



Final grant report: Under the Law

Project title	CLE resource for emerging communities in Fairfield
Grant recipient	Fairfield City Council
Project manager	Claudia Guajardo
Position	Community Safety & Crime Prevention Officer
Law and Justice Foundation awarded amount	\$20,372.73
Grant period	August 2007 – July 2011
Date of this report	March 2011

Description of the project

‘Under the Law’ is a 28-minute DVD that provides a basic introduction to the Australian legal system for small and emerging communities in Greater Western Sydney. Produced by Fairfield City Council’s Community Safety & Crime Prevention program in partnership with Information & Cultural Exchange Inc, the DVD uses dramatised scenarios to convey key messages in the areas of traffic offences, domestic violence, crime reporting, drug and alcohol related crime and youth and the law. The target audiences can access the DVD and accompanying booklet in English, Arabic, Dinka or Swahili. The 28-minute DVD can be viewed in its entirety or in shorter sections covering specific issue areas.

As part of overall strategies to assist small and emerging communities to integrate into the Australian community, Fairfield City Council managed the development of this resource appropriate for communities with low levels of literacy with the support of a dedicated advisory committee. “Under the Law” provides a clear and easily understood introduction to rights and responsibilities under the Australian legal system.

This project was supported and resourced through strategic partnerships between Fairfield City Council, Information & Cultural Exchange, NSW Police Force, Legal Aid NSW, Liverpool/Fairfield Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, Auburn Community Development Network, NSW Department of Justice and Attorney General and the Sudanese Settlement Service/ECWA. These partner organisations are also assisting in the promotion and marketing of the DVD to both services and clients.

This 28-minute resource was developed in consultation with the major stakeholders, local target communities/residents and other agencies such as the Attorney Generals Department, Auburn Community Development Network, NSW Police including Domestic Violence Liaison Officers, Youth Liaison Officers and Multicultural Community Liaison Officers. The script took on a storytelling approach to communicate major issue areas. The project involved active input from the advisory committee as well as relevant community organisations and community members. The project included extensive consultation on the script and its legal content, and a final review and consultation of the DVD before it was ready to be launched.

The project – what happened?

In response to the increase in African Communities settling in the City, Fairfield City Council in partnership with Fairfield Police and the Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre conducted 'Understanding the Australian Legal System' workshops in April 2006 for more than 40 representatives from the Burundi and Congolese communities. A follow up session for the same target communities was held in September 2006. In July 2006 similar workshops were held for over 35 representatives of the Sudanese community.

Each of these workshops identified an overwhelming need for culturally and linguistically appropriate resources to educate small and emerging communities about rights and responsibilities under the Australian legal system. Fairfield City Council further consulted with local residents and concurred that the majority of newly arrived refugees and humanitarian entrants settling in Western Sydney demonstrated this need.

The need for electronic and visual resources to educate small and emerging communities was also a strong recommendation of the 2006 'Paving The Way – Findings of the Community Diversity Policing Survey' based on the attitudes of emerging communities towards crime reduction and prevention. The survey, conducted by NSW Police - Holroyd Local Area Command, made a strong recommendation for 'Educational Media in electronic and visual form' arguing that many people in emerging communities 'do not respond to printed information.'

Building on successful past collaborations between Fairfield City Council and Information & Cultural Exchange (a digital media organisation, based in Western Sydney, with a long history in community cultural development, and the production of high-quality digital resources for agencies and clients in the government and community sectors), a project partnership was formed to develop and produce the Community legal Education DVD resource.

What was the aim of the project?

The aim of the resource was to provide a clear and easily understood introduction to residents' rights and responsibilities under the Australian legal system with particular reference to crime reporting, domestic violence, traffic offences and alcohol and drugs.

The resource would include language options allowing audiences to view the DVD in key community languages. The three languages featured would reflect the growth in the demographics of refugee and humanitarian arrivals settling in Fairfield, specifically the Sudanese, Burundian, Tanzanian and Iraqi communities.

As well as low levels of literacy, the target communities also come from oral traditions with cultural knowledge and contemporary information transmitted orally through storytelling techniques. The DVD would aim to dramatise situations and tell stories about characters' experiences in order to convey key messages.

What followed was a successful submission to the Law and Justice Foundation for the development of a legal Education DVD for the above mentioned communities.

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What were the project stages and what happened in each stage?

The project was developed through the following five stages:

Stage 1. Research & Script Development

Stage 2. Pre-production & Rehearsal

Stage 3. Production Shoot

Stage 4. Editing & Post-production (including language post-production)

Stage 5. Project Launch, Marketing & Promotion

The major activities and achievements in each stage are summarized below:

Stage 1. Research & Script Development – February 2008 to June 2009

- Development of MOU for FCC and ICE partnership, and work plan for the DVD Writer/Director/Supervising-Producer (the one project worker was involved in the project throughout, in the capacity of scriptwriter, supervising producer and director)
- Consolidation of a project steering committee with representation from Fairfield City Council, Information & Cultural Exchange, Legal Aid (Fairfield), South West Sydney Legal Centre, Liverpool/Fairfield Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, Multicultural Community Liaison Officers from the Fairfield Local Area Command, NSW Police Domestic Violence workers, and Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre.
- Further script consultations conducted with Youth Liaison Officers, DVLOs, HWY Officers and Crime Prevention Officers from the Fairfield and Liverpool LACs, Sudanese Settlement Service (Blacktown), Auburn Community Development Network, NSW Department of Justice and Attorney General (Diversity Services), and NSW Ombudsman
- Drafts of the script were developed and revised with the input of the steering committee and other stakeholders
- Revised script sent to stakeholders for signing off. Follow-up meetings with NSW Police - Fairfield LAC, to expedite process with NSW Police Media Unit and Legal Services

Stage 2. Pre-production & Rehearsal – July 2009 to September 2009

- Casting, meeting participants from target community, holding informal auditions to gauge interest and suitability
- Securing crew, booking equipment
- Location research and securing permission to film in specific locations (through negotiations with stakeholders include Fairfield City Council, NSW Police Force, NSW Department of Justice and Attorney General, and local residential and business premises)
- Rehearsing and workshopping scenes with cast
- Developing production schedules, performance releases and other documentation/schedules

Stage 3. Production Shoot – September 2009 to October 2009

- 25-page script filmed over 9-day shooting schedule, involving up to 30 people in positions of cast and crew from target communities and participating agencies

Stage 4. Editing & Post-production – October 2009 to August 2010

- Logging material, editing, assembling rough-cut of English language version suitable for test screenings with stakeholders
- Test screenings sessions with steering committee, additional screenings for community participants, Fairfield Police participants, Legal Aid, NSW Department of Justice and Attorney General and other stakeholders, feedback collated
- Scheduled Pick Up shoots to develop a number of additional scenes and revisions to existing scenes, as identified in test screenings
- Revised picture edit, incorporating feedback and material from pick-up shoots, screening revised edit to major stakeholders
- Picture lock off, materials developed for sound production, up-to-date transcription of dialogue script
- Dialogue script forwarded to translators, and translated in Arabic, Dinka and Swahili
- Booklet text developed (providing contact details for key services), text translated in target languages
- Voice-over Artists secured for community language dubbing sessions; 5 Voice-over Artists cast for each community language (i.e. 15 Voice-over Artists in total)
- Language Recording sessions conducted in sound studio over 5-day schedule
- Language Previews of DVD and Information Booklet checked by consultants from target languages, corrections made, final product/s verified
- Final Mix of Sound Designs and language versions
- Interactive DVD menu designed, checked
- DVD cover and booklet designed and signed off
- DVD Mastering and Authoring
- Masters delivered to Duplication House

Stage 5. Project Launch, Marketing & Promotion

- DVD launch, 25 August 2010

How did the implementation of this project vary from what was originally planned?

Some of the significant variations and developments to the project are summarised as follows:

Delays in Project Commencement

Changes in key personnel and organisational restructuring impacted on steering committee members, delaying the project's commencement, from March to September 2008.

The position of Program Officer, Fairfield City Council's Community Safety & Crime Prevention Program was vacated in March 2008 and not filled until June 2008. A major Domestic Violence consultant was unable to participate due to a major restructure of the NSW Strategy to Reduce Violence Against Women and the two Multicultural Community Liaison Officers from Fairfield Police Local Area Command were unable to participate during the relocation of the Fairfield Police Station.

Between March and September 2008 steering Committee meetings were sparse, although the script research and consultation process did commence during this period.

Responding to additions to Script Content

From September 2008 onwards, the project steering committee met more frequently to monitor the project's development. A range of stakeholders participated in the research and concept development stage, each representing specific areas of expertise. While this resulted in access to accurate and up to date information, it also meant that stakeholders were often compelled to insist on detailed information. The parameters of what should be included in a 'basic introduction to the Australian legal system' were re-negotiated. This resulted in a script, and therefore a final product, that was much longer than the 10-15 minutes originally envisaged and budgeted for.

The project steering committee recognised that all information was valuable and relevant, and therefore decided on a strategy to film the expanded script. It was rationalised that it would be easier to find areas to cut from the rough-cut of the video than it would be to organise additional shooting schedules to film material that would be identified later as important. Little of the material filmed was eventually cut from the project, indeed a number of additions were filmed after feedback to the first rough-cut.

Expanding Insert to 8-page Booklet

Other strategies to reduce the length of the script included a plan to reassess at a later stage what information could be cut from the video and included instead the printed insert that would accompany the video. Again, plans for a single-page insert were expanded into an 8-page booklet. The booklet contained contact details for useful services, listed in English and translated into Arabic, Dinka and Swahili.

Impact on Budget

There was an overall recognition that the value of the project would benefit from these additions. This did however, have an impact on the budget, mostly because the longer script required a longer shooting schedule to film, and therefore more resources were needed. Additional costs were also required to translate the longer script and the 8-page insert booklet, as well as the related printing costs.

The Law and Justice Foundation provided \$24,651.00 in funding for the program with Fairfield Council funding \$21,031.50 and ICE funding \$20,562.77 (\$10,000 of which were Fairfield Council funds) with the program costing a total of \$63,594.27. The project took 2.5 years to complete. The original budget did not include extensive funding from Fairfield Council or ICE, however due to the demand and need for such a project, the budget was reviewed and adequate funds allocated to ensure the project would be completed.

Since launching in August 2010, 900 copies of the DVD have been distributed State Wide and nationally. The feedback from services, Police and residents has been incredibly positive. The DVD has been so well received that a second stage has been added to the project in which an educational kit will be developed to compliment the DVD and make it an even better tool for empowering newly arrived migrants. It is deemed that the outcomes for the project have been so successful the impact on the budget is justified.

Signing off on script

As the script developed, it was clear that the resource would only be possible through a strategic partnership with the NSW Police Force, which meant that the content of the script would need to be signed off by the Media Unit and Legal Services of the NSW Police Force.

The original steering committee included workers from the NSW Police Force Domestic & Family Violence Coordinator, South West Metropolitan Region and the Fairfield Police Local Area Command Multicultural Community Liaison Officers and the Fairfield Police Crime Prevention Officer. While these workers facilitated script materials and schedules reaching the proper authorities within the Police Force, the bureaucracy involved in granting approval lengthened the process considerably. It wasn't until the Crime Prevention Officer from the Fairfield Local Area Command intervened that the project began progressing again. It was obviously important to have someone from within the NSW Police corporate structure to oversee and actively facilitate the signing off process. Sign off took almost 5 months, during which time the project could not progress. This unforeseen bump in the road threw back the project schedule once more.

Evaluation

What were the key evaluation questions?

Evaluation processes were undertaken at key stages to ensure the project was meeting its aims and reflected accurate and current information.

Evaluation Questions, Script Development

1. Is all the information in the 'Talking Heads' dialogue correct and clear? (We are trying to avoid jargon and use plain English, but some phrases are specific to the legal system)
2. Are the characters and situations credible, believable? Do storylines accurately depict the issues?
3. Is any important information missing? (Keeping in mind we aim to produce an introduction to the Australia legal system and not cover every aspect in detail)
4. What material could be cut or condensed? (At present the script is approx 22-minutes long and we're trying to make the final video 20-minutes, so it would be good to cut at least 2-minutes from this draft)
5. Structure. The running order of scenes and the links between them seem to work quite well – but does it end abruptly? Your feedback about the structure and a conclusion would be helpful.
6. What information is better to be covered in the booklet rather than the video?

Evaluation Questions, Video Rough Cut

1. What's your first response to the video?
2. Is the information clear? Is the language easy to understand?
3. Is information correct? Is there anything you know is incorrect, inaccurate or misleading?
4. Are the representations (ethnicity, organisations etc) credible, respectful?
5. Do the stories hold your interest? At what point, if at all, does your interest wane?
6. Do you think section titles are needed?
7. Any suggestions for overall title?

Quality Assurance, Language Versions, Video and Booklet

1. Is the resource in the correct language?

2. Would the majority of the Arabic/Dinka/or Swahili-speaking community easily understand the language spoken in the video?
3. What, if anything in the video or booklet, is not correctly translated?
4. What, if anything in the video or booklet, is confusing or inappropriate for the community audience? Is the video culturally sensitive?

What data was gathered?

Feedback to questionnaires to draft script, rough cut and language versions of the DVD and booklet, were documented, outlining recommended corrections and changes.

What answers were found?

Corrections to Content

Screenings with stakeholders from the legal sector allowed us to revise the script, re-film and in some cases re-edit specific scenes. The following are some of these recommendations:

- Legal Aid suggested strengthening the message that it is not compulsory to give an interview in scenes featuring youth and police (additional talking head narration was recorded to articulate this).
- Legal Aid also suggested a clarification of the police ‘cautioning’ in drug related offences
- NSW Department of Justice & Attorney General (DJAG) requested more explanation about the role of the NSW Ombudsman in relation to complaints against police (new footage was taken to address this)
- DJAG also suggested a clarification in the message about the ability of emergency services to trace calls if victims leave the phone line open. An additional talking head narration explained that only calls from landlines can be traced. If victims call emergency numbers on mobile phones, they need to provide address details

Culturally Sensitive Approach

Screenings and surveys with representatives from the target communities provided feedback that allowed us to address the following:

- Names of two services for victims of domestic violence were inappropriately translated in Dinka in the booklet text. The Dinka consultant who checked and identified these mistakes, provided appropriate alternative translations.
- It was decided that a disclaimer should be added to the introduction of the video stating ‘The following stories are not real cases but are examples for educational purposes. In no way are they intended to suggest that the communities involved are more likely to break the law.’ The disclaimer appeared as text in English accompanied by voice-over in each language version. The disclaimer plays at the beginning the entire video, as well as at the start of each chapter when only a single chapter is selected.

Conclusion and recommendations

What were your key findings?

This project has exceeded all expectations, with over 900 copies distributed both state wide and nationally, the demand has been so great that a third run of duplications is being considered.

Legal services are using the DVD with both workers and clients, and have also been providing clients with copies where requested.

The State library has requested 200 copies and has distributed DVD's to all libraries in NSW.

NSW Police has approached Fairfield Council and has entered a partnership that will develop a specific training manual for Police Officers.

The DVD has been so effective in providing basic information on the law, the project will now continue with the development of a written resource which will train workers, educate newly arrived migrants and provide Police with more insight into African communities.

Making the resource available in different languages has prompted other community groups to request the resource in their language. The DVD can be accessed in 4 languages including Arabic, Dinka, Swahili or English. All information in this project is intended as a basic introduction only. A list of useful contacts for generalist and specialist organisations based in NSW is included with this DVD in the above mentioned languages.

The promotional strategy has targeted English and Ethno Specific print, radio and online media for the target languages. The resource has been widely distributed to community agencies across NSW with high refugee populations, including Wagga Wagga and Coffs Harbour, over 900 copies of the DVD have been mailed out across NSW and other States. Information on this resource has been made available to residents in their own languages and through specialist workers across the State.

Workers in the field and residents speaking languages other than those specified in the resource have requested the DVD as a valuable resource for their community and some have informed they would be using the DVD as a legal educational tool and would be translating/interpreting the information to their community.

The resource has also been distributed to Ethno specific/specialist organisations and the State Library for maximum exposure to the target communities. 200 copies of the DVD have been distributed to libraries across NSW. The project will be streamed from the Fairfield Migrant Resource Website and available on the NSW Police Force Intranet and will be used as an educational resource for new Police officers.

Most recently, a request was received from a Melbourne based non profit organisation to use the DVD as a training tool for volunteers who will be delivering a program to African men in the prison system. The worker believes the DVD provides good insight into the issues even though the legal content can differ from State to State. The worker informed that providing an overview of the issues to the volunteers would be useful in communicating when visiting inmates.

The DVD has also been compressed and uploaded on 'You Tube' (<http://www.youtube.com>) in separate chapters for easier access. A link appears to the DVD resource on the Fairfield City Website. It is envisaged this approach will give the resource maximum exposure to both the target community, workers, students and the like.

This project was supported and resourced through strategic partnerships between Fairfield City Council, Information & Cultural Exchange, NSW Police Force, Legal Aid NSW, Liverpool/Fairfield Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, Auburn Community Development Network, NSW Department of Justice and Attorney General and the Sudanese Settlement Service/ECWA. These partner organisations are assisting in the promotion of the DVD to services and clients.

What was the conclusion?

This project started off as a resource to address some of the legal issues being experienced by newly arrived African Communities. What started off as a 1 year project turned into a 2.5 year project in which the budget also grew 2.5 times more than originally budgeted. At times it appeared the project would never reach its much needed target audience, however the persistence of the dedicated workers, actors, volunteers and organisations on the project not only delivered an exceptional resource but also demonstrated that true partnerships and collaboration result in improved relationships as well as a resource that is a truly valuable community asset.

What are your recommendations for improvements for the target group?

As with all projects time can only determine what improvements can be made to address the issues of the target group more appropriately. So far, the project will continue to deliver to the community, workers and Police through the development of an information and training kit. It has been identified that issues such as Domestic Violence call for a more targeted approach, a DVD resource addressing only the issue of Domestic Violence at greater length would be of assistance to the target group.

What are your recommendations for future projects for this target group?

'Under the Law' has been a project in which the target group and stakeholders were extensively consulted to ensure a product that would be legally accurate but also acknowledge the experiences of newly arrived African Migrants and Refugees. What has resulted is a DVD resource that has produced a script reflective of the issues being experienced, has engaged Actors of African backgrounds, involved real Police officers in real locations across the region and incorporated genuine input from legal services.

Newly arrived African Migrants and Refugees want to become involved in educating their community on the different laws of NSW and Australia, therefore in the development of any future projects involving this community it is imperative that they are consulted and where possible become active agents in the delivery and implementation of such projects.