

6. Pacific journalism education and training—the new advocacy era

Abstract: For years, journalism education training in the Pacific has relied on donor funded short courses and expatriate media educators but in recent times this has been changing with the growth of more journalism schools at both universities and technical institutes and a more home grown actively qualified staff and proliferating research programmes. These changes can be reflected with the establishment of the new advocacy group, Media Educators Pacific (MEP). This is chaired by Misa Vicky Lepou, the president and she is also the head of journalism at the National University of Samoa. This body has a mission to promote and deliver the highest professional standards of training, education and research in media and journalism education relevant to the Pacific and beyond. In a region where the news media and journalism education have been forced to confront major hurdles such as military coups, as in Fiji; ethnic conflict, as in the Solomon Islands; and two rival governments and the ruthless crushing of student protests in Papua New Guinea in June 2016, major questions are faced. Along with critical development issues such as climate change and resources degradation, what are the challenges ahead for teaching contemporary journalists? These were some of the issues explored by this panel at the Fourth World Journalism Education Congress (WJEC) conference in Auckland in July 2016. The panel was chaired by the Pacific Media Centre director Professor David Robie. Speakers were Emily Matasororo of the University of Papua New Guinea, Shailendra Singh of the University of the South Pacific, Misa Vicky Lepou of the National University of Samoa and Charlie Dave Mandavah of the Vanuatu Institute of Technology. Eliko Drugunalevu of the University of the South Pacific provided a summing up.

Keywords: culture, ethics, Fiji, journalism, journalism education, journalism training, Media Educators Pacific, Pacific Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Vanuatu, fa'a Samoa

*Compiled by MACKENZIE SMITH
Pacific Media Centre, Auckland*

PROFESSOR DAVID ROBIE:

KIA ORA and warm Pacific greetings. For years, journalism education training in the Pacific has relied on donor funded short courses and expatriate media educators but in recent times this has been changing with the growth of more journalism schools at both universities and technical institutes and a more home grown actively qualified staff and proliferating research programmes. These changes can be reflected with the establishment of the new advocacy group, Media Educators Pacific (MEP). This is chaired by Misa Vicky Lepou, the president and she is also the head of journalism at the National University of Samoa. This body has a mission to promote and deliver the highest professional standards of training, education and research in media and journalism education relevant to the Pacific and beyond. In a region where the news media and journalism education have been forced to confront major hurdles such as military coups, as in Fiji; ethnic conflict, as in the Solomon Islands; and two rival governments and the ruthless crushing of student protests in Papua New Guinea in June 2016, major questions are faced. Along with critical development issues such as climate change and resources degradation, what are the challenges ahead for teaching contemporary journalists? These are some of the issues being explored by this panel.

I'd also like to acknowledge at this stage the support we've had for having this panel going ahead. It has been supported by grants from the New Zealand Institute for Pacific Research (NZIPR) to bring five Pacific participants to Auckland for this conference, the Pacific Media Centre and UNESCO.

To set a tone for the discussion, we will show a short video by citizen media—students—at the University of Papua New Guinea on the sustained protests over the past couple of months at several university campuses. The peaceful protests were against current Prime Minister Peter O'Neill, calling on him to stand aside and cooperate with a police warrant for his arrest as part of ongoing corruption investigations. The protests culminated with heavily armed police in camouflage fatigues opening fire on students at UPNG on 8 June 2016 in shocking scenes. Early international reports on the day wrongly stated four people had been killed. None were killed, but four out of a total of almost 30 casualties were critically wounded and taken to hospital.

EMILY MATASORORO, journalism and public relations strand leader at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG): Kia ora ladies and gentleman. What you've just seen are real events that took place in Port Moresby at the university and I was there among the students when the police opened fire. For me that event was really traumatising. My presentation is about the student protest that was involved and how the local media covered it. Before I present this, let me give you a brief cultural, and probably socio-economic, background about

Papua New Guinea so that I can present with some context (Matasororo, 2016).

Papua New Guinea is the largest country in the Pacific with more than 900 different languages and a diverse cultural and socio-economic background. It is a country divided by languages and regions but I think it stands united about wanting to see good governance and transparency taking place in the corridors of power so that basic government services can trickle right down to the bulk of the rural population. According to the rural bank [National Development Bank], this section of people make up 87 percent of Papua New Guinea's total population - that's a large number. Most significantly, it's the number of students who come from these rural and subsistence backgrounds who are trying to make inroads in tertiary education to support their families and tribes and communities in search of a better life. That life can only come from decisions made by leaders who are for the people, leaders who will fight to eradicate corruption and promote good governance and transparency.

You have probably heard a lot about Papua New Guinea and it's highly ranked as a corrupt nation and the images you saw are just some things that are related to the kinds of decisions that our leaders in Papua New Guinea make. Recently in 2016 and—ironically it was on World Media Freedom Day—a journalism student was preparing to celebrate the press freedom events. However, this did not eventuate because our academic space was taken up by a student protest. I got a call from PNG Loop website and instead of asking me questions about media freedom day, as I had thought, they asked me questions about what was happening on campus. For me, I was sad that they had to ask such questions. Anyway, this was the beginning of an eight-week standoff by students who demanded that Prime Minister Peter O'Neill step down from office and face police over allegations of fraud. However, the Prime Minister defiantly said, 'I will not step down'. The Prime Minister has challenged the issue of a warrant of arrest against him and this case is now before the courts.

In fact, earlier in the week Parliament was recalled and a vote of no confidence against the Prime Minister was being planned. Among other things that occurred before the student protest forums began was the disbanding and dismantling of the Police Fraud Squad—the office that was supposed to investigate the Prime Minister. It was later reinstated. And the other being the adjournment of Parliament



Figure 1: Papua New Guinean police in camouflage fatigues try to arrest a student leader at the University of Papua New Guinea shortly before opening fire on the students on 8 June 2016.

Video clip screened on 3m 58s at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTHLC5GBFRg>

© DEL ARCEDE/PMC



Figure 2: The Pacific journalism educators delegation at WJEC16 at a talanoa in the Pacific Media Centre.

to November 2016 to avoid the possibility of a vote of no confidence against the Prime Minister. These were just some issues that the students were concerned about. These events led to students boycotting classes and to show their concerns and frustrations over the Prime Minister’s general handling of national affairs. Students set fire to copies of the daily newspapers, the *Post-Courier* and *The National*—it was done in front of the campus gate. They did this to show their frustration about how biased they perceived the media to be, and that the media was taking sides and promoting the government’s agenda. The burning was an indication that they disliked the papers’ coverage of events leading up to the protest.

Why would the Student Representative Council (SRC) go so far as to prefer certain media outlets over others? The *Post Courier*, *The National* and television station EMTV were banned from coverage. The UPNG is a government and public-run institution and is a public space open to everyone, including the media. If students reacted that way, it brought up issues of credibility and integrity about the freedom of the press in PNG, which brings to light questions about ethics. This is a quote from one of the student leaders, who was reported in the *Post-Courier*:

We saw the newspapers and saw that the reports were very shallow and biased. They are not actual reports of what we students are portraying at the university. That’s why, to show our frustration, we went out to the bus stop and burned those papers. What we displayed in the morning shows that we have no trust in the media.

For me, that was a very strong statement, a very strong statement indeed. While I acknowledge and appreciate the tireless efforts of the media's coverage of the students' protests, this statement for me needs to be investigated. It needs to be done by all stakeholders concerned in promoting fair and just reporting and the essence of good ethics and good journalism. The stakeholders include, but are not limited to the following: the publisher and the management of the newspapers, the Media Council of PNG, Transparency International, Ombudsman Commission and educators of journalism at the University of Papua New Guinea and the Catholic-run Divine Word University in Madang. For the publishers, credibility is questioned, for the Media Council, it is a threat against the profession, and for the educators, it raises questions about where we are going in terms of teaching ethics in our universities. These questions need to be answered in order to promote a robust and conducive environment in which journalism in Papua New Guinea can operate.

Going back to the events on the 8 June 2016, the protest took an ugly turn. Several students were wounded and some seriously when police opened fire on them. Social media was running hot with images and comments uploaded in real time. Some of what was coming from social media was emotional reporting—information was distorted—with some news stations reporting fatalities. An Australian news station also reported four deaths and isolated reports on radio, television and social media that day created a new level of fear, confusion and anxiety among residents. For me on that day, I saw how powerful the media was and when its power isn't applied correctly, the results can be tragic. On the other hand, among all the confusion, radio broadcasters PNG FM and Legend FM, acted, in my view, responsibly in an attempt to curtail confusion and disorder. It broadcast the message from the capital of Port Moresby's governor telling residents to remain calm and that city services were not affected, when in fact they were. Everything came to a standstill. The governor also said that he could not confirm any casualties at that time and immediately after his address, lines were opened to the public.

One resident called to say he witnessed injured students rushed to the hospital with the possibility of some deaths. Before he could elaborate, the announcer swiftly put him off air. Was that suppression of information or responsible journalism? I don't know. This station on that day had a strategy to control what it could broadcast and it did so for the benefit of the common good of the people even though there were small pockets of disturbances in the city. Every day from then on student activities seemed to attract news coverage. By then, many students had vacated the campus and for many of them, the only way to get updated was from the media.

In this regard, the media played an important role in keeping the students informed. The standoff continued, with the staff locked out of the campus for

periods of time. In one staff meeting, held away from the main academic space, the Vice-Chancellor addressed the staff and, among other things, told them that the management had temporarily ceased involving the media. In fact, UPNG accused the media of misreporting and aggravating the situation. The whole protest turned sour when students stepped right out of line on the 23 June 2016 and damaged state-owned property worth millions of kina. The protest has now come to a closure as the university's governing body announced the termination of the 2016 academic year for the University of Papua New Guinea.

I take my hat off to PNG Media Council president Alex Rheoney, who said, 'It's a wake up call for the industry and we need to pull our socks up. Every person in the industry, including the educators as well.'

In that light, the University of Papua New Guinea, in collaboration with the Pacific Media Centre, sent a final year student from PNG on a recently-concluded Pacific Cooperation Foundation media internship here at AUT and with other New Zealand media. This is the right direction in empowering journalists of the region. I thank you, PCF, AUT and PMC, for that support. Apart from the news that was provided during the protest, I strongly believe that it was the media coverage of the protest that has provoked debate and discussions about the issues of good governance and corruption in Papua New Guinea. I think about we expect in 2017 when PNG goes to the polls. I can only hope that it is through this experience that Papua New Guineans will see wisdom prevail in choosing the leaders they vote into power. In memory of this tragic event, the journalism strand at UPNG is going to unveil a wall to display the untold stories and create a photo montage for the unseen images to serve as a reminder of the student protest and something for future students to ponder over.

DR SHAILENDRA SINGH, *coordinator of journalism at the University of South Pacific (USP)*: Most people in the audience might not know much about the state of journalism education in the Pacific, so I'm going to start really from the basics. Journalism education in the Pacific is really critical to state the obvious and also the not-so-obvious. Why I say the not-so-obvious is based on the lack of support throughout the region for journalism education and for tertiary teaching of journalism. There's a critical lack of resources in most of the technical educational institutes that were set up in the region. We face major threats, for example climate change, overfishing and corruption on a grand scale, and we need a really strong and informed journalism corps to understand, analyse and report these issues, so proper training is crucial.

Emily's presentation was a really strong illustration of the problems we face in the Pacific, and also the need to analyse and report certain issues in a careful and sensitive manner. To train good journalists we need well-qualified and experienced trainers. It's really critical for the Pacific both from a teaching sense, and also from

a research perspective, to develop home grown media educators who not only understand the terrain but also have a stake in it. With regards to teaching for example, it's preferable if the teacher is experienced as a journalist and also academically qualified. I need to restate this because in the Pacific there is a misconception that all you need is to be an experienced journalist, and you can swan into the classroom and start teaching. This might be okay for a while, doesn't work in the long term. Experience as a journalist is essential but not enough on its own to lift the standard of journalism on a consistent basis.

In my experience, what is required for learning and teaching journalism in the Pacific is often underestimated. There was a well-intentioned Australian-donor funded drive to set up all these TVETS, without much thought or regard for the need to resource these institutions with equipment and qualified personnel. Today these TVETS are bare-bone operations with questionable standards. Most of our media educators do not have adequate qualifications. This is more due to the lack of opportunity rather than any lack of desire to study and attain qualifications. Moreover, some media educators have an undergraduate degree, but no field experience.

Pacific media educators' qualifications stop at an undergraduate degree, which is certainly better than nothing, but ideally for the TVETS, the qualification should be upgraded to an MA, and should not stop there, simply because postgraduate qualifications are critical for research. The focus of the research should be into local problems and how to address them.

The teaching gap has been filled by expatriates, who have played a critical role in bridging the local skills and qualifications shortages. However, expatriates are not meant to be, and should not become, a permanent condition. We need some locals to teach local students for obvious reasons. At best, there should be a balance between expatriate and local educators so that the students get the best of both worlds. Local ownership also means taking over financial responsibility rather than relying on donors for everything.

Consistent research into Pacific media is sorely lacking. Besides a few dedicated people such as Professor David Robie (2004, 2014), there aren't many people researching in a consistent manner. The number of local and regional researchers in Pacific media can be counted on one hand. So we've got two major gaps: first of all, not enough people doing research in Pacific media to begin, and secondly, a shortage of local researchers to provide an insider perspective. Just as we need local-expatriate balance in teaching, we need the same kind of balance in research. So this brings me back to my original point—the urgent need to build regional and local capacity in teaching and research. I am a rare example of a local researcher, and this is thanks to David Robie's foresight and mentoring during his days as the coordinator of the USP journalism programme in the 1990s. David was very progressive in that sense. In turn, I am mentoring

our two teaching assistants from USP, Irene Manarae and Eliko Drugunalevu, who are in Auckland at this conference and they have also already published a journal article. So it's really heartening to see our other colleagues from the Pacific presenting their research at this conference.

The challenge is to keep the momentum going, and with the TVETs there is no institutional pressure, incentive or compulsion to conduct research. So the question for the TVET educators is why would we spend our time doing research when there's really no incentive. So my advice to them would be, it is advisable to take the initiative for the sake of their own professional and intellectual development. It's always an asset to have a publication or two on your CV when applying for jobs, scholarships or promotions. Besides career prospects, you can also enhance your teaching through your research, although I may be preaching to the converted with my colleagues that are here today. On its part, USP is investing a lot of money on research to inculcate a research culture. Our School of Language, Arts and Media (SLAM) offers cash incentives and opportunities to attend conferences if you publish. For some media educators, the lack of know-how—how to conduct research—may be a problem. This may be prevalent in the TVETs because the people who are teaching there lack the necessary academic training. The second problem is they've got no one to teach or mentor them. So they are sort of isolated and on their own. Without addressing this situation, it will be hard to change things.

My advice to TVETs staff is to find a mentor and publish jointly. You can do cross publications with people at other universities. For example, if you are in the Solomon Islands, you could perhaps do a joint paper with a lecturer at the University of the South Pacific with a research interest in the country. So there are possibilities for doing cross-disciplinary research.

Another challenge is the flak from the media industry and this is nothing new, nor unique; it happens in many countries. Some of the criticism is fair, but some of it is unfair. Sometimes students are judged too harshly and there are unrealistic expectations placed on them. I have heard similar stories from my colleagues in other Pacific countries. But by and large the mainstream media is very cooperative and an important part in our efforts. We have strong and enduring relations with the news media industry in Fiji, especially in the current political climate.

MISA VICKY LEPOU, *head of journalism at the National University of Samoa (NUS)*: Other than Australia and New Zealand institutes being mentors—and we do appreciate that, being mentors in terms of research and to forge partnership with these institutions—we thought, 'why not come together as one body instead of individually approaching help from our developing partners, why not come together and address this with one voice and then as educators?'. That's how we formed this Media Educators Pacific (MEP) group, we felt at some point that if we're going

to spend the next five or ten years talking about these challenges, who's going to listen to us. But if we travel together as a group, we've got issues at Papua New Guinea, we've got issues in Tonga. Tonga in fact, we've got our colleague in Tonga here, they're struggling to find trained educators. Even the Vanuatu Institute of Technology (VIT), here is the only person teaching journalism in Vanuatu. We're lucky enough in Samoa and it didn't take me overnight to find additional staff and to push the bureaucrats, the national university to get additional help because the programme itself was sinking at the time, before I came on board. It took me five years to consistently ask for help and these are the same challenges that we face as journalism educators in the region and so we felt we need to do a lot of research.

There are many challenges. We need to find answers to bridge that gap between the media industry and journalism education, not just between these two but also we need to build that trust between ourselves and the community. The key question is how many people in the community respect journalism as an honourable profession in the region? And we've heard that reflected from the case at UPNG, as well as in Tonga—you know, all of us.

I just want to make a special mention of the *Samoa Observer* as the sole monopoly in the daily newspaper print media in Samoa. A recent *Sunday Samoan* edition of the *Observer* published a photograph of a transgender person hanging from the rafters of a church hall. Now this was a front page photograph with the headline 'Suicide in Church Hall' in a Sunday paper. And this was everyone coming after church and it was just too horrific, too dramatic for young people. I have a child who reads the newspaper everyday and that was the only Sunday I decided not to. She consistently asked for the paper, and I said, 'no, not today'. There was a huge public outcry from Samoans here and overseas about that particular front page (Robie, 2016). Seriously, the Samoan media needs a lot of training in ethics.

Now, the role of journalism education. This is you trying to teach the young up-and-coming journalists about media ethics compared to someone with 40 plus years of experience in journalism who publishes a front page picture like that. There's that challenge again within the community. People were asking, 'why would I bring my child to study journalism when this is the kind of journalism that reflects within this small society?' It's not just about journalism education anymore, this is more than building our trust with the community within the region.

DAVE MANDAVAH, *course coordinator of journalism at the Vanuatu Institute of Technology (VIT)*: In 2002, the diploma course in journalism and media commenced at the Vanuatu Institute of Technology (VIT). It was the first full-time journalism and media course ever run in Vanuatu and long overdue for an expanding media industry. A media course was later introduced in 2007. The curriculum had been put together in a modern module format. Originally the

course was developed through an aid-funded programme and was coordinated by PACMAS (Pacific Media Assistance Scheme). The course was intended to target current media practitioners. However, the student intake was largely school graduates with little or no experience. This has presented significant challenges. It has been an issue at the VIT for at least seven to nine years as the basis of two diploma courses, and this has been a wonderful foundation for more than 30 graduates, many of whom who are now employed in the burgeoning media industry in Vanuatu. But it has some initial flaws. By 2015, a section of this course had simply become outdated and in need of a fresh outlook. Myself as course coordinator and trainers Tony Wilson and Ellen Wilson from Australia have reviewed and refined and tweaked the courses over the past six years as they continue to learn from students, graduates and would-be employers.

The principles of good journalism in media clearly don't change but the delivery and adaptation vary enormously and the right delivery of this to any Vanuatu student takes considerable thought and planning. Like many journalism courses around the world, female students outnumber the males by around three to one. In Vanuatu, females are treated as truly second class citizens. As such, they are not encouraged to speak out or have any significant public opinion. Among the 52 Members of Parliament, none are female, and this has been the norm for some time. The prospect of females securing a seat in the Vanuatu Parliament are limited at best. Journalists and other media people are outgoing by their very nature yet this is hard to establish with the culture in Vanuatu where females are subdued and find it difficult to publicly express an opinion. As we teach female student journalists how to write news stories, we also have to find ways to instil confidence in them so they are even prepared to ask a single question. It is almost impossible to put into a structured form that will work for the majority of female students each year. So after some time with each group of students, we work out strategies. As individuals, we try to encourage the females to speak up and ask questions.

In 2004, for example, we had a total of 14 students and three were male. So this ratio becomes critical as to how we prepare our classes to achieve maximum successful results. We have to become part-time psychologists to build the individual's confidence and while teaching the basic journalism requirements—and what is applicable to the media in Vanuatu rather than Australia or New Zealand. It is a real challenge, but not an insurmountable one, once you understand the new Vanuatu and how the local media works.

After six years, we are certain we are on the right path but the evolution of the original course remains a work in progress as each year passes. Trainers and I have also established some years ago that many of the students were not very computer literate as they came from schools that were under-equipped so we have added to the course some basic training in things like how to surf the net, create Word documents and associated with that, create documents like CVs,

cover letters, and other helpful skills for gaining employment. We know that not all our graduates will be employed in the media and we hope these added skills will give the students opportunities to get jobs at a better level than would have been the case before they did the course. We have a success rate of around 60 percent in finding graduates jobs in the media industry, a figure we are extremely proud of. Despite the best efforts of the first course coordinator and later myself, we have been unable to find any other qualified trainer or experienced journalist prepared to take on the role of trainers. Added to this, the media and journalism courses are the most expensive courses at the VIT and many parents struggle to find the funds for two years.

To conclude, most of our students are female and there are significant cultural and social barriers for women in a male-dominated and very conservative society. Dealing with a societal gender power imbalance to embolden female media practitioners to tackle difficult aspects of media practice has been both a challenge and one of the course's successes. None of the organisations that have employed graduates from VIT have complained to us about the standard of the graduates after entering the workforce.

The open discussion from the issues raised by the panel

ALEXANDER RHEENEY, *editor-in-chief of the PNG Post-Courier and president of the Media Council of PNG*: I appreciate the presentation given by Emily on the insight into the student unrest and it was definitely a wake-up call for the media industry back in Papua New Guinea. I am aware of some newsrooms starting to change their reporting culture in response to all of this criticism. And a lot of the criticism was made on social media, there were individual reporters including myself, who were called all kinds of names and accused of all kinds of things by Papua New Guineans. One thing that I get from all these online interactions was that a lot of Papua New Guineans don't really understand the process of news gathering and how individual media organisations have their own checks and balances in place before a story gets on the air or into the newspaper the next day. So I think there's an opportunity for the media industry to hold an expo back in Port Moresby and the general public gets invited to attend the expo. The individual media organisations, both electronic and print media, can basically give them a rundown on how a newsroom operates. The Media Council will need to consider this expo going forward.

A lot of the criticism was warranted because some journalists in Papua New Guinea—being public figures themselves, their conduct has to come under scrutiny on a 24/7 basis—were probably spending too much time with a particular politician, for example. Consequently that information made its way onto Facebook and then media started a lot of debate about what sort of conversations took place, what was exchanged. I think this crisis at the University of Papua

New Guinea, the shooting of student demonstrators, was a wake-up call and it also provides a foundation for us to reach out to the audience out there and of course we take the tracks that social media has for mainstream media.

However, my hope on social media is Papua New Guineans have never been given an opportunity and a platform like that to actually engage in conversation. Not only among themselves, but directly with politicians. There are a couple of MPs who actually have Facebook pages and Papua New Guineans are getting on Facebook and actually talking to the politicians directly. This has never happened before in the 40-year history of the country. So we support social media, we encourage Papua New Guineans to engage in social media but we would like to get them to engage in more critical and educated discourse instead of the raw stuff that they're currently engaging in.

DR DAVID ROBIE: When I was at UPNG between 1993 and 1998, I was fairly conscious of the fact that through our journalism programme there were a number of students who actually saw journalism as a stepping stone to a political career with the communication skills that they achieved, and I found that quite a unique situation compared with many countries where I have taught journalism.

DR SHAILENDRA SINGH: The University of the South Pacific is really pushing for research now and there is also a reward and incentive system and this system is linked to publishing in ranges, for example A tier or A+ journals. I think it's \$5000 for an A+ journal if you publish and then about \$3000 for an A range journal and this incentive credit can be used for future conference travel or research projects. But USP also includes some local journals in their ranking systems to balance everything out. What this does is allow expatriate lecturers to pursue their own specific interests and also research into local issues and problems. I think it's a fairly good approach and more and more, instead of rankings, USP is now shifting towards research that can affect policy in a positive manner so that's where the emphasis is now shifting for the better.

MISA VICKY LEPOU: We have a similar system with NUS as well, it's also required as part of my job to do more research so there's two more research papers coming. We are hosting 10 Australian media journalists and students next semester, which is next year from January to June and this is what we've been very successful at in terms of the media programme, is forging partnerships with institutions in New Zealand and Australia. So we signed an MOU with James Cook University so we're under a new Colombo Plan. So they're coming to NUS to study a full block semester and that research paper alone is looking at from the indigenous perspective, what would be the experience in

doing journalism in Samoa and the fact is we've always been talking about, discussion in the region was always about parachute journalism. So how to avoid that is to start from that level, to bring a lot of Pacific stories to the minds of, in this case, Australian media students. When they get to the industry, at least somebody somewhere at some point will do a lot of Pacific coverage on stories throughout the region. But we would welcome support from your institution as well, it's one of the things we talked about, as the newly formed group MEP, is to have a journal, a publication or something, together as a team to develop more research skills and I'm not saying that we're experts on that but we welcome the technical assistance of professors and PhDs in this room.

RICHARD PAMATATAU, *AUT*: The Routledge *Dictionary of Philosophy*—Routledge is one of the publishing people we like to go with—doesn't have the word *Pacific* in its index. I just think that we need to place that thought around how we look at the literature. What my colleague Dr Tina Brown and I are doing here is using an auto ethnographic approach to research and we are writing about what we want to write about, how we want to write about and publishing it on *Te Kaharoa* (n.d.), which is the indigenous journal published by this university. It is really important that scholars are able to use their own thinking, their own methodologies to lift up the thinking around what we're doing.

DR DAVID ROBIE: Out of the Pacific Media Centre here at AUT, we have the *Pacific Journalism Review* (n.d.) which has been publishing now for 22 years and made a long contribution to indigenous media studies, collaborated with USP and in the next edition we're actually dedicating this to Pacific research, papers coming out of this conference that'll be produced later in the year. We also publish the *Pacific Journalism Monographs*, *Asia Pacific Report*, which was founded in January this year has been running now for several months and the policy of this online independent news and current affairs website is very much based around student collaborations across the Pacific, and many have been contributing. During the two-month crisis in Papua New Guinea, we were the only New Zealand media that comprehensively followed and reported on what was happening.

HANNAH SPYKSMA, *formerly of AUT*: I've recently done some research looking at the role of NGOs reporting from the Pacific, specifically Vanuatu and my research found surprisingly that this particular NGO—I was looking at 350 Pacific, part of the wider 350.org global movement, was able to facilitate ni-Vanuatu voices being pushed into a global discussion about climate change (Spyksma, 2017). The way that it enabled this reporting to happen was in a way that, David Robie, I know that you've described and that Pacific journalism educators and scholars have talked about, is more of a Pacific way. But in contrast to that,

I know that there's also a lot of research about the role of NGOs being quite problematic and coming in and providing that funding for small one-off journalism training and so I just wondered, to all of you, what you thought about the role of NGOs should be in training of journalists in the Pacific.

MISA VICKY LEPOU: At the National University of Samoa, our department has been proactive in terms of engaging the NGOs to do annual training and at NUS we have the centre for professional development where the umbrella for NGOs is the beneficiary of most of that funding so we get to do a lot of media training with NGOs. As a trainer of the last two years with NGOs, what I found was most of the participants who came to these training sessions do not have basic access to a computer. First and foremost, if you would like to be a journalist, you are doing this training, and then do what? Next, sustainability. Making sure these skills and knowledge are being applied into that small community media outlet you are working in. When we did the feedback study, neither of these organisations existed anymore. Secondly, most of them do not have a computer to do anything and most of them were doing some sort of newsletter, just a simple one or two pages and that was it. NGOs can play the role of being a media person but at the end of the day, how active are they in making sure that it is sustained in the long-term.

QUESTION FROM MICHAEL: At the meeting yesterday and again today, I'm hearing that relations between some of the media outlets in your countries and the journalism schools are uneasy at best and also that you have worries about the quality of the journalism in some countries—shallow, biased—these are words you've used. I'd like to understand a bit better, among the journalists who are doing that sort of work that you find problematic, the ones who are working in the industry, what's the pathway into those jobs, are they graduates of other sorts of programmes, or are they not graduates? How do the people who are in the industry at the moment and whose work is questioned, how are they getting to be journalists and what training do they have?

DR SHAILENDRA SINGH: I will respond to that in a Fiji context. I did a survey in 2004 at the start of my PhD and I found, I think only 49 percent of the journalist cohort in Fiji had any form of tertiary qualification, and this includes certificates and diplomas. If you join a newsroom, there's not always the opportunity for you to do good journalism because the media organisations want stories to be churned out as soon as possible, and they're not able to devote resources for longer pieces and investigative journalism and all that. But I think the third and the most pressing issue is the fact that journalism is not seen as a viable career in places like Fiji, and other Pacific Island countries, so you don't get the cream of the crop, both in terms of tertiary education and also people doing media. There's a higher

turnover rate because the media industry is not able to compete in terms of paying salaries. So my research also shows that as far as experience is concerned, I think there's about 30 percent or so had less than three years experience and about 50 percent had less than five years experience. What I also found was that the experienced journalists, they were not out in the front lines, they were not out there interviewing or writing news, they were managing the newsroom. So we have all these dilemmas and problems.

FURTHER QUESTION FROM MICHAEL: Are you finding that the problems with the quality of journalism is as a result of directives of senior editors to do a certain kind of journalism or is it simply because people are not trained to do good journalism?

DR SHAILENDRA SINGH: What the editors are telling the journalists is one cause maybe, but I can't speculate, it's one possible cause. In Fiji's case, as I pointed out, it's inexperience. Because of its very young and highly inexperienced journalist cohort, there's a continuous turnover. This is not a new problem, this problem has existed for a number of decades. So when people talk about this talent of journalism, you need to look at the people who are actually doing the reporting and how long they stay in the newsroom and what is the newsroom capacity over the long-term. Then you start to understand the problem.

ALEXANDER RHEENEY: Michael, just to give you the PNG context, there are some reporters in PNG who have got sloppy and lazy. So they are reporters who basically push through unbalanced stories. A lot of times the editors come under a lot of pressure to make the deadlines, there's a tendency to run unbalanced stories on the understanding that we'll get the other side for comments tomorrow. Now that's been happening over the last few years. Most times the stories are run based on the merits of the story, depending on a national issue and there's a lot of fierce competition now, not only between mainstream media colleagues but with social media, so now speed is becoming a necessity in the news cycle in PNG. So a lot of stories get run without incorporating comments from the other side. And there's been one or two occasions when senior reporters do this and they've just become lazy, they just don't want to get the other side of the story to incorporate it into the story.

MISA VICKY LEPOU: When you get to the process of when a media organisation is sued, it's not a question of the reporter getting the story, the whole line of production is responsible for that particular story. This suicide story, the reporter did not come through formal training and I find it's the whole line of production that's in question, it's not just about the reporter or the proofreader.

At some point, everyone's involved so the whole newsroom needs to improve. In Samoa, it's this lack of mentorship. When our graduates do come to the newsrooms, these are just diploma graduates, they are expected to be like PhDs who can do analysis and critical thinking. So they're always on their own and that's something we've raised with our advisory board who are members of the industry, to ensure that there's such a system in place, when they graduate they need at least one, two or three years to be mentored at least. Because there are also other cultural factors involving journalists at the same time. I know this one particular organisation which has done that, at least there is someone senior to mentor these graduates because once they come out of the university, they're out of our hands, we've done our job. So mentorship is very important to ensure they are being maintained and being kept in the industry for a long time.

QUESTION FROM LEO: If you're up against corruption and ethical dilemmas, you must have a very secure professional journalists, well and truly trained up. That's not to betray the large numbers of young people who have wanted to get media training in the past. What you can do is consider a second strand of activity, call in a second strand of activity which we could call media literacy. So if the universities take on media literacy, use online services, students take a shortcut that way with resources that might spare you some resources to put an effort and resources into research that would at least show interest in concerns a little bit there. But this could bring us to this question of ethics and dealing with trouble and tragedy, whether it's a suicide story or police firing on young student protesters in Papua New Guinea—that social media then kicks in and becomes a very powerful public forum. From what I know about this comes from Vanuatu, where it seems to be, there's a culture there that acts as a good civil society. It has to do with media and media training so I want to know what you think about the option of, especially cultivating media literacy and doing that instead of a lot of spread out formal media training for mainstream media.

MISA VICKY LEPOU: Over the last four or five years we've had this discussion with the advisory board with members of the industry: how come this is no longer about journalism itself, this is no longer about not the skills, going through that formal training. But the doing of journalism in Samoa, the Samoan way, the influx of technology, if you come to Samoa, Facebook is considered a bad thing. It's like if you see that 1980 indie movie, *The Gods Must be Crazy*, when you see that bottle of Coke, it's bad, it's from somewhere else. So our role really, and you have that gap between the older generation and the younger generation, we saw it like we need to take this to the grassroots level and we've had that proposal done to be given to the Ministry of Education to ensure that this is more than journalism. It's media studies, we call it. How to use social media effectively,

I think that's the issue in Samoa at the moment. Instead of that bad picture of Facebook, there's more to it than Facebook. How to connect *fa'a Samoa* with the influx of universal concepts. It's not just media, there's other things as well, there are other thematic areas as well that's in the way of the *fa'a Samoa*. But we really need to come out and explain that and justify why we there's this notion of the older generation not respecting. At the end of the day, we don't have a place in the *fa'a Samoa*, the movement does not have a sitting in that traditional set up of *fa'a Samoa*. They've got protocols, *fa'a Samoa* has protocols and to bring in press freedom with the notion that you're free to do whatever you want, I think we need to start building from here to explain what media is before we actually get into other contexts as well. So we have a lot work to do in trying to build that trust. We need to build that trust first with community before we get to introduce all these philosophies.

SUMMING UP BY ELIKI DRUGUNALEVU (FROM USP IN FIJI): I'd like to thank the panelists for those lovely, informative presentations. David Robie addressed the very important mission statement in noting that the panel was basically to promote the highest level of journalism education. To begin with, Emily Matasororo talked about a very important movement that has basically been taking place in PNG and that is the student protest movement calling for the resignation of the Prime Minister to let a police investigation take its course and basically how the media is covering the issue. She noted how the student body had no trust in the media, which is quite a worrying statement, and Emily talked about how this statement needed to be investigated. Shailendra Singh also talked about the basic lack of support in the journalism education in the region, and also the important need to train journalists and how there is not enough qualified and experienced trainers to train the journalists. This is something that has been a long-standing issue. He also talked about how important it is for the support from the institutions to help carry that through. Misa Vicky Lepou also alluded to support of what Shailendra said in terms of the need to have experienced trainers to train the journalists and how there seems to be no sense of respect for professional journalism, particularly from the community which is something that we need to actually address in the future. Also Dave Mandavah talked about how they've sort of become something like psychologists and how they need to address the social and cultural context of how females are not actually getting a say, particularly when in school when they have more females than males.

Resources

- Video 1: Journalism education in the Pacific 1 - presentations (Pacific Media Centre, 44m 34s)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTHLC5GBFrg>
- Video 2: Journalism education in the Pacific 2 – discussion (Pacific Media Centre, 44m 40s)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4gnmqdZruE8>

References

- Matasororo, E. (2016). Standoff in Papua New Guinea: Students take issue over corruption. *Pacific Journalism Review*, 22(2), 13-19. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24135/pjr.v22i2.71>
- Pacific Journalism Review: Te Koakoa* (n.d.). Available at the Tuwhera open access platform <https://ojs.aut.ac.nz/pacific-journalism-review/>
- Robie, D. (2004). *Mekim nius: South Pacific media, politics and education*. Suva, Fiji: University of the South Pacific Book Centre.
- Robie, D. (2014). *Don't spoil my beautiful face: Media, mayhem and human rights in the Pacific*. Auckland, NZ: Little Island Press.
- Robie, D. (2016). From Pacific Scoop to Asia Pacific Report: A case study in an independent campus-industry media partnership. *Pacific Journalism Review: Te Koakoa*, 22(2), 64-86. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24135/pjr.v22i2.31>
- Spyksma, H. (2017). Unintentional journalists: The role of advocacy group 350 in filling a news gap for reporting from the Pacific region. *Journalism Studies*, 1-21. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2017.1351885>
- Te Kaharoa* (n.d.). Available at Tuwhera open access platform <https://ojs.aut.ac.nz/te-kaharoa/index.php/tekaharoa>
- UPNG students burn 800 newspapers in protest over political crisis (2016, May 7). *Pacific Media Watch/Asia Pacific Report*. Retrieved from <https://asiapacificreport.nz/2016/05/07/upng-students-burn-800-newspapers-in-protest-over-political-crisis/>
- UPNG student protest was not in vain, says student (2017, June 9). Radio New Zealand International. Retrieved from www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/332624/upng-protest-was-not-in-vain-says-student