



Submission No 15

Review of Australia's Relationship with the Countries of Africa

Name: Professor Craig McGarty
Associate Professor Michael Broderick
Institute for Sustainable Societies, Education and
Politics (Social Research Institute)

Organisation: Murdoch University

Submission No:.....15.....
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Secretary:

South Street
MURDOCH WA 6150
Telephone: +618 9360 7616
Fax: +61 8 9360 7615
C.McGarty@murdoch.edu.au
www.research.murdoch.edu.au
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Senator Michael Forshaw, Chair,
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Dear Senator Forshaw,

This submission made on our own behalf addresses the following Terms of Reference of the *Inquiry Australia's Relationship with the Countries of Africa*

- cultural, scientific and educational relations and exchanges;
- development assistance co-operation and capacity building;

In particular our submission relates to the potential for an Australian university to establish partnerships with agencies in African countries to foster such exchanges and build capacity.

Background

In January 2009 we led a delegation from Murdoch University to provide advice to Rwandan Government agencies and survivor organizations in the preparation for the 15th Annual Commemoration of the Tutsi Genocide.

The visit built on contacts between Murdoch University staff over the previous two years and was intended to bring about closer connection between Murdoch University and Rwanda in line with the institutional commitments to the values of social justice, global responsibility, and sustainability.

In response to a request from Rwandan partners a major focus of the visit was on the development of a public information campaign in relation to the 15th Commemoration that was entitled 100 Messages of Hope. The aim of the campaign was to record messages of hope from survivors of the 1994 Genocide in their own words and in their own language (Kinyarwanda) and to make these available to the Rwandan and international community.

The Murdoch University team visited Rwanda and obtained full support for a program with the following proposed elements:

- A global public information campaign entitled 100 Messages of Hope
- A musical Festival of Hope including
- A Hope Soccer Match in Kigali between the Rwandan national team and a World XI (prospectively to include an Australian international player)
- A longer term program of research and educational and support for services based around but not limited to trauma counselling and understanding and representing trauma and recovery from trauma.

The program has encountered logistical difficulties but has included some substantial successes that are documented below.

The collaboration continues in the lead up to the 16th Annual Commemoration of the Genocide but we would like to bring the following point to the attention of the Inquiry:

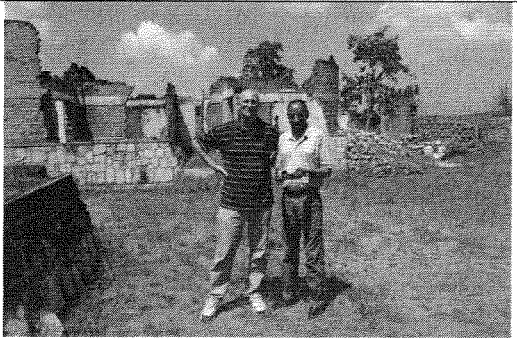
- Rwandan partners were extremely receptive to Australian contributions but many Rwandans perceived Australia (but not the USA) to be far away even though Australia and east Africa comprise the Indian Ocean rim.
- Rwandan partners noted the lack of an Australian diplomatic mission in Rwanda and saw our project as a way to build closer ties.
- Very senior government officials expressed a keen interest in visiting Australia to foster closer ties and to visit Murdoch University. It seemed that it was logistically difficult for these visits to occur unless they were prompted by invitations from the Australian.
- The February 2008 Apology to the Stolen Generations was a significant event for many Rwandans as it expressed a commitment to Reconciliation.
- The existing infrastructure for communication by post, telephone, and fax between Australia and Rwanda continues to be a limiting factor.
- Collaborations such as ours would be facilitated if Rwanda were to be a participating nation in the Australian Development Scholarships program.

We would be happy to provide further details based on our experience, and that of other Murdoch University staff with close research links to East Africa, for the benefit of the Inquiry.

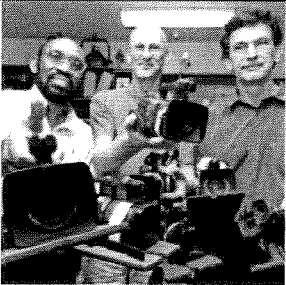
Professor Craig McGarty and Associate Professor Michael Broderick
Murdoch University

Summary and web-links of Murdoch Rwanda Project activities 2007-09

In January 2007 Associate Professors Mick Broderick and Martin Mhando travelled to Rwanda and met with several survivor organizations such as Ibuka, SURF and the KMC to consider collaborative research and education outcomes.



In 2008 A/Prof Mick Broderick and A/Prof Martin Mhando secure the donation of ten digital video cameras which are given to Ibuka/KMC to record testimony and gacaca inquiries. Donation and funding comes from Murdoch's School of Media, Communication & Culture and the Centre for Social and Community Research, led by Prof. Craig McGarty.



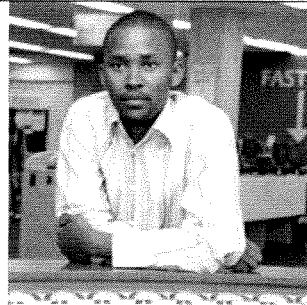
<http://www.murdoch.edu.au/News/Helping-to-heal-through-recording-history/>

Murdoch-funded trauma video conference training commences in 2008. Murdoch installs a purpose-built, video conference psychology lab for remote counselling and training services to Rwanda and other external partners, led by trauma specialist Dr Angela Ebert.



Mr Yves Kamuronsi, Director of Documentation, Kigali Memorial Centre, is invited to Murdoch University as a guest of the Interrogating Trauma conference (Nov-Dec 2008) and the Research Institute for Sustainable Societies, Education and Politics.

Mr Kamuronsi identified the importance of the theme of hope in the annual 100 day commemoration of the 1994 genocide and seeks assistance in recording messages of hope from Genocide survivors.



<http://www.murdoch.edu.au/News/Helping-heal-through-recording-history/>

<http://www.mcc.murdoch.edu.au/trauma/>

During January 2009 visit to Rwanda, the Murdoch research team proposed to several senior government authorities and NGOs a number of strategies to assist in sustaining the post-genocide reconciliation process. These included the creation of a 'Messages of Hope' campaign and a pan-African Football match for reconciliation to commemorate the 15th anniversary dates. These strategies are endorsed by the Hon. Mr Joseph Habineza, Minister of Sports and Culture and Hon. Mr. Jean de Dieu Mucyo, Head of the National Commission for the Fight against Genocide and Mr. Theodore Simburudari, President of Ibuka

Murdoch delegation meeting with the Rwandan Minister Hon. Mr. Joseph Habineza responsible for commemorating the genocide



<http://rwanda.murdoch.edu.au/>

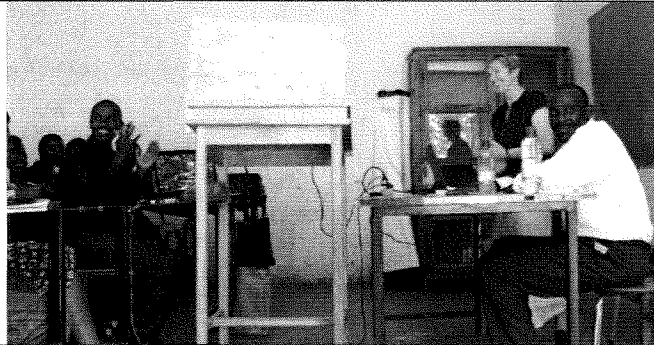
A/Prof. Mick Broderick and Dr Amanda Third conducted digital video interview training workshop for Ibuka staff at the Commission Against Genocide.

Dr Angela Ebert and Dr Amanda Third met with the Rwandan Association of University Women.



<http://www.ifuw.org/rwanda/media/mr-2009-02-03.shtml>

Dr Angela Ebert conducts a trauma counselling workshop for Psychology students at the National University.



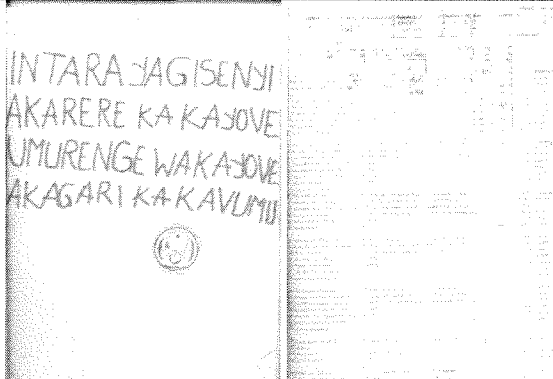
Dr Angela Ebert and A/Prof Mick Broderick develop a draft MOU with the Rwandan National University (Jan 2009) and the Dean of Psychology and Education.

Dr Amanda Third and A/Prof. Mick Broderick liaison with MTN and RwandaTel on 3G and mobile media applied research for documentary testimony and trauma counselling.



http://www.actnow.com.au/Interviews/The_Rwanda_project.aspx

A/Prof. Mick Broderick liaises with Denis Bikeshu, Director of Training, Mobilisation and Sensitisation, National Service of Gacaca Courts, on digitising and preserving tens of thousands of handwritten gacaca notes. Murdoch's School of Information Technology explores methods for automatically scanning and converting handwritten ledgers to word processing text.



A/Prof. Mick Broderick and Prof. Craig McGarty interview Rwanda Cinema Centre founder and filmmaker Eric Kabera. Subsequently Kabera's new documentary film is invited to premier in Perth.



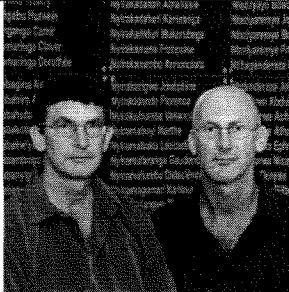
<http://rwandacinemacenter.wordpress.com/>

Working with the Commission for the Fight against Genocide Murdoch University funds and supports the recording of the first messages of hope that are released on the website by the Rwandan team in April. Currently, there are four messages on the site. The parties are seeking additional funding.



<http://www.100-messagesofhope.org/project>

Prof. Craig McGarty and A/Prof. Mick Broderick coordinate a ceremony at Murdoch University to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the genocide. Local school children attend and light candles in memory and deliver messages of hope, recorded and uploaded to the official website.



<http://www.murdoch.edu.au/News/Renewed-Rwandan-efforts/>



By invitation, a Rwandan documentary premieres at Revelation: the Perth International Film fest, 4 July 2009

Iseta: Behind the Roadblock

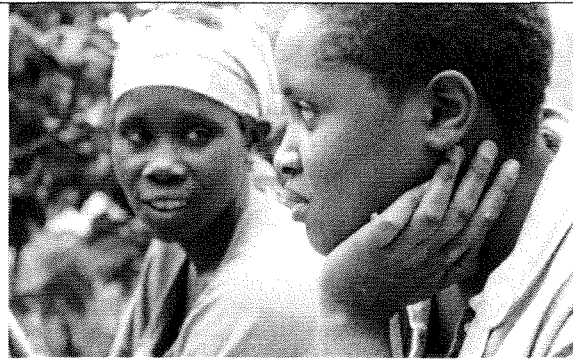
Director: Juan Reina

Year: 2008

Duration: 55 minutes

Print source: Rwanda Cinema Centre

Australian Premiere introduced by A/Prof. Mick Broderick.



<http://www.revelationfilmfest.org/go/films/documentaries/iseta-behind-the-roadblock>

November 2009 Murdoch Honours student, Helen Thomas, returns to Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo to produce an ABC Radio National documentary on post-genocide life in the border camps.