


Spring 2011

Media in Sāmoa: Journalists' Realities, Regional Initiatives, and Visions for the Future

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Media in Sāmoa:
Journalists' Realities, Regional Initiatives, and Visions for the Future



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Abstract

This research investigates media freedom in Sāmoa by identifying the country's obstacles to freedom of expression and proposing strategies for generating change in the media industry. The paper assesses the local media initiatives of the Journalists Association of (Western) Sāmoa (JAWS), *Sāmoa Observer* newspaper, United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the Media and Journalism Programme at the National University of Sāmoa (NUS), and evaluates their strengths and shortcomings in providing services for the community. It also examines how journalists balance cultural sensitivity in reporting and what ideas news organizations, journalists, journalism students, and media educators have for improving media standards and accountability within a society where freedom of expression is a relatively new and challenged concept. This research draws upon primary resources such as personal interviews, media lectures at NUS, presentations at the Inaugural Pacific Media Networks Meeting, as well as print, online, and broadcast news sources. Secondary resources were consulted to obtain background information on Pacific news outlets. Surveys were also distributed in the Media and Journalism Programme to provide students with an opportunity to give course feedback and the data is utilized to suggest ideas for creating a more sustainable relationship with the media industry and improving journalism standards across Sāmoa. I conclude that the democratic concept of freedom of expression is met with traditional disapproval because it threatens the balance of power established by the chiefly system and is guided by a code of ethics based upon universal principles and values created by the media industry. Since these values are often at variance with local village standards and the interests of government, the field of journalism in Sāmoa has not developed prestige and journalists often feel conflicted balancing values of *fa'aSāmoa* (the Sāmoan way) with the industry's proposed guidelines of transparency and responsible news reporting.

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To future journalists:

Here's to finding that "fire in your belly."

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my new Sāmoan family of journalists for taking me in, putting up with my questions, and sharing your world with me. I hope I have expressed your thoughts and sentiments accurately, and I wholeheartedly admire your commitment to having your voices heard across the Pacific. A special acknowledgement to Afamasaga Toleafoa, Cherelle Jackson, Lagi Keresoma, Keni Lesa, Molesi Taumaoe, Lance and Angela Polu, Nora Tumua, Vicky Lepou, Media and Journalism students at NUS, and the visionary presenters at the Inaugural Pacific Media Networks Meeting during World Press Freedom Day 2011.

Lastly, I'd like to acknowledge Jackie Faasisila, Acacia Cochise, and the SIT Spring 2011 group for your words of wisdom and guidance, and healthy reminders to breathe every once in a while.

Guide to Organization Abbreviations

ABU — Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union

AusAID — Australian Agency for International Development

EU — European Union

IFJ — International Federation of Journalists

IPDC — International Programme for the Development of Communication (UNESCO)

JAWS — Journalists Association of (Western) Sāmoa

MAP — Media Alliance of the Pacific

NUS — National University of Sāmoa

Pacific WAVE Media Network — Pacific Women Advancing Vision of Empowerment Media
Network

PacMAS — Pacific Media Assistance Scheme

PADJ — Pacific Alliance of Development Journalists

PasiMA — Pasifika Media Association

PFF — Pacific Freedom Forum

PIMA — Pacific Islands Media Association

PINA — Pacific Islands News Association

UNESCO — United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

Glossary of Sāmoan Terms

Fa'aaloalo — Respect

Fa'aSāmoa — The Sāmoan way or culture

Komiti — Committee

Palagi — Foreigner

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INTRODUCTION

Accurate news reporting, adherence to a code of ethics, and an unwavering commitment to the public's right to information are fundamental principles of journalism. The media industry is engaged in an up-hill battle to preserve freedom of expression and individual journalists have the responsibility to remain honest, investigative, and accountable in their news endeavors. In the Pacific, media organizations facilitate the exchange of information and create a sense of interconnectedness among regions that may be geographically isolated. Through the input and allegiance of journalists to upholding truth and demanding access to information, a forward-moving Pacific news front is being developed. Journalists have the opportunity to report upon local issues of great significance and give voices to the voiceless and underrepresented communities of the world. They are pushing for transparency, challenging institutions, reporting upon the cultural diversity that sustains their communities, and in turn, redefining their commitment to a free and independent media industry.

In a culture based upon the value of *fa'aaloalo* (respect), the investigative role of the journalist may be perceived as challenging Sāmoa's social order. Journalists are required to uncover and report the facts for a living, and in doing so, ask questions and expose information that may be damaging to a person's name. Since Sāmoa is a small, collectivist island society, news regarding an individual has implications for the family and village and may spread quickly. The democratic concept of freedom of expression is sometimes met with traditional disapproval because it threatens the balance of power established by the chiefly system and is guided by a code of ethics based upon universal principles created by the media industry, values that are often at variance with local village standards. In the Sāmoan media industry, journalists must be

culturally sensitive and aware of the social implications the written and spoken word could have on the island.

This paper investigates media in Sāmoa by identifying the country's obstacles to freedom of expression and proposing strategies for generating changes to the industry. The primary objective is to give voice to journalists' everyday realities and visions for the future, and explore the regional media initiatives through which these realities are shaped. This researcher provides a forum for journalists, media practitioners, and journalism students to express the strengths and weaknesses of the current media state, to convey directions in which they'd like the industry to move, and to share ideas for improving news standards within a society where freedom of expression is a relatively new and challenged concept. An assessment is provided of the regional media initiatives of the Journalists Association of (Western) Sāmoa (JAWS), *Sāmoa Observer*, United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the Media and Journalism Programme at the National University of Sāmoa (NUS) to understand how they interact with and impact journalists, news bodies, and students. Lastly, some insights from Pacific media professionals are compiled to encourage future journalists into the field.

METHODOLOGY

This research began at Sāmoa's only daily, independent newspaper, *Sāmoa Observer*, wherein a case study was conducted by interviewing the editor, journalists, and staff members about media freedom in Sāmoa. During this preliminary research, a conflict between *fa'aSāmoa* (the Sāmoan way or culture) and freedom of expression, obstacles to media freedom, and journalists' goals to establish a more accountable news industry were identified. The initial goal was to interview journalists on the ground and study media issues through their eyes, but found my Western lens and background as a former newspaper editor for my high school fostered

certain expectations about how media standards ought to be enforced. It wasn't until the end of the first week when I realized the extent to which my research was culturally sensitive and could be perceived as disrespectful in that I was challenging the traditional hierarchy by asking direct questions. I made a point to carry on my research with the objective of *learning* about Sāmoan media, rather than actively searching for weaknesses and paternalistically attempting to “improve” a complex entity I could not fully understand as a *palagi* (foreigner).

The majority of research was conducted in the three-week period between April 21 and May 13, 2011. During personal interviews in media offices, news conferences, the National University of Sāmoa, and various locations around Apia on the island of Upolu, Sāmoa, I established a strong media network. I developed a partnership with NUS and attended Media and Journalism courses, interviewed students, and was invited to attend a 3-day conference for media networks as a student observer. I grew familiar with several students in the program and spoke with them about their courses and goals after graduation. I read Sāmoan newspapers, media blogs, and secondary sources to comprehend how Sāmoa fits into a broader Pacific context of media freedom and watched television broadcasts to surround myself with news. Surveys were distributed to 19 journalism students to grasp what improvements they want to see and inquire about the strengths and weaknesses of the program from a non-media industry perspective. The survey also attempts to evaluate whether students utilize the courses to further their career goals and assess how prepared they feel to obtain media jobs upon graduation.

Due to restrictions of time and transportation costs, I could not interview all journalists in print, radio, and broadcast media, and thus do not claim to speak for all journalists. Furthermore, during the course of my research, I encountered many different opinions and do not attempt to represent a single voice in the Pacific.

JOURNALISTS' REALITIES AND VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE

“How do we define our commitments to ethics, accountability, truth, and the public interest? Who monitors the notion of just how free, truthful and ‘independent’ journalists are?”¹

Questions of accountability and freedom of expression as posed by Pacific journalist Lisa Williams-Lahari above are commonly expressed by Sāmoan journalists. The media professionals interviewed conveyed that news organizations ought to share a collective mentality of preserving media freedom and cooperate to sustain a regional identity that works together to promote journalistic accountability. News sensationalism is threatening the integrity of the industry and many indicated that better fact-checking and investigative reporting standards must be enforced across news outlets. The following sections demonstrate some of the media weaknesses Sāmoan journalists identified and their visions for a forward-moving news front.

The concept of media freedom is evolving in Sāmoa and will be shaped by the input and demands of dedicated journalists. According to Cherelle Jackson, a passionate media professional with 11 years of in-country and overseas experience, what the mainstream media needs is a renewal of its commitment to journalism ethics. “We can decide whether to stick to an island mentality or go the ethical route and observe international media standards,” she stated in an interview.² Although this island mentality is prevalent in Sāmoan society, culture does not have to be a restrictive force; in fact, it can motivate a person to advocate for change if change is what’s best for the people. Jackson asserts that she is a Sāmoan first and a journalist second, and is proud to be part of a “small [media] industry that’s defining its terms as we go.”³ She believes media organizations will always have personality clashes and contends it is most important to

¹ Williams-Lahari, Lisa. “Reclaim the right to know *toki* and locate it online.” *Pacific Journalism Review*. 2nd ed. Vol. 16. Auckland: Premier Print, 2010. 12. Print.

² Jackson, Cherelle. Journalist. Coffee Lounge at Aggie Grey’s Hotel, Apia. Personal Interview. 29 April 2011.

³ Ibid.,.

remain focused on solid media objectives. Jackson supports the movement toward “cause-driven associations” of journalists united by common beliefs of protecting freedom of expression.⁴

Afamasaga Toleafoa, the former Editor of *Sāmoa Observer* and a Consultant on Governance and Public Policy believes it is critical for journalists to have an understanding of traditional Sāmoan society and the contemporary influences that are shaping and molding it today. He argues, “You can’t be an effective agent of change if you don’t know the basic nature of Sāmoan society and what kind of society you want that to change into.”⁵ He believes that the media should play an influential role in Sāmoa’s democracy and serve as a watchdog. Toleafoa also asserts that Sāmoans are culturally programmed by the *fa’aSāmoa* to have respect for authority, honor ones family, and be obedient. The youth who are ingrained with these values grow up programmed to maintain the status quo and not to question their culture because it is disrespectful and un-Sāmoan.

No culture is static and Sāmoan society is changing, despite resistance to globalization or adherence to global trends. Toleafoa believes the media will play a crucial role in this process of change, “guided hopefully by the natural idealism of youth and journalists by having that fire in the belly.”⁶ He adds that “Sāmoan journalists can choose to look at Sāmoan issues within the narrow confines of their own culture and environment or to report on Sāmoan issues in a global context with its more universal values and standards.” In exploring society through this wider global lens instead of conforming to the ideals of their *fa’aSāmoa* upbringing, journalists will be introduced to a new world to question. Investigative journalism will then flourish and serve as a

⁴ Ibid.,

⁵ Toleafoa, Afamasaga. Consultant on Governance and Public Policy. Sydney Side Café, Apia. Personal Interview. 26 April 2011.

⁶ Ibid.,

conduit through which the public can interrogate largely unchallenged entities such as the government, church, village affairs, and the underlying hierarchical social structure.⁷

Because journalists often report upon culturally sensitive matters and their role may be perceived as intrusive, the general public does not regard the industry with prestige. In interviews, numerous journalists identified that they felt under-valued and underpaid, and discussed the hardships they had to overcome to earn the respect of their families and peers. Some journalists are disheartened by this lack of respect and seek international careers wherein they can obtain economic and social status that is not generally found in Sāmoa. A number of them have left Sāmoa to pursue media opportunities in countries such as Australia and New Zealand where the potential to launch a respectable career and reap financial benefits is greater. As long as Sāmoa continues to lose its valuable resources in a “brain drain” to other countries, the flow of journalists into the nation’s workforce will be impeded and journalism will not be perceived as a respectable career path. Furthermore, the industry cannot move forward unless there are people committed to investing their time and energy to improving media standards.

Additional interviews revealed a common dissatisfaction with access to information and the tactics some government officials use to manipulate reporters. When journalists report upon controversial government issues, they run the risk of disrespecting public officials and may face a variety of consequences. Tupai Molesi Taumaoe, a journalist for the Sāmoan overseas newspaper *Le Manamea* reported he has been physically assaulted by government officials five times for publishing articles. Despite this abuse, however, Taumaoe has been writing for over 20 years and has never apologized for any of his articles. “It’s an issue of integrity,” he stated. “If you can substantiate your information then you don’t really have much to lose.”⁸ He upholds that

⁷ Toleafoa, Afamasaga. Phone conversation and paper comments. 10 May 2011.

⁸ Taumaoe Tupai Molesi. Journalist. Click Net Café, Apia. Personal Interview. 26 April 2011.

“freedom of expression implies the freedom to access” and believes that access to information is a basic obstacle for reporters.⁹

Fatu Tauafiafi, a senior writer for *Sāmoa Observer* has also had his right to freedom of expression encroached upon through verbal intimidation from public officials. He has received numerous threats over the phone and joked in an interview about how his friends tell him to wear a bulletproof vest to work. Despite these threats, Tauafiafi is determined to continue writing and acknowledges that it’s “just part of the job.”¹⁰ He asserts that “the truth hurts people who aren’t telling the truth” and believes that “the essential thing is the truth,” which can be found through responsible research.¹¹ This research revealed that many journalists and news organizations have been sued for the defamation of public officials. These issues are commonly resolved outside of court in the form of a public apology or statement retraction because the legal fees of in-court settlement are too much for most news organizations to bear. Regardless of the lawsuit’s outcome, however, the legal fees are very high and private organizations find it financially difficult to compete against officials who have the legal backing of government.

Lagi Keresoma, a writer for *Talamua Media* who has overseas and freelance experience, believes journalists must be strong and maintain their wits about them in the field because “the media can be easily manipulated.”¹² Similar in sentiment to Tauafiafi, she revealed, “it doesn’t bother me about run-ins with the government; it bothers me when I don’t do my job right.” Keresoma is very outspoken and asserts journalists ought to be wary of government officials who may befriend them to cover up their corruption. She believes it is essential to maintain a public

⁹ Taumaoe Interview.

¹⁰ Tauafiafi, Fatu. Journalist. Office of *Sāmoa Observer*, Vaitele. Personal Interview. 15 March 2011.

¹¹ Tauafiafi Interview.

¹² Keresoma, Lagi. Journalist. Office of *Talamua Media*, Apia. Personal Interview. 26 April 2011.

appearance and not be intimidated by the people she's writing about because she has the truth on her side.

Since freedom of expression can be a contested issue and uncomfortable reality for people living on a small island, it is imperative that journalists are protected and monitored by a regional media coalition like the Journalists Association of (Western) Sāmoa (JAWS) so that this freedom is not abused.

JAWS: NATIONAL MEDIA ORGANIZATION FOR JOURNALISTS

JAWS is a national organization for print, broadcast, and online media professionals. It was founded in the 1980s under the guidance of 15 members from different media groups who outlined key objectives and visions for the future of journalism. JAWS membership is open to journalists for \$10WST per year and news organizations for \$50 WST. The executive board is comprised of six members who represent different news outlets in Sāmoa including *Talamua Media*, *Radio Polynesia*, and *Le Mau a Sāmoa*.¹³ The Constitution reads as follows:¹⁴

1. To promote cooperation among local journalists and others working in the media, information, and public relations sectors.
2. To promote an understanding of the role of journalism in the community.
3. To organize activities that promote the aims and values of the Association.
4. To undertake activities that will lead to improved training of members and increase professionalism.
5. To establish and uphold a code of ethics.
6. To establish and maintain contact with like-minded regional and international organizations.
7. To develop and maintain freedom of information and expression.

The role of JAWS in the Sāmoan media has been of great debate in recent years. The organization's current President who was elected by JAWS members also serves as Press Secretariat to Parliament. In an interview, Ualetenese Papalii Taimalelagi stated, "the issue is

¹³ Members: Ualetenese Papalii Taimalelagi (President and Press Secretariat); Lagi Keresoma (Vice President, freelance, *Talamua Media*); Ame Sene (General Secretary, News Editor *Radio Polynesia*); Angela Kronfeld (Treasurer, Marketing Manager *Talamua Media*); Sioeli Alofaifo (Sports reporter *Radio Polynesia*); and Manuleleua Mere Talitau (Publisher/ Editor *Le Mau a Sāmoa*). See <http://jawsamoa.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48&Itemid=34>

¹⁴ Journalists Association of Sāmoa. "History." Web. 04 May 2011. <http://jawsamoa.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=49&Itemid=10>

sticky,” but contended that he is a public servant who uses his job as Press Secretariat “as a channel for making political decisions and passing them onto the public.”¹⁵ The JAWS headquarters operates from Taimalelagi’s office in the Government Building, which is an unusual location for an organization the President called “a government watchdog.”¹⁶ As Press Secretariat, Taimalelagi’s duties include tasks such as advising the Prime Minister on media relations and writing press releases approved by the Cabinet about government affairs for the media and public.¹⁷ Since the media industry in Sāmoa has been under years of government scrutiny for publishing stories that expose corruption and/or are considered defamatory, some news organizations that are members of JAWS do not have great relationships with the government. JAWS, from a theoretical level at the very least, aims to be an organization that protects the journalist’s right to freedom of expression, but when this freedom conflicts with government interests, where does that leave the journalist? Taimalelagi’s position is “sticky,” indeed.

Journalists have mixed opinions about Taimalelagi’s position and the influence JAWS has on regional media. Some recognize Taimalelagi’s dual appointment as a major conflict of interest and breach of journalists’ rights, while others are not concerned because they believe JAWS does not have much of a presence in the region. In interviews, some indicated JAWS is an organization they can look up to when there is a violation of ethics,¹⁸ while others noted it is a lobby group that neither functions to preserve freedom of information nor protects the interests of journalists.¹⁹ More heated comments referred to JAWS as “next to useless” and “a totally

¹⁵ Taimalelagi, Ualetenese Papalii. Press Secretariat and President of JAWS. Office of the Press Secretariat, Apia. Personal Interview. 26 April 2011.

¹⁶ Ibid.,

¹⁷ Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. “Press Secretariat Roles and Duties.” Web. 07 May 2011. <<http://www.mpmc.gov.ws/presec.html>>

¹⁸ Anonymous Interview. Apia.

¹⁹ Anonymous Interview. Apia.

unaccountable, government propaganda machine that violates all rules of free government.”²⁰

According to several senior journalists, the organization was influential in the region years ago and actively held workshops for its members, but today, its meetings are sparse and journalists are more likely to be sent overseas to attend conferences. Although there is no consensus among journalists on the efficacy of the organization, the debate is promising in that it fosters discussions about media ethics and reveals a commitment to media freedom.

In an age of disparate media transparency in Sāmoa and cultural debates about the abuse of media freedom, many journalists and newspapers like *Sāmoa Observer* maintain a controversial commitment to freedom of expression.

CASE STUDY IN FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION: *SĀMOA OBSERVER*

Sāmoa Observer, the country’s only daily newspaper has a global readership of about 350,000 people per week²¹ and is the largest group of newspapers in Sāmoa. *Sāmoa Observer* is marketed toward the educated, English-speaking business class elite in Sāmoa, but the recently launched *Talanoa Sāmoa* is available in the Sāmoan language 3 days a week to accommodate a more rural readership. Interviews with *Observer* reporters reveal a common objective to enforce a higher standard of news reporting and research and increase media accountability in Sāmoa.²² Editor Keni Lesa wants media coverage in the Pacific to be more credible and believes news in general has produced a poorly informed, unquestioning group of media consumers. According to Lesa, “Freedom of information is a concept many [Sāmoans] are still struggling with,” but one

²⁰ Anonymous Interview. Apia.

²¹ *Sāmoa Observer*. “About Us.” Web. 29 April 2011. <http://www.samoaoobserver.ws/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=46&Itemid=77>

²² Personal Interviews with *Sāmoa Observer* employees: Lesa, Keni (Editor) 15 March 2011, Charlina Tone (Reporter) 11 March 201, Fatu Tauafiafi (Senior Reporter) 15 March 2011. Office of *Sāmoa Observer*, Vaitele.

that his newspaper will fight to protect at all costs.²³ He contends that the *Observer* is set apart from other news organizations in Sāmoa in that a code of ethics and high standards of reporting are strictly enforced. Lesa believes some journalists have quit as reporters to pursue jobs at government newspapers or television networks where they are not held as accountable.

While striving to maintain these values, however, the *Observer* has been repeatedly condemned by the government for defamation and irresponsible reporting, and served with lawsuits that have financially weakened the private company.²⁴ The Printers and Publishers Act of 1992 has had major legal ramifications for the *Observer* and media outlets, as the legislation requires publishers to disclose their confidential sources with any government official who claims defamation. Editor-in-Chief of *Sāmoa Observer* and media advocate, Savea Sano Malifa argues the act “was designed to frighten sources from revealing information about political corruption to the media,” and in turn, “effectively undermines media freedom” by exposing sources to government scrutiny and other consequences.²⁵ Since this Act strips sources of their confidentiality, freedom of information is impeded as the sources run the risk of being sued for defamation or harassed by government officials. This ultimately limits journalists’ ability to adequately investigate stories and makes news content less provocative. These obstacles have weakened the state of media in Sāmoa and prompted lawsuits against news organizations that must bear the financial burden of standing up for media freedom in court.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) fosters intercultural dialogue about a multitude of issues such as development, sustainability, and freedom of information.

²³ Lesa Interview.

²⁴ Ibid.,

²⁵ Malifa, Savea S. "Sāmoa: The Observer and Threats to Media Freedom." *Pacific Journalism Review*. 2nd ed. Vol. 16. Auckland: Premier Print, 2010. 41. Print.

UNESCO AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

Media freedom is a cornerstone of human rights; it encourages transparency and good governance. Freedom of expression is a right to be fought for; it is a bridge of understanding and knowledge. UNESCO believes the exercise of these rights is essential to the exchange of ideas between peoples. They underpin the emerging information society and are a driving force for sustainable human development.²⁶

Sāmoa became a member of UNESCO on 3 April 1981 and receives financial assistance from the agency for a variety of local media projects. The International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), a branch of UNESCO that asserts information accessibility is the precondition to development, has created frameworks to strengthen journalism curricula on a global scale.²⁷ The 2007 UNESCO Series on Journalism Education brought together four leading UNESCO associates and 20 senior journalism educators to identify objectives of media curricula for diploma, undergraduate, and graduate programs in developing countries and newly democratic nations.²⁸ Although the Model Curricula was meant to be an effective framework for journalism programs, lecturers at NUS have not integrated it into the Media and Journalism Studies curriculum because it is not suited to the students' academic capabilities.²⁹ This reveals the disconnect between “universal” development strategies and their actual application, and how solutions must be grounded in a local context with approaches designed to benefit the community in need. UNESCO, NUS lecturers, and media practitioners could potentially use the document as a framework for revamping the NUS curricula to fit the regional needs of news organizations and the academic aptitude of the students. The local branch

²⁶ UNESCO. *Communication and Information: Programmes in Asia and the South Pacific*. Kabul: UNESCO, 2004.

²⁷ Cyranek, Gunther. Head of UNESCO's Programme in Communication and Information in the Pacific. UNESCO Office, Apia. Personal Interview. 27 April 2011.

²⁸ UNESCO. “Model Curricula for Journalism Education.” 2007. Web. 28 April 2011. <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001512/151209e.pdf>>

²⁹ Tumua, Nora. Head of Department of Media and Journalism Programme. Le Papaigalagala Campus, NUS, Apia. Personal Interview. 28 April 2011.

of UNESCO needs to become a bigger presence in ground-level media initiatives and only when it establishes itself in this respectable regard and invests in the next generation of journalists can it expect to improve media standards and transparency.

Although there are areas in which improvement is needed, the IPDC is collaborating with the NUS Media and Journalism Programme to launch a Radio in a Box program. Lecturers Vicky Lepou and Nora Tumua worked on a 12-month work plan outlining program goals and were accepted for a UNESCO grant for broadcasting production and radio equipment. The Radio in a Box technology was developed several years ago by Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) as a means of bringing mobile radio equipment to regions lacking the infrastructure for better developed media operations. The ‘box’ consists of a laptop, mixer, CD/cassette player, built-in FM transmitter, and recording equipment.³⁰ Students will be able to record interviews, download the data directly to the laptop, and then edit the content for broadcast over the radio.³¹ Students will work to create their own radio station on the FM band at NUS and learn radio skills that could prove lucrative when they apply for jobs after graduation.³² Tumua wants to air journalism lectures and eventually open up the program to other students in the Information Technology School to host creative segments.

UNESCO’s World Press Freedom Day fosters collaboration among news organizations through workshops and meetings with media representatives from around the world.

³⁰ “UNESCO helps ABU to develop low-cost mobile broadcasting system.” Web. 03 May 2011.

<http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=21931&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html>

³¹ Ibid.,

³² “Enhancing Institutional Capacity at National University of Sāmoa through Introduction of Radio in a Box.” Web. 03 May 2011. <<http://www.unesco-ci.org/projects/eng/IPDC-Projects-database/List-of-all-projects/ipdc1206>>

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY: RAISING THE STANDARDS FOR MEDIA IN THE PACIFIC AND PROMOTING MEDIA REGIONALISM

Although Pacific islands may be geographically isolated and lack strong representation in the media, there has been a commitment in recent years to increase communication through regional and global news forums. History was made in May 2010 when UNESCO held World Press Freedom Day in the Pacific for the first time at the University of Queensland, Australia. The conference brought together over 300 delegates from 40 countries and made Pacific issues at the forefront of discussion.³³

Sāmoa celebrated World Press Freedom Day at the National University of Sāmoa from 2-4 May 2011. The Asia Pacific office of International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) organized the event and invited delegates from Pacific news outlets and key speakers in journalism to address themes such as transparency, information sharing, and capacity-building. The Inaugural Pacific Media Networks Meeting received funding from UNESCO's Communication and Information Sector and Australian Agency for International Development's Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PacMAS). In attendance were influential voices in Pacific media including Lisa Williams-Lahari representing the IFJ, Monica Miller of Pacific Freedom Forum (PFF), Peter Lewis of Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance in Australia, Savea Sano Malifa of Pasifika Media Association (PasiMA), and Cherelle Jackson of Pacific Alliance of Development Journalists (PADJ). Following this year's theme of "Promoting Dialogue and Media Regionalism," participants set out to draft a cooperative framework for Pacific media networks to indicate the direction in which they want to take their regional alliance.

The conference provided the opportunity for media representatives to discuss their news networks, media goals, and visions for a more connected Pacific news front. Monica Miller, the

³³ Hadlow, Martin. "Great is Truth." *Pacific Journalism Review*. 2nd ed. Vol. 16. Auckland: Premier Print, 2010. 5. Print.

co-chair of the online Pacific Freedom Forum (PFF) and news director of South Seas Broadcasting in Pago Pago, described her goal to support a free and independent media by monitoring threats to media freedom. PFF members, many of whom are media professionals, journalists, academics, and volunteers who work right out of their homes, issue statements to newsrooms and the PFF website when a journalist's freedom is encroached upon.³⁴ Miller is a firm believer that “no matter how much time you’ve spent in media, there’s always room to learn” and commented that local advocacy groups such as women’s *Komiti* (committees), churches, and education factions could strengthen the news network with their involvement.³⁵ PFF believes freedom of expression is fundamental to democracy, and upholds the importance of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The 1948 United Nations Declaration reads as follows:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.³⁶

Environmental reporter and media professional Cherelle Jackson introduced the Pacific Alliance of Development Journalists (PADJ), a coalition established in October 2010 that encourages working journalists to “reconnect with why they’re journalists”³⁷ and recognizes the humanity of journalism. Through partnerships with organizations such as the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, PADJ is attempting to “create a healthier newsroom” and reassert demands for transparency and higher standards for investigative reporting in members’

³⁴ Pacific Freedom Forum. Web. 04 May 2011. <<http://www.pacificfreedomforum.org/>>

³⁵ Miller, Monica. “Pacific Freedom Forum.” Inaugural Pacific Media Networks Meeting. National University of Sāmoa, Apia. 02 May 2011. Conference Presentation.

³⁶ United Nations. “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” Web. 04 May 2011. <<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>>

³⁷ Jackson, Cherelle. “Pacific Alliance of Development Journalists.” Inaugural Pacific Media Networks Meeting. National University of Sāmoa, Apia. 02 May 2011. Conference Presentation.

respective countries.³⁸ In an attempt to make the alliance more accessible and dialogue-generating among working journalists, there is no membership fee and journalists are encouraged to post and add comments to development stories on the website.³⁹

Lisa Williams-Lahari presented on the IFJ Pacific Media for Democracy and Human Rights Project, a Pacific-based initiative funded by the European Union (EU) and UNESCO to promote press freedom and freedom of expression. The project formed out of frustrations vented at the 2009 World Press Freedom Inaugural Meeting in Apia. The current project seeks to create an alliance for Pacific journalists and structures demands for media freedom within a legal and human rights context. Williams-Lahari identified that sustaining a regional identity is a major challenge to media regionalism, but believes that giving Pacific peoples a voice is fundamental to reaching this goal. She quoted the late Pacific scholar Epeli Hau'ofa in her presentation: "Human reality is human creation; if we fail to create our own reality someone else will do it for us."⁴⁰ The cooperation of media professionals at the conference revealed their commitment to protect the voices of Pacific media and define the terms by which Pacific peoples are represented.

Another promising Pacific media organization is Pasifika Media Association (PasiMA), which is under the executive leadership of Sāmoan chairman Savea Sano Malifa, Tongan vice chairman Kalafi Moala, and New Zealander of Maori descent secretary/treasurer John Woods from the Cook Islands. PasiMA seeks to establish an alliance among Pacific media bodies to defend freedom of expression, provide a news service through an online newsfeed, and operate without funding from aid organizations with agendas that could detract from the group's media

³⁸ Jackson Presentation.

³⁹ Pacific Alliance of Development Journalists. Web. 04 May 2011. <<http://padjournalists.blogspot.com/>>

⁴⁰ Williams-Lahari, Lisa. "IFJ Pacific Media for Democracy and Human Rights Project." Inaugural Pacific Media Networks Meeting. National University of Sāmoa, Apia. 02 May 2011. Conference Presentation.

objectives. PasiMA formed in August 2010 as a response to unmet media needs and disparate visions between its founding members and the Suva-based Pacific Islands News Association (PINA). Because of Fiji's military coups since 1987 and subsequent military infringement on the media, many are wary that PINA is being used as an ineffective political tool, rather than a news organization that champions freedom of expression.⁴¹ No PINA representatives were in attendance at the conference and this non-presence was felt throughout the room. Malifa addressed the PINA issue and stated; "now we are here because of corruption among our colleagues...let's not repeat the mistakes of the past."⁴² He also spoke of the collective responsibility of journalists to protect media freedom and posed the question, "How can we keep the torch of freedom burning brightly?"⁴³

Participants responded to this question passionately and with a commitment to media regionalism, founding the Media Alliance of the Pacific (MAP) and releasing an Outcome Statement by Day 3 of the conference. The presentations enabled media representatives to identify common problems Pacific news networks experience and brainstorm sustainable solutions. Media professionals addressed major difficulties in the region, including disparate and expensive internet access, funding, media monitoring, and training. They discussed strategies for integrating 21st Century internet and media capabilities in a Pacific context that would not simply

⁴¹ Over the last decade, military coups in Fiji have negatively impacted the country's news outlets. Journalists have experienced physical abuse by government officials, imprisonment, deportation, and legal fees for reporting certain news stories. Many journalists impose self-censorship as well, as they fear losing their jobs or incurring exorbitant fines for reporting news the military regime views as anti-government or threatening to national security. In June 2010, the Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA) launched a government media initiative that increased censorship of news content and gave the government power to seize documents and equipment from journalists, and prevent news organizations from publishing any article deemed defamatory toward the government. The Public Emergency Regulations decree enables the government to restrict freedom of speech, press, and information. The decree also implemented a foreign corporations divestment plan that states news outlets in Fiji must be 90% Fiji-owned or they will be shut down. Since PINA operates in a regime that's repressive of media freedom, many former members are doubtful of its ability to promote freedom of expression and remain a stable communication network for its Pacific Island members.

⁴² Malifa, Savea Sano. "PasiMA." Inaugural Pacific Media Networks Meeting. National University of Sāmoa, Apia. 02 May 2011. Conference Discussion.

⁴³ Ibid.,

emulate Western journalism, and agreed to defocus on funding and prioritize working together to create a space for unheard networks to join the alliance. As per the Outcome Statement, alliance members will seek to create an accessible online database of media contacts in the Pacific, draft a regional code of ethics, and establish a regional media complaints council of professionals with a solid understanding of media ethics and the cultural context of the claims.⁴⁴

The 2011 Inaugural Pacific Media Networks Meeting fostered a necessary dialogue between some of the most outspoken voices in the region. Media ought to serve as a channel through which underrepresented and seemingly disconnected islands establish alliances and embrace their Pacific diversities. Journalism schools can be at the frontlines of these partnerships, which is why the meeting's location at the National University of Sāmoa was symbolically rich. Media students were invited to attend the conference as observers and almost all were in attendance for Marc Neil-Jones' key note address about media freedom. The Meeting showcases what journalism students at NUS can aspire to and serves as a reminder that an allegiance to freedom of expression is very much alive in the Pacific.

NUS MEDIA AND JOURNALISM PROGRAMME

History

In the year 2000, JAWS President Lance Polu and members launched a job training program for journalists in affiliation with the National University of Sāmoa. The Prime Minister, who had been critical of Sāmoan media, was onboard with the initiative and consultation between the government and its aid partner followed suit. AusAID commissioned Moneka Knight, an Australian Youth Ambassador and media educator with a journalism background to develop a viable course curriculum. The 1-year Certificate in Media and Journalism was created

⁴⁴ "Outcome Statement." Inaugural Pacific Media Networks Meeting. National University of Sāmoa, Apia. 02 May 2011.

to provide vocational training in media studies through the School of Business and General Studies. After a media workshop assessed the curriculum in 2004, it was concluded that it should be expanded to two years to provide adequate training for journalists. Nora Tumua was assigned the task of revamping the media curricula and became Head of the Department and USP Journalism graduate Vicky Lepou joined her later on as a lecturer. Today, Polu and other leading figures from the media industry are members of an Advisory Panel that is supposed to monitor the program and meet regularly to discuss the relevance of course offerings.

Requirements

Applicants are required to complete an oral entrance interview and diagnostic test, be proficient in the English and Sāmoan written and oral language, and complete Year 13 with Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate scores of English 5, Sāmoan 5, and a 5 in History, Computing, Sociology, or Geology.⁴⁵ The Diploma in Media and Journalism has attracted many students who failed the Foundation Certificate and/or were rejected from programs with more rigorous requirements. Many of the admitted students also lack proficiency in English and cannot write basic sentences, which has modified the course content and standards.

Curricula

The Media and Journalism Programme curriculum is designed to provide theoretical foundation and practical application of reporting skills through hands-on field experience.⁴⁶ The program aims to expose students to various forms of multimedia in print, radio, and broadcast journalism, and provide opportunities for students to engage in interactive media projects. Students complete a Work Experience Attachment internship at the end of Year 1 in which they

⁴⁵ National University of Sāmoa. *National University of Sāmoa Calendar 2011*. National University of Sāmoa, 2010.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 262 and Tumua Interview.

are placed at local news organizations for 4-weeks to study print media. In Year 2, students work in broadcast media outlets for 5 weeks based upon their individual capabilities and preferences. Both experiences gives students great exposure to the field, facilitate networking opportunities, and motivate them to think more seriously about their futures. Internships serve the dual purpose of strengthening some students' commitment to media and deterring unmotivated students who are not seeking diplomas in media studies to develop journalism careers.

Weaknesses

Despite fieldwork initiatives and the breadth of course offerings, the Media and Journalism Programme is still very much in its development 11 years later and has many obstacles its lecturers are trying to overcome and weaknesses media practitioners are quick to identify. Tumua and Lepou identified students' lack of interest in media as a downfall of the program. Tumua described her job as "double the work" because she has the responsibility of teaching journalism theory along with the very basics of reading and writing.⁴⁷ Its yearly retention rate is very low, with attendance starting at 20 at the beginning of the year and dropping to about 5 or 6 at graduation just two years later. Tumua believes enrollment fees are a financial burden on students and a main reason for the high drop-out rate she refers to as "fatalities" of the program.⁴⁸ First-year student residents of Sāmoa pay \$179 per course and internationals pay \$616 and second-year residents pay \$195 and internationals pay \$700,⁴⁹ fees that do not include course materials. News industries such as *Talamua Media* have sponsored motivated students so they may complete their studies, but this has not had much of an impact on

⁴⁷ Tumua Interview.

⁴⁸ Ibid.,

⁴⁹ *NUS Course Calendar*. 41, 42

overall retention rate as noted in the low annual graduation figures.⁵⁰ Students may also qualify for free tuition through merit-based scholarships after the first semester and the top student in the graduating class receives a \$500 award from the Journalists Association of Sāmoa (JAWS).

Advisory Panel Chairman Polu contends that program requirements need to be reevaluated and media resources upgraded. In an interview, he addressed the point of entry for students as a major weakness in that requirements are not strict and students are not held to high enough standards.⁵¹ He and other media outlets proposed a 3-month campaign by news professionals to visit colleges to promote media and serve as role-models to youth. He believes such an initiative could generate interest in the program and attract students who are more academically motivated and invested in journalism as a career. Polu also proposed acquiring second-hand media equipment such as laptops and cameras from overseas to provide students with the resources their courses are currently lacking. In fact, 14 out of 19 students (~74%) identified lack of resources as a major weakness of the program and many wrote open-ended comments in the survey about the need for media equipment.⁵²

NUS Media and Journalism students have the potential to fill the current void in the Sāmoan media industry and with the right resources, communication with the industry, self-discipline, and guidance, they might just accomplish this goal. In addition to leadership from the media industry and department, however, students' voices must be heard in the process.

Analysis of Survey Data

I spent time at NUS observing students in the Media and Journalism courses, talking to students at the World Press Freedom Day conference, and distributing a 9-question English

⁵⁰ Polu, Lance. Publisher of *Talamua Media*. Office of *Talamua Media*, Apia. Personal Interview. 05 May 2011.

⁵¹ Ibid.,

⁵² Survey for Media and Journalism Diploma students about program overview at National University of Sāmoa. Le Papaigalagala Campus, NUS, Apia. 04 May 2011.

language survey to 19 students in the program.⁵³ I conducted several informal interviews and noted that all survey answers were confidential and data would not be used to harm the students in any way. Four questions required yes, no, or undecided answers, 2 required students to select all applicable answers, 1 was open-ended, and 2 required a rating on a scale of 1 to 10. I was unable to obtain full survey participation because attendance was never 100 percent and some classes were canceled during the conference to encourage students to attend as observers.

My data reveals that 11 students (~52%) applied to journalism as a first choice and 8 (~42%) did not.⁵⁴ Students may apply to Media and Journalism if other classes are filled to capacity or if they are rejected from programs with more demanding requirements. Of those non first-choice applicants, however, 6 out of 8 (75%) still want to become a journalist and/or work in the media industry after graduation, and the other 2 are undecided. These results reveal that despite not getting into their first choice program, journalism courses are engaging to the extent that perhaps formerly reluctant students are now considering media as a career choice. Out of 11 first choice applicants, 9 (81%) want to pursue journalism as a career, which means that 79% of the total sample has this goal.⁵⁵ This data does not represent how many students will join the media industry, however, because several are likely to change their attitudes, drop out before graduation, or fail to meet graduation requirements given the recent data of retention.⁵⁶ Despite the varying reasons for being drawn to the program, students deserve to receive a high quality of education and must remain committed to their studies or else they threaten to waste their own and everyone else's time and resources.

⁵³ See Appendix A.

⁵⁴ Survey, 04 May 2011.

⁵⁵ Ibid.,

⁵⁶ Graduation Rates: 2007-2008, 7 out of 20; '08-'09, 6 out of 20; '09-'10, 5 out of 20. Tumua notes the '10-'11 class has an enrollment of 11 with about 7 reporting to class and the '11-'12 class has 14 out of 20 students reporting regularly.

The survey also asked students to identify the strongest and weakest part(s) of the program by selecting one or multiple answers from the following list of criteria: Quality of lecturers, Courses/curriculum content, Access to media resources (ex: media contacts, equipment, etc.), Cost, and Other (please explain). Twelve selected “Quality of lecturers” as the greatest strength and 8 chose “Courses/curriculum.” Fourteen students selected “Access to media resources” as the weakest component and the next most selected option was “Cost,” with 4 votes. In the open-ended section about suggestions, comments, and changes students want to see in the media program, over half of those who responded indicated a deficiency in equipment. Equipment is a very practical demand for media students and students might maintain more of an interest in the program if they are exposed to more hands-on media projects throughout the semester. Polu also stated that most media students he has worked with were unfamiliar with newsroom equipment and broke things or had to be trained to use basic media tools.⁵⁷

To respond to the question “Is wage or salary important to you in choosing a job?” 12 indicated “Yes,” 6 “No,” and 1 “Undecided.” I asked this question because the majority of journalism jobs in Sāmoa are low-paying and many journalists recognized poor salary as a weakness of their line of work. Although this is a very general question and students may seek jobs for other reasons, it highlights how the majority (~63%) is conscious of money and can be extrapolated to a larger sample of Sāmoans to assume that money influences ones job decisions. This money factor could be a major reason why the program has a small graduating class, why more youth are not invested in the media industry, and why some journalists go overseas to develop their journalism careers.

These surveys generated important discussion about students’ needs and enabled me to ask follow-up questions in interviews about their reasons for taking media classes and plans for

⁵⁷ Polu Interview.

the future. First year student Taumanu Lino from New Zealand has had a positive media experience at NUS. Though he initially registered for classes too late and was intent on studying graphic design before enrolling in Media and Journalism, the program has helped him realize radio as a new career goal.⁵⁸ Keli Tuatagaloa spoke about her passion to establish her own newspaper one day because she's interested in talking to people and asking questions.⁵⁹ In speaking to the voices behind the statistics and curriculum, and one of the founding fathers, I was able to see the program in its many complexities as something worth fighting to preserve.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

My research reveals that the media industry has been developing for years and issues pertaining to freedom of expression are likely to persist given the country's restrictive official climate. There is also a complicated relationship between the media industry and government, and one that is here to stay. Although stories of intimidation and reports of abuse at the hands of government officials are all too common, journalists are committed to the vision of being a watchdog of democracy regardless of the consequences. Mark Neil-Jones, a journalist who's been physically assaulted countless times for publishing articles in Vanuatu's *Daily Post*, stated in his Key Note Address during World Press Freedom day, "it's the media's job to be a pain in the ass of government."⁶⁰ As long as the government enforces the Printers and Publishers Act and does not pass a Freedom of Information act protecting information accessibility, however, journalistic freedoms will be encroached upon and the industry as a whole will suffer. The small financial reward journalists receive in the field reflects the place they hold in the economy and

⁵⁸ Lino, Taumanu. NUS Student of Media and Journalism. NUS, Apia. Personal Interview. 02 May 2011.

⁵⁹ Tuatagaloa, Keli. NUS Student of Media and Journalism. NUS, Apia. Personal Interview. 26 April 2011.

⁶⁰ Neil-Jones, Mark. World Press Freedom Day Key Note Address. Le Papaigalagala Campus, National University of Sāmoa, Apia. 03 May 2011.

greater social scheme. Since the government is a great source of livelihood in that it provides stable employment for many, it may be dangerous to critique the government and threaten the jobs of so many. Moreover, is difficult to sustain a developing media industry that has not quite earned the respect and social status of other sectors like the government.

Language accessibility and educational attainment are also issues that influence the state of media. Although there is much promise in advancing freedom of expression through print media, Sāmoa has a strong oral tradition and English language newspapers are inaccessible to many Sāmoans who lack critical reading and writing skills. Print media also has a negative colonial legacy in that the industry was first driven by colonial administrators who did not report on local issues in the region, but rather used the media as a conduit for connecting expatriates to European news and trends.⁶¹ Today, much of the readership of online media, for instance, is also from the expatriate community and not supported by the Sāmoan community that lacks internet access. Primary and secondary schools need to promote reading to the youth and work to strengthen students' access to media. Building a strong foundation of critical reading and writing skills in primary school could also be a great resource to improving the NUS Media and Journalism Programme and media industry. There will always be barriers for Sāmoans to understanding the nuances of the English language and some journalists may feel restricted writing in Sāmoan, but these obstacles can be lessened by utilizing the proper educational channels.

A more sustainable relationship with the media industry is fundamental to the development of the Media and Journalism Programme at NUS. A healthy news industry must be supported by an army of well-trained, inquisitive journalists committed to transparency and

⁶¹ Singh, Shailendra and Biman C. Prasad. "Media for Language and Education in the Pacific Islands." *Media and Development: Issues and Challenges in the Pacific Islands*. Lautoka, Fiji: Fiji Institute of Applied Studies, 2008. 221. Print.

promoting the growth of the field. The Advisory Panel, Tumua, Lepou, students, and media organizations like UNESCO could collaborate to identify long-term goals to improve the retention rate and make the courses better tailored to the current needs of the industry as well as local issues and international standards. Local media outlets ought to continue to be open to working with the program because the futures of their organizations are ultimately at risk if the work caliber of graduating classes remains at the same level of inadequacy. Moreover, an open dialogue should be fostered between the students and department to identify why students aren't excelling and additional funding could bring experienced media educators to NUS to provide students with more guidance. Although funding may not be readily available or prioritized, partners like the Sāmoan government, JAWS, UNESCO, and AusAID could be encouraged to see the initiative as a positive long-term investment in sustaining the program into the future. By selecting the right people to drive the program, the responsibilities that Tumua and Lepou currently have in developing curricula, lecturing, grading assignments, writing grant proposals, and organizing events like World Press Freedom Day would be shared among responsible parties who would have more time to advise students.

Journalists and news organizations ought to take a more decisive stand in regards to their regional media organization, the Journalists Association of Western Sāmoa (JAWS). While it may have been founded upon credible objectives in the pursuit of media freedom, how it currently functions today is questionable at its best and government propaganda at its worst. If media professionals are truly committed to transparency and upholding media ethics, then they will come together to challenge the organization and rework it to incorporate 21st Century visions for more responsible journalism. Simply disassociating with JAWS or blindly pledging ones allegiance to the association is not actually taking a stand. Journalists need to consider the long-

term goals for media freedom, how international standards function in this vision, and demand that a regional media organization is as accountable as it claims to be in its constitution.

Partnerships with aid organizations are often useful in meeting the needs of developing island economies in the Pacific, but the media industry ought to be wary to not let foreign influence take control of the media initiatives and lose sight of Pacific visions. These donors can help support some form of economic independence, but they work through government. As PasiMA spokesperson Ana Currie insightfully said at World Press Freedom Day, “You must be careful to not let the tail wag the dog.”⁶² If media professionals stay committed to freedom of expression, collaborate with other passionate parties, and develop strong leadership, they will generate a strong case for funding and create a team of people interested in seeing the program through.

Although this research illuminates the many obstacles to media freedom and individual cases in which culture obstructs the momentum for change, findings were very positive in that they illuminated the collegiality of media professionals in the Pacific. I went into the Inaugural Meeting at NUS with the mentality that Pacific communities were present-oriented and slow to change, and was skeptical that agreements outlining goals for the future could be reached in three days. Conference discussions demonstrated how the representatives share common long-term aims such as capacity-building, cooperation, skills development, information sharing, implementing regulatory councils to monitor media abuses, and creating a sustainable regional identity and media presence in the Pacific. Representatives had different opinions about training and the role technology should play in realizing these goals, however, which led to interesting disputes regarding where training should be held and by whom (i.e. international vs. local

⁶² Currie, Ana. Inaugural Pacific Media Networks Meeting. National University of Sāmoa, Apia. 02 May 2011. Conference Discussion.

forums), and how it could be done more holistically to invest in trainees. Several voices in the room identified that training has not been done properly and is a waste of money, time, and resources, while others firmly argued that training strategies need to be upgraded and adapted to new technologies. They debated that each country has different training needs as well as disparate access to internet coverage, which hinders the possibility of building an online media presence across the Pacific that is representative of those living in remote villages.

CONCLUSION

It is crucial to break out of the “island mentality” Cherelle Jackson referenced and recognize how media is an integral part of an effective democracy. Ideals of accountability, honest and accurate reporting, responsible disclosure of facts, and information sharing are important concepts with local applications as well as universal value. There are indeed cultural sensitivities journalists ought to be aware of, but when these local values get in the way of challenging and questioning the status-quo then the industry has no room for improvement. Local and universal ideals do not have to be seen as oppositional to each other; in fact, culture is always changing and incorporating globalized trends into its traditional context. If journalists aspire to universal values of media freedom and don’t resist the forward moving currents of international industry demands, then journalism in Sāmoa will transform and achieve the integrity many of its journalists currently envision.

Strengthening the media industry and championing media freedom, however, require an investment in the people who are its future: the youth of Sāmoa. Sāmoa is small and should take advantage of its size to fortify its network, improve collegiality, share information, and promote journalism to the youth through large-scale media initiatives in school. Strengthening the

regional media network and developing an online database of contacts, as the newly created Media Alliance of the Pacific seeks to do, could also be a valuable resource for questioning journalists who may lack support from their families, news organizations, the church, and government. Journalism courses ought to be designed to appeal to the natural idealism of youth and encourage students to explore critical issues like the government's role in society, globalization, social justice, poverty, and crime. Students should become familiar with international media standards and grow impassioned to question their own cultural practices. Journalism students are indeed the future and if they love what they do and are committed to the field, this dedication or "fire in the belly" will take them far.

Statements for Journalism Students

- “Always be curious and never be afraid to ask hard questions. Have a childlike curiosity about things and don’t be intimidated by people with authority.”
(Iulia Leilua, Pacific Islands Media Association)
- "The universal values and principles upon which journalism is founded are sometimes new and often alien to *fa’aSāmoa*. It is important to understand the difference between the two because there are times when as a Sāmoan journalist, you have to choose between one or the other. *Fa’aSāmoa* begins and ends in Sāmoa. Universal values are what we all share as a human family." (Afamasaga Toleafoa, Journalist)
- "If you are in journalism to make money then you are badly mistaken. Journalism is about reporting and writing stories that make a difference in people's lives. It's about helping the poor become wealthy and about keeping the wealthy honest so he/she doesn't forget the poor. Last but not least, journalists are supposed to be watchdogs, not lapdogs."
(Keni Lesa, *Sāmoa Observer*)
- “Meet different people, make a difference, become an expert in so many lines of work. The backgrounds of people in media rooms shape stories in radio, broadcasting, and newspapers.”
(Monica Miller, Pacific Freedom Forum)
- “There’s a need for the young students to further promote the operation and there’s help from within the industry to upgrade the skills of the future journalists.” (Vicky Lepou, NUS)
- “Being a general reporter is an advantage. It's a must that [you] read the newspaper and online news; watch television news and listen to radio news to get audio and visual trained every day. [You] must make time to volunteer at any media outlet after school hours to get familiar with the industry, and also the field experience. It's important that [you] know about accuracy and balance when reporting any story... Have some background understanding of the subject and people involved when it comes to interviewing. A reporter in Sāmoa must be aware of the culture and protocols when it comes to approaching community issues that may affect or involve family or village affairs.” (Ame Sene, *Radio Polynesia*).
- “Journalism students are the future.” (Peter Lewis, Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance)
 - “The meeting on occasion of World Press Freedom Day demonstrated the need of an understanding of the importance of Code of Ethics in the education of students. The use of ethical standards with a regional council as discussed definitely could help to improve justice to editors and journalists. The Media Alliance for the Pacific (MAP) is an appropriate alliance to develop and discuss this professional tool with a regional perspective.”
(Gunther Cyranek, UNESCO)
 - “If you’re not happy with what you do, forget it.” (Lagi Keresoma, *Talamua Media*)

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Appendix A: Survey for Students in NUS School of Business and General Studies: Diploma in Media and Journalism

****All responses are anonymous and the data will not harm students in any way. Survey results will be used in Leslie Pyne's undergraduate research for the School for International Training in a paper and oral presentation on media in Samoa.**

1. Did you apply to the NUS Media and Journalism Programme as your first choice?

Yes No

2. Do you want to become a journalist and/or work in the media industry after graduation?

Yes No Undecided

3. If yes, do you want to work overseas?

Yes No Undecided

4. Is wage or salary important to you in choosing a job?

Yes No Undecided

5. How satisfied are you with the NUS Media and Journalism Programme?

Scale: 10= very satisfied, 5=neutral 1= very dissatisfied, many
no room for improvement improvements needed

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

6. What is the strongest part of the programme? (Select all that apply)

☐ Quality of lecturers
☐ Courses/curriculum content
☐ Access to media resources (ex: media contacts, equipment, etc.)
☐ Cost
☐ Other (please explain)

7. What is the weakest part of the programme? (Select all that apply)

☐ Quality of lecturers
☐ Courses/curriculum content
☐ Access to media resources (ex: media contacts, equipment, etc.)
☐ Cost
☐ Other (please explain)

8. 2nd Year Students: How prepared do you feel to become a journalist and/or work in the media industry?

Scale: 10= very prepared 5=neutral 1= not at all prepared

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

9. Are there any suggestions, comments or changes you want to see in the Media Programme?

Appendix B: Students from the Media and Journalism Programme at the National University of Sāmoa with World Press Freedom Day Key Note Speaker, Mark Neil-Jones. 03 May 2011.



Appendix C: Media representatives at the Inaugural Pacific Media Networks Meeting. 04 May 2011.



Appendix D: Members of the Media Alliance of the Pacific (MAP). 04 May 2011.



Appendix E: Media representatives preparing for a Skype conference with a PacMAS Consultant. 04 May 2011.

