



#### 4. GENERAL ACTIVITY ASSESSMENT

Did the Activity's outcomes meet the Organisation's expectations?

The Multistory Project took Eastern Riverina Arts on an amazing journey through the complexities of working across multiple communities and partners using an innovative approach.

The Multistory Project aimed to address the key issue of providing a space for inter-generational and inter-cultural exchange and dialogue. The aim of this space was to break down barriers between cultural groups, increase acceptance and tolerance across all cultures of Wagga. The space would enable cultural groups to develop their social voice to counter stereotypical and negative portrayals or the lack of portrayal in mainstream media as well as misinformed views that are being promoted within communities and online.

Multistory Project provided an opportunity for the coordinated documentation of cultural and community activity across the whole of community. Cultural groups were to have the space to promote, celebrate and share their cultural activities with the wider community.

Multistory Project aimed to provide Wagga Wagga with a community owned and maintained media portal that allowed for communities and cultural groups to own the way in which they are portrayed in the community.

The Multistory Project attempted to build the skills and capacity within the community to engage with new social media tools. This will ensure that communities aren't disenfranchised by the lack of access to using the Internet and new technologies to not only promote themselves but to enter into dialogue with the local community and the global community.

It is our sincere belief that the Multistory Project had a positive impact on participants' lives and provided both virtual and real opportunities for the broader community to engage with the diversity of people who live in Wagga Wagga. The Multistory website contains a diversity of video, text and sound that captures a Wagga Wagga that is rarely promoted in the mainstream media.

The project was most successful in generating content that displays the diversity of



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Wagga's population and promotes greater understanding of each other. Many of the workshops involving young people provided opportunities for cross cultural exchange. Another of the project's successes was in identifying a number of artists from culturally diverse backgrounds, who became involved in Multistory Project through our Harmony Day events, the project launch and other workshops. These artists, through promotion on the website and the events have gone onto develop more public awareness, employment and performance opportunities.

## ACTIVITIES

### PUBLIC EVENTS

#### Harmony Day

The Harmony Day Event was an outdoor event held on the evening of March 21, 2012 at the Wollundry Amphitheatre in Wagga Wagga. The event, titled EVERYONE BELONGS was a family event featuring poetry, music and dance performances, as well as screenings of material from the Multistory Project and short films from around the world. A free sausage sizzle and Egyptian food was also available. The event was attended by over 150 people from a diverse background including many teenagers.

The 25 performers came from a diverse range of cultures, and include a collaboration between local dance professional Centennial Tuvale and local African-Australian Tokombor Williams. Heaps Decent played featuring some of the young people they had been working with at Shepherd's park School (inside the Juvenile Justice Centre). The Multistory Website was demonstrated.

Event generated photos and a story in the Daily Advertiser, Wagga's daily newspaper.

#### The Multistory Website Launch

Over 50 people attended the launch of the Multistory Website at the HR Gallop Gallery, Charles Sturt University. The website was launched by the Hon Kate Kundy and featured video work from the website and some large format prints documenting the Harmony Day event taken by Shona Pratt. Zohab Khan, a performance poet performed two pieces that had been recorded for the website, and the community producer Jordan Bryon demonstrated the functionality of the website.

The event generated media stories on Prime and WIN television news reports and two photos in the Daily Advertiser.

#### Ngiyaginya Festival

The Multistory Project was invited to set up a stall at the Ngiyaginya Festival, a festival run by



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Wagga Wagga City Council celebrating Wiradjuri culture and language. Through the two days of the festival over 350 students and adults passed through the stall, watching DVDs of website content, visited the website. 250 postcards with the website URL were distributed.

#### Refugee Week

The community producer attended planning meetings for Refugee Week celebrations, with members of Wagga's Multicultural Interagency Committee. As part of a larger event, the Multistory had a display which promoted the website, demonstrated how to upload photos to popular social networks. Portraits of families were taken and given away (as a means of developing relationships and seeking further participants) and brief vox pops were recorded about hopes and dreams. Over 800 people attended the refugee week celebration and over 85 people had portraits taken.

#### Final Celebration and Exhibition

During the Fusion Multicultural Street Festival, the Multistory held an exhibition of work generated during the project including over 160 photographs. Alongside this was an exhibition by a Brazilian photographer who worked closely with the community producer to create a photo and video exhibition engaging migrants in Wagga from Sudan, Chile, Indonesia, China, Germany, Afghanistan, Hong Kong and Slovenia. Project explored the diversity of experiences in applying for a visa to migrate to Australia, dispelling the stereotypes about migrants and allowing some deeper focus on participants in skilled migration programs. Over 150 people attended the exhibition in a five-hour period. 50 participants over the project attended a special preview and party to celebrate the conclusion of the Multistory Project. 250 postcards with website URL were distributed.

#### CONTENT GENERATION

The Multistory website contains over 35 videos, an interview with Raye Colby from the SBS TV show "Go Back to Where You Came From", photos and 10 feature stories about the community. These were generated in 12 specific workshops as well as a number of one on one sessions with a number of community partners include Headspace, Wafrica, Riverina Community College, Bridges to Learning, Ngurra Youth Hub. Approximately 105 people participated in these specific content generation workshops.

The website also contains links to personal blogs, and work done by Heaps Decent and Booranga Writer's Centre's Riverina Multicultural Voice project.





The following provides further description of the way material was generated.

### Dance Video

As a part of Youth week established a relationship with Ngurra Youth Hub and ran 4 days of film and





Photo workshops at the Hub with African-Australian, Burmese-Australian and Sri-Lankan-Australian and Australian children. The participants wrote, shot, edited and starred in a dance video; 15+ children involved, 6 workshops in total.

#### Cooking Videos

6 videos were created with Wagga residents from Burma, Sudan, Sri Lanka and Egypt. These videos used food and cooking as an entry into gaining some insights into the participants life, background, experiences and beliefs.

#### Performance Poetry

The community producer documented two performances by Zohab Khan, a finalist in the National Poetry Slam competition. Zohab then worked with the community producer to run a workshop with 3 African-Australian boys. Zohab became a key contributor to the project, emceeing Harmony Day and performing at the Launch. Zohab now runs poetry workshops at several high schools.

#### Drawn Together

The community producer worked with a group of youth people from a variety of cultural backgrounds at the Riverina Community College running 6 film and photo workshops with 10+ young people including storytelling, stop motion, photo essays, experimental filming techniques, portraiture, transmedia storytelling.

#### Music video

The community producer facilitated 2 music video making workshop with 6 high school students from Indigenous, Anglo, African, and Burmese backgrounds. The participants wrote, shot and edited music videos, gaining technical skills and conceptual skills. One participant who wrote the song went on to perform it and another song on stage in front of 800 people.

#### Bridges to Learning

The community producer ran a stop motion workshop with 12 high school students from diverse backgrounds at Ngurra youth hub. Students learned about the mechanics of shooting stop motion and were very excited to learn how to upload work to the internet and see their work live on the website.

#### DIGITAL LITERACY/USE OF THE PORTAL/SOCIAL NETWORKING

Over 120 people gained insights into how they might use social networking, blogging and basic computing skills that would enable them to better participate in a digital society. Over 35 people received specific instruction in methodology for adding material to the Multistory website.





Staff from Eastern Riverina Arts, Riverina Community College and Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga received instruction into how to upload material directly to Multistory Project website.

Over 30 students taking English as a Second Language at Riverina TAFE participated in workshops outside of their regular classes. Participants engaged with photography, video, blogging, Facebook, Internet searching, storytelling and collaborative processes. The workshops were tailored to students' English ability. A Facebook page was established as well as a group blog, where everybody contributed text and photos. The participants were invited to continue their blogging and submit their entries to the Multistory blog.

Multistory project also offered small group and individual assistance in our search for potential contributors and community editors. The level of computer literacy in some of our target groups was incredibly low. Classes and lessons were tailored to meet individual needs including emailing, attaching photos / documents to emails, Facebook, Microsoft word; general computer skills, downloading music/videos, online banking; searching on the Internet; using communication applications like Skype and Viber.

Multistory worked with a local service to source second hand computers for newly arrived families and assisted other families in fixing problems with their own computers

RCC provided access to computer rooms to run group sessions - 2 group classes were organised. While these were heavily promoted through service providers and our partners, they were not well attended.

A blogging workshop was run for 15 + participants. They engaged in blogging posting their own text and images and exchanging comments. For many of these participants it was their first online communication. One participant, a writer, was assisted to set up his own personal blog which is linked to from the Multistory website.

What was the primary target group for the activities, and how effectively did the project reach them?

The main target groups were service providers, the African Communities, young people from a diverse range of backgrounds. The community producer spent a lot of time early in the project developing relationships with a number of communities. It took a lot of time and energy for the community producer to develop trust within key groups. While the project has been broadly successful there were some limitations to the effectiveness reaching the target community. One problem with engagement was the level of computer literacy within some of the target communities, a reluctance to engage in creative self-expression or an arts project and wariness in giving away their stories. That said the project's activities engaged with people from over 15 different cultural backgrounds. One of the signs of success from the project was the ability for the



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community to take



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over the running of the website. The project still needs more time to develop the skills and demand and understanding within the community for this to happen.

Unexpected issues – how were they resolved?

One of the unexpected issues was the difficulty in inspiring community groups and service providers to a) document their events and b) share the documentation. The community producer could have been employed full time just documenting activity in Wagga Wagga. A number of service providers became reluctant to provide material for the website fearing they would be infringing client's publicity. Wherever possible the community producer helped shape some release forms. Some community groups didn't see the value either as a group or individuals in documenting their activity and publishing online.

A major unexpected issue was the switch of the portal from a stand alone custom "social network" portal with individual logins and membership to a more traditional website using a number of web services (Vimeo, Wordpress and Posterous to serve content). This came out of direct discussion with steering committee and initial participants. There were fears about creating a space that would expose people to cyber bullying and racism. The website was originally meant to have comments and chat facilities but the steering committee and project staff decided to minimise this risk. Whether this was detrimental to the project was unable to be determined.

We had difficulties obtaining permission from some parents for their children to participate in workshops. Parents felt that the workshops were distracting from school work. The community producer would have to spend a lot of time convincing parents that the skills learnt in the workshop would be applicable and transferrable to their school work. It meant that workshops were a lot harder to organise and populate than originally expected.

The media in Wagga were very difficult to work with. When promoting our exhibition they incorrectly captioned our photographs. At one point a television news reporter said they would only do a story if we could give them access to a refugee with a really sad story. There is reluctance from the media to engage with stories about cultural diversity without resorting to the stereotypical. Wherever possible we would try to talk to the journalist about the aims of the project and the reality of the lives of our participants - but the truth should never stand in the way of a good story.

One of the issues our community producer discovered was about finding a balance between exploiting a participant's story for the broader goals of the project and ensuring that an actual exchange of value took place. As the project developed it became much more focused on giving valuable skills to our participants and allowing them to drive the stories they wished to tell us.



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Additional outcomes – how were they used to advantage?

It became evident that the events where we exhibited work from the website publicly were the best way of generating discussion and exchange. The power of face to face communication and engagement provided much greater opportunity for the promotion of social cohesion. We also found that the public events was the most effective way of driving visitation to the website. We took every opportunity we could to give Multistory exposure at community events

## 5. COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

What changes were noted as a result of the Activity in the Organisation and/or the community in respect to community attitudes to social cohesion and integration?

Were any new links between members of groups in the community developed and sustained as a result of Project Activities?

Eastern Riverina Arts has created some great links for our organisation into the Multicultural Community. We have been invited onto the steering community of the Fusion Multicultural Street Festival. We have designed future projects with Centennial Tuvale to deliver hip-hop workshops across the Riverina. His involvement with Eastern Riverina Arts has resulted in employment at a local High School, setting up a dance crew with young aboriginal students. Zohab Khan has become a regular performer at community events following his exposure through the Multistory Project. Eastern Riverina Arts has been working with Unison Multicultural Choir to look at funding options for its sustainability. Eastern Riverina Arts recently were approached by TAFE to take a work experience student from their ESL class, which we did. Roof-less Dance (a group of young dancers and musicians from African backgrounds) have approached Eastern Riverina Arts to help establish themselves, seek funding and find performance opportunities. This project has positioned our organisation well within the community as an organisation willing to support arts and cultural activity

What has been learned from the project and by whom (eg. by the general community, the targeted audience and/or the Organisation itself)?

The general community has been given insight into the background, hopes and desires of a number of members of our community from diverse backgrounds. Our target groups have had positive experiences with an arts organisation and have understood that there are people in the community who are interested in getting to know them and their culture. Most importantly our organization has learnt that a number of communities are getting tired of being seen as refugees and tired of telling that story and want to be viewed as citizens of Wagga and to tell stories of their



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integration and experiences in Australia.



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How does the Organisation plan to sustain the project Activities and/or achievements and momentum in the community into the future?

Eastern Riverina Arts has committed to keeping the website running for another 12 months. A method for continuing contributions has been made available and publicised. Eastern Riverina Arts have arranged introductions from a number of participants to dlux media who are working in Wagga over the next two years on digital literacy using a portable studio. We are talking to dlux about them taking over the website and redesigning for there purposes to keep the brand alive. Eastern Riverina Arts have received funding from Telstra Foundation to continue work on digital capacity for young people.

SELECTION OF COMMENTS FROM VISITOR BOOK AT MULTISTORY EXHIBITION AT  
FUSION MULTICULTURAL STREET FESTIVAL

“Australia is a multicultural society and that’s what adds more variety to Australia’s beauty. Jordan and the Multistory Project is one of the amazing things I did in past year.”  
- Nascem

Excellent! So nice to see people creating art and photos that aren’t just about middle class white females. Great stories ...  
- Amy

Fabulous, empowering and such an important project for Wagga. Thank you  
- signature unreadable

Amazing!! Terrific work. Really shows just how multicultural Wagga Wagga really is.

Amazing experience. Learnt a lot about filming. Thanks  
- Sachi

Really appreciate your involvement with communities to bring their talent up.  
- Samudra





The Multistory Project has gone beyond its intention. Not only have the young people loved learning how to use the equipment, writing scenarios, learning dances they have also formed everlasting friendship.

-Rachel

The Multistory Project website is really good. Everyone can get to know about other cultures. Hope it will keep going on.

- Rusi

COMMENTS FROM DIGITAL LITERACY WORKSHOPS WITH STUDENTS  
STUDYING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE.

Q. What did you personally get out of the Multistory workshop/s you took part in?

“I learn how to use facebook.”

- Setsuko

“I learn new skills about computer”

- Marcia

“I learn computer skills, team work, digital skills, work experience, meeting new people and speaking skills improvement”

- Jenelyn

“Tell story with video”

- Ah Dee

COMMENTS FROM ONE ON ONE/SMALL GROUP DIGITAL LITERACY WORKSHOPS

Helped me do my job better with computer skills... Increase my confidence to use the computer. Helped me communicate with my friends and family around the world with skype and viber lessons. Helped me help other people in the community with computers.

- Suzanne

87% of survey respondents engaged with digital technology that they had never used before.



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