'We are all confident to speak': Using radio as a tool of resettlement for young people of refugee background

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Abstract

Settlement presents a significant challenge for refugees compared to other migrants, given the forced, and often traumatic, nature of their resettlement, but despite this, many refugees arrive in Australia with the tools to positively face new challenges in their settlement and as a result have a very high chance of making a good life for themselves in Australia. This paper discusses the ways community media production can be utilised to investigate solutions to the resettlement challenges faced by young people of refugee background. It draws on findings from a pilot research project that involved young people with refugee experience in media and radio production, as well as broadcasting on an internet radio station at the University of South Australia. The findings suggest, preliminarily at least, that participation in community media can have a beneficial effect on a young person's settlement experience, in line with perceptions of what constitutes 'successful' resettlement.

Keywords

Community radio, ethnic broadcasting, resettlement, refugee radio, action research, community media, ethnic media, refugee media

Introduction

Settlement presents a significant challenge for refugees compared to other migrants, given the forced, and often traumatic, nature of their resettlement (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013). Despite this, many refugees arrive in Australia with the tools to positively face new challenges in their settlement and as a result have a very high chance of making a good life for themselves (Correa-Velez, Gifford & Barnett, 2010). In Australia, the National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasting Council (2011) has acknowledged there are specific settlement concerns relating to practical support, community development, trauma recovery and other complex needs of refugees. This is compounded for younger people with refugee backgrounds who share many of the challenges of other migrant youth, exacerbated by the fact that their migration was forced rather than chosen, and that they arrive in Australia with past experiences of violence, loss and, for some, the survival of torture (Gifford, Correa-Velez & Sampson, 2009).

This paper focuses on how engagement in media production, through a community radio project, can investigate solutions to resettlement challenges and assist in the settlement experiences of young people from refugee backgrounds; specifically, through addressing issues relating to language and communication. It draws on a pilot project, *The Powerhouse Radio Show*, which involved young people from refugee backgrounds in media and radio production workshops, broadcast on the UniCast internet radio station, based at the University of South

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Australia. This project builds on established research that places community radio as an important cultural resource (Forde, Foxwell & Meadows, 2002; Hayes, 2018).

The findings of this pilot research project suggest that involvement in the radio program assisted the participants to feel more confident in their (English) communication skills, and gave them a sense of being heard in the community – that is, being a part of *The Powerhouse Radio Show* gave participants the confidence to speak. The pilot findings suggest, preliminarily at least, that participation in community radio can have a beneficial effect on a young person's settlement experience, in line with Ager and Strang's (2008) perceptions of what constitutes 'successful' resettlement; continuous housing (Phillips, 2006), building relationships, employment and vocational training (Ager & Strang, 2008) and, most relevant to this paper, the development of language and social connection (Beiser & Hou, 2001).

This paper firstly outlines these key factors, and connects them to already identified benefits of ethnic community radio. The case study is introduced and methodology is outlined, focusing on the relevance of a participatory action research project when considering the ethics of researching (with) refugee and other vulnerable groups. The findings are discussed within two key topics, the impact of engagement in radio on language and communication skills, and the benefits of engagement in radio for social connections. Thick description is used, utilising detailed quotes, to merge the participants' lived experiences with the researcher's interpretations of these, and create meaning for the reader as well as for the participants and researcher (Ponterotto, 2006).

Literature Review

There is a growing body of research on community radio that exists both internationally and within an Australian context, some of which evidences the positive roles played by ethnic community broadcasting. There is, however, a distinct gap in the literature when it comes to examining the specific benefits of community radio (or television) for refugee communities living in host countries. Regardless, connections can be made to broader findings. Community radio and its important role in community development and communication for social change is widely recognised and documented, both through organisations such as AMARC (World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters) (2007) and UNESCO. In Australia, community radio is recognised as a key cultural resource that meets its expected outcomes in 'contributing to social gain' (Meadows & Foxwell-Norton, 2011: 98).

Fozdar and Hartley (2013) found that refugees say integration could be better supported by programs that strengthen the interaction between refugees and mainstream Australians, and also make services more accessible. The Australian ethnic community broadcasting sector is currently fulfilling both of these essential roles. *Community Media Matters* (Meadows, Forde, Ewart & Foxwell, 2007), the first (and to this point only) national qualitative study into Australian community radio audiences, took ethnic broadcasting as one of its key foci and found its audiences listen to specialist ethnic programming on generalist community radio stations, and/or full-time ethnic community radio stations, for a wide range of reasons. These include maintenance of culture and language, community connections and networks, music programming, and to receive both community and overseas news and information. All of these benefits play a role in assisting resettlement, to different degrees. Looking at ethnic media beyond community radio, the findings are aligned. Ethnic media foster ethnic cohesion (Riggins, 1992) and help minorities integrate into wider society, connecting migrants to the host society, keeping them informed about local events, and providing a detailed roadmap for them to navigate unknown territories (Zhou & Cai, 2002). As such, ethnic media foster an identity that is embedded in local experiences specific to a migrant's new geographical location (Yin, 2015). Furthermore, according to Lewis (2008) alternative media more broadly plays an important role in social cohesion and citizenship, particularly for refugee, minority ethnic and migrant communities.

Before examining these benefits in more detail, it is pertinent to consider what it means to resettle in a new country. Ager and Strang's (2008) *Indicators of Integration Framework* identifies a variety of key factors that support the settlement process, including (but not limited to) assistance with housing, employment, language and social connection. While the focus of this paper is language and social connection, all of these factors are intertwined.

Factors for resettlement

In the first few months of arrival, refugees often experience uncertainty with regard to housing, often having to move from one place to another on a number of occasions, but to successfully integrate they need continuous housing and support (Phillips, 2006: 545-547). Housing conditions impact on one's sense of belonging and security and this in turn impacts relationships within the community (Phillips, 2006: 539). However, while housing is an important aspect of settlement for refugees, the associated social and cultural factors, such as building and maintaining relationships in an area over time, takes precedence (Ager & Strang, 2008: 171). Having neighbours, and living in a neighbourhood, are important to refugees who say they can learn from those who are already a part of the community (Ager & Strang, 2008: 172). A sense of belonging can be reinforced by kind gestures from people such as neighbours who overtly make them feel accepted. Friendliness from people that refugees meet on a regular basis, as well as being recognised by people within the community, can help generate a sense of settlement (Ager & Strang, 2008: 180). As such, the importance of securing a physical location to reside may be paramount, but the capacity to create community around that physical space is also required, to foster positive experiences.

Likewise, gaining employment is an important opportunity for refugees to connect and integrate with Australian society and culture. Employment not only benefits the economy in the regions where skilled people are needed, but helps refugees settle in those very communities (Ager & Strang, 2008: 171). Being employed is also a way to regain dignity and respect, which some feel they may have lost (Losoncz, 2015: 59) and job satisfaction among refugees may be regarded as acceptable, even if the job level is lower than what they are qualified to do (Colic-Peisker, 2009: 186). The main reasons for not being able to gain employment as mentioned by refugees are English fluency and disconnection from employment networks (Losoncz, 2015: 59), therefore, vocational training is seen as an important aspect of integration, with refugees becoming more employable when they gain work experience and host-country language skills (Ager & Strang, 2008: 171). However, it should be noted that an uncritical acceptance of employment as an indicator of successful settlement should be avoided as it has potential to reproduce the hegemonic neoliberal governance discourse which views gainful employment as central to neoliberal citizenship (McCafferty & Mooney, 2009: 163). The neoliberal ideology valorises waged employment yet research illustrates how at least in the first few years of settlement, there is a mismatch between the skills of new arrived refugees and the low-paid, low-status jobs they take up on arrival (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006).

Social connection is another important factor for refugees in their settlement (Colic-Peisker, 2009: 187). This sense of 'belonging' – a connection with family and strong friendships (Ager & Strang, 2008: 178) – is an important part of feeling integrated into a community. As such, settlement difficulties may be compounded for younger refugees and asylum seekers who arrive in host-countries as unaccompanied minors. Being close to family supports settlement, as it allows refugees to, 'share cultural practices and maintain familiar patterns of relationships' and refugees are said to have a greater sense of wellbeing if they are living at home with their parents (Correa-Velez, Gifford & Barnett, 2010: 1403). With African refugees in particular, research suggests that their life satisfaction is highly dependent upon social support (Colic-Peisker, 2009: 187).

Social media networks support this social connection and may also play a crucial part in facilitating settlement of refugees (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014: 406), as social media offers the opportunity to maintain connections with friends and family who live at a significant geographical distance, creating a sense of closeness (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014: 406-407). The affordability of online media and the ease of sharing audio, video and text have given migrants a sense of closeness with friends and family across long distance communication (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014: 407-408). The smartphone has empowered refugees, providing them with the opportunity to maintain contact with others in similar situations (Gillespie et al., 2016: 24). With its capacity to capture countless photos, the smartphone provides refugees with an ability to document their journey at each stage and share it with family (Gillespie et al., 2016: 25). The use of video and photographic recording is also utilised by refugees to document any crimes they have witnessed or experienced (Gillespie et al., 2016: 25).

Ultimately though, host-country language skills are vitally interconnected with all of the abovementioned requirements for successful settlement. Language acquisition also influences educational outcomes, with Brown, Miller and Mitchell (2006: 159) finding strong links between successful socialisation and academic achievement. In turn, education impacts language acquisition, as the more educated a refugee is, the greater the possibility of English improving over time (Beiser & Hou, 2001: 1328). There are a variety of factors that impact on second (or multi) language acquisition. Age plays an important role, with young refugees more likely to learn a host-country language as compared with their older counterparts (Beiser & Hou, 2001: 1328). The same authors found that, in the early years of settlement particularly, female refugees do not have as many opportunities to learn English compared to men, which impacts the likelihood of entering the workforce. Overall, an inability to speak the language of a new country not only has a negative impact on a refugee's chance of employment and the opportunity to access services, but also impacts on social life (Beiser & Hou, 2001: 1328).

Community radio as a community hub

One of the most relevant themes identified by *Community Media Matters* (Meadows et al., 2007), and expanded upon by Forde, Foxwell and Meadows (2009), was that ethnic community broadcasting strengthens integration by maintaining community connections and networks between members of the same community. This refers to creating and maintaining social life and community spirit, and is especially important to emerging communities who may not have the range of avenues available to more established communities, such as cultural events and church groups. *Community Media Matters* (Meadows et al., 2007: 79) found that for some, radio is often the only source of information for emerging communities, which are 'still to make solid connections between new arrivals and those already-established'. This can be particularly important to maintain a sense of belonging whilst new arrivals begin to learn the host-country language and culture.

Though as seen above, resettlement not only relies on connecting with one's own community, but also with the broader Australian community. Closely connected is a second theme of *Community Media Matters* – the provision of community news. This not only refers to local ethnic community news but also to the importance of finding out what is going on in the local area more generally, especially for new arrivals. Many new arrivals rely on community radio to provide Australian news and essential information about visa processes, employment and public services presented in their own language (Meadows et al., 2007). Ewart (2012: 133) describes this as providing 'a layer of connectivity for audiences', and says being able to actively engage in community, cultural, and social events is an important element of social inclusion.

The importance of community radio's capacity to connect newly arrived refugees to community, cultural and social events, should not be overlooked. For young people especially,

participating in different group activities helps with settlement and it is argued that when refugees are seen to be participating in such group activities, 'integration is happening' (Ager & Strang, 2008: 180). Being part of extra-curricular activities give young refugees confidence so that they not only make friends amongst peers in extra-curricular programmes but also at school (Beirens, Hughs, Hek & Spicer, 2007: 226). After-school and weekend activities give refugee children the opportunity to create social networks with people from their neighbourhood, which results in friendships where they feel secure and protected (Beirens et al., 2007: 227), and as Brown, Miller and Mitchell (2006: 159) found, refugee boys, in particular, enjoy playing sport which in turn is a good opportunity to make new friendships.

Participating in community radio production is another such group activity, distinctly different to the solo nature of much other 'do-it-yourself' media production, and there is little research that directly relates to the benefits of community radio participation for refugee communities living in host countries. Community development literature has examined the role of refugee radio in camps (for example Tucker, 2013). This paper seeks to contribute to a much-needed new body of literature that builds on ethnic community media research to recognise the specific circumstances of newly arrived refugees.

Methodology

The Powerhouse Radio Show was a pilot action research project, which involved eight young people from refugee backgrounds (three male, five female aged between 18 and 25) in media and radio production workshops to investigate solutions to the challenges of their resettlement. It utilised the UniCast internet radio station, based in the School of Creative Industries at the University of South Australia, and its main output was an eight part radio series, called *The Powerhouse Radio Show* (*P-HRS*) broadcast on UniCast, and podcast via the Powerhouse Radio Blog on WordPress.[1] Each episode featured spoken word content produced by a different participant, mostly through pre-recorded and produced interviews, features and vox pops, as well as live commentary and music chosen by the participant. Content included stories on support services for refugee communities, education pathways, experiences from people living, or who had lived, in refugee camps and discussions on media representation of refugee issues. Social media presence was also established on Facebook and Soundcloud. The project participants were at various stages of settlement in Australia from a range of countries – Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Liberia, and Pakistan. Participants had lived in Australia on average for just over five years, however this ranged from 14 months to 10 years across the participants. All identified as young people of refugee experience, and all but one described themselves as at least 'somewhat' settled.

The project drew on established research that places community radio as an important cultural resource (Meadows et al., 2007) and tests this claim against the experiences of marginalised communities with unique communication needs, who are yet to be given rigorous academic attention within the Australian media studies context. It was conducted as a participatory action research pilot project and involved young people of refugee experience in both the development of the project and the production of radio, using the cross disciplinary expertise of the research team.

Ethical issues may arise with the selection of methodology for research projects that engage young people of refugee background, because an instrument choice for one cultural group may not be the best choice for another (Ellis et al., 2007: 463). Therefore, the importance of considering the mixed methods approach has been suggested (Ellis et al., 2007: 463). This pilot project engaged in Participatory Action Research (PAR), a method that involves testing ideas in practice as a means of improving social, economic or environmental conditions and increasing knowledge. Action research works as a collaborative approach to inquiry (Stringer, 1996), and brings

researchers and participants together as partners with unique strengths and shared responsibilities (Pickering, 2014).

The research project gathered data through a number of distinct approaches, mainly:

- Ethnographic participant observations and reflection notes taken during and after the workshops.
- Individual semi-structured interviews with participants were conducted towards the end of the research project.
- Content analysis of the media broadcast as a result of the workshops.
- Audio recordings produced during the training project not intended for broadcast.
- Survey of participants' satisfaction conducted at completion.

In essence, these data collection methods focus on collecting what Wang (2013) has coined 'thick data', which provides the story that humanises quantitative data. Thick data, produced within the realm of ethnography, provides context and connection and counteracts the notion that qualitative data is 'small data', and lends itself towards a 'thick descriptive and interpretive' approach to presenting results and discussion. An often-confused term (Ponterotto, 2006: 543), 'thick' description and interpretation refer to the researcher's task of both describing and interpreting observed social action, 'capturing the thoughts and feelings of participants as well as the often complex web of relationships among them'.

Findings and discussion

Impact of engagement in radio on language and communication skills

The *P-HRS* participants identified a number of barriers they faced when first arriving in Australia, including loneliness, disconnection, not knowing how to access services, having troubles making friends and struggles with clashes of culture. However, the most common factor by far was the language barrier, with all but one participant mentioning this as a major settlement concern. This resonates strongly with the above-cited perceptions of successful resettlement. The following quotes are representative of the group:

> …I was so nervous at first like when I came here I was shy; I couldn't speak English properly and I didn't know how to communicate and how to act towards some situations…

> …the big challenge for myself is the language because when I got here I could barely speak English and it was very hard for me to be involved with young people because when I got here I was 17 years old and then it was really hard for me because I needed friends and I wasn't connected to my own community.

Lack of confidence in their level of language proficiency made some participants doubt their ability to present on radio.

> …I thought I wouldn't be on the radio because I've got English issue, English problem shall we say and then I thought it might put me back because obviously people who are involved with radio they have to have a really high communication skill…

Even for those participants who were comfortable with their English language acquisition, accents also acted as a barrier to resettlement.

> Socially I used to be really shy to talk to more people because I thought they will laugh at me, because I got laughed at a couple of times in class. That was partly because of my accent … So I wasn't confident enough and because of that I limited myself to the kind of friends that I had.

As demonstrated by the quote above, language and accent barriers led to shyness and disconnection, which again inhibited successful settlement experiences. Given the significance of language and accent as barriers to initial settlement, it was a positive and significant finding of the pilot project that participants broadly identified 'confidence' and 'voice' to be major benefits. When asked what skills participants thought had been developed by the project, communication skills, improved speaking skills and being provided with a voice to address community issues were all interrelated themes within participants' responses. However, answers related to 'confidence' dominated as a perceived major benefit.

Three of the participants specifically cited 'confidence' as a priority, while all indirectly referred to this as an advantage of their involvement in the project. Increased confidence was developed, not only for those who felt troubled by their existing levels, but for those who already were comfortable with public speaking.

> You can see the difference ... how we started ... and where we are now, there's a huge difference and we are all, I can say we are all confident to speak to studio equipment and resources and yeah we are very external so that we can go out ... to do some interviews and some research, that's a success.

> Well I've been interviewing people, getting interviewed myself, having to use the microphone, I guess I could say I feel more confident, and so it's boosted my confidence. I'm really shy so coming to this ... and meeting new people, people whom I've never met before, definitely increased my confidence and my skills.

> I'm so confident and I know I can broadcast...

On the point of confidence, Brown, Miller & Mitchell (2006: 151) note that if students are confident in using the social language of their host-country, they are more likely to participate in situations that require the use of academic language. Participants also said the radio project enhanced their communication skills more broadly.

> It helped me because I personally – sometimes I'm shy like I don't do – communicate too much with the people that I don't know ... it helped me to do that ... it helped me (understand) how to communicate and how to get involved in a project.

> ...I get more knowledge of how to communicate with people and how to work in a radio...

It is important to note that while the participants were generally concerned about their language skills and how this affected their ability to settle in Australia, there was common agreement that involvement in the radio project gave them not only the confidence to speak, but to speak to a public audience. Increased confidence assisted participants to feel as though they had a voice in the community, and to address issues important to them, as young people of refugee background.

> I never thought of talking to the whole world ... I just couldn't imagine being listened to by the whole world ... listening to my stories and whatever presented there.

This last quote captures what Rodriguez (2001: 159) describes as a citizens' media framework, where attention is focused on the power generated by the actual processes of media production, and the creation of 'new subject positions of citizens' media producers and their communities' (Rodriguez, 2001: 159). Viewing *P-HRS* as citizens' media is highly pertinent, given citizenship can be more significant for refugees than for other migrants who have left their home countries voluntarily (Haggis & Schech, 2010). Nyers (2005) argues without a state to recognise their citizenship rights and take responsibility for them, refugees lack a political voice, which jeopardises their status as human beings. The quotes above, and the content produced by the

participants, suggest that they not only felt confident to speak, but that they were taking control of their capacity to be heard – to still exist, regardless of their current citizenship statuses.

The confidence of having a voice in the public sphere encouraged participants to choose topics that worked to overcome stereotypes, and especially negative media coverage. We see this as significant given the general absence of voices of refugees in the media (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017). Having a 'voice' that articulates the refugee experience is 'instrumental in endowing the refugee with personhood and historicity – and hence with capacity for recognition' (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017, p.629). As the general public has limited knowledge about, exposure to, or significant contact with refugees, they are very dependent on the media to inform them (McKay, Thomas & Kneebone, 2011). Coverage around refugee and asylum seeker issues has become increasingly negative, especially in Western countries (Klocker & Dunn, 2003), with the media playing an essential role in framing this public discourse and policy. Participants said that community radio was one way that alternative discourses regarding refugee issues could be expressed.

> Showcasing diversity a lot on the radio. Getting different voices and bringing out the best, because what media tend to do is, we focus on (the) negative, bad news sells too good, good news ah who cares. I think being able to change this perspective is by using a platform that encourages people to see the good in a particular group in society, or anyone, I think bring out the good in anyone in society. If radio can portray that, that will help lower the stereotypes that currently exist in our society.

> Let's say for people who listen to radio, they get to learn a lot from different backgrounds … if I get to tell them more about myself, my background, where I come from, and get to tell them about what exactly we are, they do get to understand us better. So I guess they (don't) have to fear from us or feel like making any judgments. So I think radio, yes, definitely does help because there is a social voice where it gets to be heard by everyone.

Benefits of engagement in radio for social connections

Participants also identified a lack of confidence in mixing with people from different cultures, which resulted in them limiting their friend circle to a similar culture to their own. Family and cultural expectations also played a significant part in preventing social connection.

> … my family and my relatives they expect us to keep my own culture but to live in a society and to have a different culture is hard because if you want to get in – settled in Australia or in this society you have to get to know their culture. And you have to know how to behave, how to talk with people and you have to do something to get involved… to become part of this society I have to do their culture like at some point but it's so hard for me…

> … So to be honest they are more Indians, Nepalese from different culture than English because I never had the courage to talk to English much…

It is evident, however, that all of the participants have found ways to engage with their local geographic communities, despite facing these barriers. This is echoed by Correa-Velez, Gifford and Barnet (2010: 1406) who say that despite facing challenges when arriving, a number of refugees have the tools to positively face new challenges. Every participant was an active volunteer, often for multiple organisations including the Migrant Resource Centre SA, Welcome to Australia and the Smith Family. Participants also recounted many positive stories based on their

experiences with community groups assisting in their initial settlement experiences and noted how volunteering played a positive part in their social connections:

> … I went to the centre… I went there a couple of weeks and after that I start, I thought oh
> it's a good place and I sort of met a lot of friends through that centre…

Social circles were facilitated in a number of different ways, including through churches and mosques, school and university life as well as friends and family. According to Brough, Gorman, Ramirez & Westoby (2003: 203), young refugees use a variety of strategies to deal with resettlement, for example, becoming involved in sport, listening to music and participating in community activities. Participation in group and extra-curricular activities provides the opportunity of creating social networks and, ultimately, supports settlement (Ager & Strang, 2008; Beirens et al., 2007).

The 'community hub' nature of community radio in Australia, particularly evident in ethnic community radio, is well-placed to enable many of these processes needed to promote healthy settlement (Meadows & Foxwell-Norton, 2011: 102). As such, it is encouraging to note a second significant benefit of the radio project pilot cited by the majority of participants was the value that came from working within a diverse team. Participants said they benefited from working with each other, and were very supportive of each-others' work, during the workshops, broadcasts (sending messages of encouragement via social media) and in the final interviews (given for research purposes).

There was a strong sense of team-work and of solidarity evident between the participants.

> I think it was because of the team that we had, we were so compatible and connected to
> each other … it was a great team. That made it a success.

The value of the team is also indicated in the results of the participant key indicators of success, measured via an online survey at the end of the project. The group were more satisfied with the achievements of the team as a whole, than of each individual's own achievements. This resonates with one of the most relevant themes identified by the *Community Media Matters* report (Meadows et al., 2007) – that ethnic broadcasting strengthens integration by creating and maintaining social life, community spirit and connections between members of the community.

As outlined earlier, making connections outside one's own ethnic group is important in assisting with social integration for ethnic minorities, and ethnic audiences value community radio because it allows them to negotiate their participation in the broader social and political life of Australia (Ewart, 2012). Research by Kwong (2012: 1) into Asian community radio demonstrates how such broadcasting 'assists this demographic in socializing with people of various ethnicities and encourages them to feel a sense of belonging', in line with the community radio sector's aims of fostering multiculturalism. Hudson, Phillips, Ray and Barnes (2007) found community radio was a source of participation and involvement in diverse communities. This aligns Colic-Peisker's (2009: 186) findings that refugees who made Australian friends, friends who spoke a different language to them or were a different ethnicity to them, found it easier to understand and therefore adapt to Australian culture.

This was certainly the case for the participants in this project, who said they welcomed the diversity of the group and the opportunity to get to know people from different backgrounds and learn about other cultures. With a growing confidence to speak came stronger communication and connections within the team.

> The best experience for me was to have new friends there and, because the … people
> who were attending radio were from different backgrounds, (so) I've had a little bit of
> experience about how people are in different parts of the world. Especially in Asia and
> Africa and the Europe side.

> It did really help a lot, it's not always (easy) to get along with people and it's a good thing that you have to listen to what they say and try and understand it all before making any judgement because usually, when you look at people you straight away say 'oh I don't think I can get along with that person because they're different groups from me and I look different and they look different and they're from different place'. But it's not always (like) that … so far that I know they have never made any judgement over me … but they get to know us and they always provided help.

Research on the meanings of citizenship to immigrants more broadly in Australia (Gow, 2005) shows establishing a sense of political and/or social community is as much about citizenship as are relationships between an individual and the state. It is evident that the project participants were building and widening their own sense of social community through the production of the radio series, again connecting media creation processes to notions of strengthened citizenship. However, it must be highlighted that the young people involved were already heavily engaged in community activities prior to becoming radio broadcasters.

Conclusions

There is a distinct gap in community media literature about the roles played by community broadcasting in the host countries of people of refugee experience, for those specific communities. While organisations such as the National Ethnic Broadcasters Association of Australia deliver training to community radio stations to assist them to support emerging (often refugee) communities (see for example National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasting Council, 2011), there has been little critical reflection or research into the effectiveness of such training, or of community broadcasting sector (ethnic and otherwise) attitudes towards working with refugee and other emerging communities to include and engage them in broadcasting schedules and station membership.

As such, the findings of this pilot research project aim to expand on existing previous research, which examines ethnic broadcasting in Australia more broadly, to specifically consider the experiences of young people of refugee experience who are often resilient, positive and prepared to face the challenges of resettlement despite the complex and often traumatic nature of their migration experience. To do this, we have used an action research approach, providing training, resources and support to a small group of young people of refugee experience to produce their own radio series, to investigate how engagement in media production can assist their settlement experiences. It must be recognised that the project was limited by the small number of participants and the short timeframe within which it needed to be completed. While the initial findings are positive, it would be beneficial to test them against a second action research project that allows for more time during the recruitment phase, as well as a longer broadcast schedule.

When young people of refugee background are given a platform to produce their own media, it gives them the confidence to speak, and this should not be taken lightly. Successful, fulfilling resettlement relies on a multitude of factors but almost all of them are directly connected to becoming competent in the host-country language. To connect with local neighbourhood and communities more broadly, to understand Australian society, to access services, education and employment, one needs to be able to communicate. Having the confidence to speak has flow-on effects that impact on, and support, all of the resettlement factors discussed above, and provides alternative avenues for enacting and owning ones' place in society.

Participation in *The Powerhouse Radio Show* assisted young people to feel more confident in their (English) communication skills, and gave them a sense of being heard in the community, while exposing them to a diverse group of people and expanding their social connections. These preliminary findings suggest that participation in media production can have a beneficial effect on a young persons' settlement experience, in line with perceptions of what constitutes successful

resettlement. Further research is required to investigate if these, or similar, outcomes are being generated by the community (including ethnic) broadcasting sector in Australia (and elsewhere).

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NOTES

1   https://phrsblog.wordpress.com/