional countries. For working journalists, Fairfax discussed the idea of initiating collaborations with civil society to provide more diverse perspectives in professional training while a Global Journalists' webpage was also proposed.

Other outcomes considered include further events to be held at CHOGM in collaboration with the Commonwealth Journalists' Association, an invite for Beris to present at the Commonwealth Broadcasters Association. Other possible outcomes proposed through the evaluation sheets included

- A similar type workshop in the Pacific
- Language training for journalists
- Seminars on comparative cultures and political systems
- Educational / information packages on cassette or video for journalists
- Funding for Australian journalists to live and work in Asia and the Pacific
- Run a one day program on a Sunday to get the working journalists
- Establishment of a subsequent network
- Development of global journalism curriculum.



The level of enthusiasm at the event and in the number of suggestions put forward to continue this work are clear indications of the success of this event. The impact of this event through the continuation of these ideas and projects indicate the FDC Information and Communication' media program is relevant and significant.

The discussion and ideas generated from journalists and journalism educators at the event now form the basis of a strong program. Particularly so as the suggestions come from the media constituents themselves, not thought up by some irrelevant third party. This is wherein lies the strength of the program.

FDC now looks forward to further developing working relationships with project partners and in following-up on the exciting ideas to emerge from the event. In particular, we are hoping to capture the momentum of the conference and to establish strategic partnerships with the industry for the development of a 2-3 year program which can implement further initiatives.