

UPLOAD | DOWNLOAD | WATCH | SCREEN | SHARE | COLLABORATE | ACT | ENGAGE

Anna Helme 2008 Dunlop Asia Fellowship Acquittal

EngageMedia.org

EngageMedia is a website for video about social justice
and environmental issues in the Asia-Pacific.



Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Asialink Dunlop Asia Fellowship.....	3
3. Transmission Asia Pacific.....	13
4. Conclusion.....	14
5. Financial Report.....	14

1. Introduction

In December 2007 I received a Dunlop Asia Fellowship from Asialink to enable me to develop my networks in Asia as a video and online advocacy trainer and facilitator. The purpose of my fellowship was to travel to Indonesia to meet and train independent video makers in the use of video-sharing technologies on the web.

This was an opportunity to train video makers in Indonesian communities, who will then be able to pass on these skills to others and help initiate ongoing projects. For myself this was an opportunity to have deeper experience of the community media networks of Indonesia, learn first-hand about their particular needs for community media infrastructure and explore how the Internet can best be used as a tool for social service in this cultural and political context.

The fellowship was undertaken in partnership with the EngageMedia Collective Inc. EngageMedia.org is a video-sharing website focusing on social-justice and environmental issues in SE Asia, Australia and the Pacific. EngageMedia is also involved in training and network projects to connect free software developers and videomakers, helping to make best use of online tools, and we also develop our own freely available video-sharing platform, called Plumi.

I have been involved with EngageMedia since it began in 2005 and have seen the organisation grow into a dynamic and effective group initiating participatory media projects in our region. It is vital that community media initiatives receive the support of organisations such as Asialink who are able to lend their resources and importantly their wide networks to the creation of a democratic media.

Throughout the Asia-Pacific region, environmental, social justice and other political issues continue to be of great importance. Inspiring scenes of uprising in Burma, the change of government in Australia and landmark political changes in Malaysia are weighed against repression in Thailand, corruption in the Philippines and environmental destruction in Indonesia. There is much to be done in terms of documenting struggles for social and environmental justice, and of using video as a tool for change.

All this occurs against a back drop of the much talked about rise of Asia on the global stage, both geographically and economically. This rise brings many opportunities, such as creating wider access to technologies, but also comes with many new problems for already disadvantaged peoples. Corporate greed and government corruption are displacing communities, destroying forests and putting profit before people.

Amidst this social upheaval, EngageMedia is carving its niche as the only Asia-Pacific focussed online video website covering social justice and environmental issues. The platform we have developed, Plumi, remains one of only a few open source online video-sharing applications. Combined with our training programs and networking activities, we are building strong foundations for media and technology activism and, most importantly, social change throughout the region.

Ruangrupa were my local partner and host in Indonesia for the fellowship. Ruangrupa are an artists collective based in Jakarta, who conduct video-training workshops all over Indonesia in addition to producing the art criticism journal Karbon and running the biennial Jakarta International Video Festival - OK.VIDEO.

2. Asialink Dunlop Asia Fellowship

In December 2007 I was awarded a Dunlop Asia Fellowship by Asialink, a non-academic centre of The University of Melbourne and an initiative of the Myer Foundation. The fellowship program aims to promote public understanding of the countries of Asia and creates links with Asian counterparts.

Before leaving Melbourne, I undertook a short course in Bahasa Indonesia (the national language of Indonesia) to make it easier to travel around, and to be able to communicate directly in a fairly basic fashion during the workshops. It was also important to me to send the right signals regarding my interest in Indonesian culture by communicating in Indonesian where possible.

Andy Nicholson from EngageMedia accompanied me on both these trips, assisted with workshops and also made it feel easier and safer to travel around Indonesia, than by myself as a single woman. Andan Mirwan from Ruangrupa accompanied us for some of the journey, visiting Yogyakarta in Java, and Padang in West

Sumatra. He interpreted English into Bahasa Indonesia, or the reverse, where necessary, used Ruangrupa's contacts from doing their own video workshops around Indonesia to find venues and host organisations for each of the workshop and assisted in organisation and logistics.

First Trip May-June 2008

In June we held workshops on the island of Java in the cities of Bandung, hosted by Kine Ruku and Common Room, and in Yogyakarta, hosted by IVAA, Combine and Mes56.

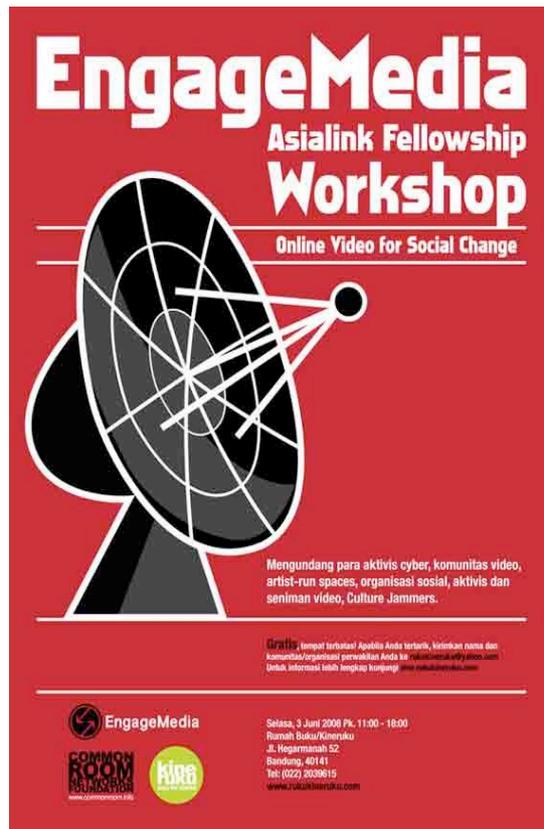


The countryside en route from Jakarta to Bandung by train – Java

The workshop in Bandung was held at Rumah Buku, which is a bookshop, lending library and cultural space. Our host Ariani Darmawan accommodated us at Rumah Buku, and took us on a tour of Bandung while we were there, to sample some of the local Javanese cuisine.



Rumah Buku – Bandung, Java



Poster distributed by Rumah Buku for the workshop – Bandung, Java

The workshop was attended by around 40 university students studying IT, local artists and musicians and other cultural practitioners and videomakers. The workshop involved practical online video training, an introduction to FOSS tools for online video distribution, a discussion about online distribution within Indonesia, and presentation of a report from the Transmission Asia-Pacific meeting (outlined below).



Anna Helme (left) presenting the workshop at Rumah Buku – Bandung, Java



Adhi Setyo Santoso (left) and his fellow student demonstrating the video site built by students at their university during our workshop – Bandung Java

Since this time one of the attendees from the workshop in Bandung, Adhi Setyo Santoso, has begun development on a video-sharing website based on EngageMedia's free video-sharing software Plumi.

Our second workshop was held in cultural capital of Indonesia, Yogyakarta, in Central Java. IVAA (Indonesian Visual Art Archive) organised the workshop for us, in collaboration with the community-based information network Combine Resource Institution and hosted by the Mes 56 gallery, who focus on media art exhibitions.



Andan from Ruangrupa overlooking Yogyakarta from the Kraton – Yogyakarta, Java

The day before our workshop we visited the Kraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat (the Sultan's palace), and spent time at IVAA's space nearby planning the workshop for the next day. Pitra from IVAA drove me around Yogya on her moped to find last-minute technical equipment.

Combine had arranged to share their internet connection from their nearby office via microwave relay, and expanded their bandwidth for the day to accommodate many people uploading and downloading video at one time. Unfortunately, on the day of the workshop, the local area which Combine is located in had an unexpected power blackout, but the organisation was impressively resourceful and managed to source an emergency power generator and get us online nonetheless by the afternoon.

We were very grateful to our hosts given this, and that Combine and IVAA generously provided food for attendees as the workshop ran all day, and MES 56 provided their gallery space, despite having an exhibition up at the time. As was our experience everywhere we went in Indonesia we were extremely well looked after by our hosts.



Anna Helme (bottom right) presenting workshop at Mes 56 Gallery – Yogyakarta, Java

Since my fellowship, EngageMedia has formed closer relationships with our partners in these workshops, Combine and IVAA, who are laying plans for their own local video archives, to be developed in partnership with EngageMedia during 2009.

Second Trip August-September 2008

The second trip was held in August and September 2008, in cities on islands outside of Java, in the provinces of West Sumatra, East Kalimantan and South Sulawesi. Reaching beyond Java was highlighted as a key element of my fellowship by our local partners, Ruangrupa



Andan (left), Ruangrupa and Andrew (right), EngageMedia, at the “Musafir” exhibition – Jakarta, Java

On arrival in Indonesia, I spent a few days in Jakarta, preparing the next workshops with members of EngageMedia and Ruangrupa. During my stay I attended the “Musafir” exhibition at Ruangrupa's gallery space in the Jakarta suburb of Tebet and spent some time with the rest of the Ruangrupa crew.



Flying into Padang, West Sumatra

First stop on our second trip was Padang, West Sumatra. This was our first workshop outside of Java. Getting out of Java definitely gave us more of an idea of the difficult environment for online video distribution, given the lack of development in many parts of archipelago. Rolling power blackouts were the first hindrance we experienced, where electricity was unavailable for all those who couldn't afford their own generators for several hours out of each day.



Andan Mirwan (left), Researcher and Coordinator from local partners Ruangrupa, and Andy Nicholson (right), Lead Programmer from EngageMedia planning the workshop – Padang, West Sumatra

Our hosts in Padang were the local artist community - *Kommunitas Seni Belanak.*, who maintain their own space in a suburb of Padang, both for accommodation and artist studios. Life can be hard for young artists in any part of the world, but it was clear from the modest living conditions that Belanak enjoy that the barriers are much higher in Indonesia to eking out a living as an emerging cultural practitioner.

The first session of the workshop was conducted at a local 'warnet' - an internet cafe - on 28th August 2008, as there were no other spaces available that had internet access. We were pleased to find that the internet connection at the warnet was quite fast, given this is how most people we met in Indonesia get online. The session started with the background to the EngageMedia project, the reasons for choosing free and open source software, an explanation of video compression for online distribution, and a comparison between EngageMedia and corporate video sites like YouTube.



Anna Helme (back) presenting at the workshop session at the warnet – Padang, West Sumatra

The practical session went for two hours, covering the open source Media Coder software, designed for compressing video into formats suitable for online distribution. Following on from this, participants created accounts on EngageMedia.org and were shown through the process of uploading videos onto the EngageMedia website.



Anna Helme (right) presenting at Kommunitas Seni Belanak – Padang, West Sumatra

The second session, later in the afternoon, was presented at the Belanak community's house. This session was a talk covering the latest technologies for distributing video online, such as syndication feeds, using Miro as a tool for downloading and screening, the Transmission.cc network, community TV, online/offline distribution models and how these technologies can be adapted for use in the Indonesian context.

Our friends at Belanak gave us a tour of their studios, and showed us some recent paintings they had produced, and we shared a meal with participants in the afternoon.

During our stay in Padang, we also visited the Belanak community's exhibition of paintings, sculpture and media art by young artists in West Sumatra at the main art gallery in town. Amongst many styles of work on show, there were some examples of the “raw art” style which Indonesia has become famous for.



With our hosts from the Belanak community at their art exhibition – Padang, West Sumatra

Our hosts also took us to visit the town of Bukittinggi in the mountains near Padang. We visited tunnels built by the Japanese, local markets and the famous clock tower in the centre of town, before taking the bumpy bus ride back to Padang.



Visiting the local markets with our hosts – Bukittinggi, West Sumatra

Our second workshop was held in Samarinda, East Kalimantan on the 9th September. It was hosted by a fledgling video community, o8o8. Chandra, our host from o8o8, picked us up from the airport in Balikpapan to drive us to Samarinda, the capital city of the province of East Kalimantan.

Many of the attendees were part of the local English club XPEC (Extra Pandir English Club). The half-day workshop on online video distribution was conducted in Warong Jarkoejua – a cafe which was closed for Ramadan but opened especially for our workshop. After the workshop we shared Buka Puasa Bersama (breaking of the fast during Ramadan) with our hosts and workshop participants.



Photo of participants from an attendee's blog about the workshop – Samarinda, East Kalimantan

A quote from one attendee, who blogged about the workshop on the TakingITGlobal website, an online community for youth interested in global issues and creating positive change:

“In this workshop, the XPEC members were so glad when this club or community was chosen to be the representative of East Borneo to join the workshop... So, you could share your video to people whole the world by using EngageMedia.org. In this organization, it moves in independently produced, social-justice, environmental, Asia-Pacific. In other hand, if you have made a video which related with world or local issues, you could share it in here.... Now, we have another site to help us to spread our voice for our world, for our future, for ourselves, for our country, for our trust, for our family, for MDGs [United Nations Millenium Development Goal] achievement.”

(from <http://tidazstrife.tigblog.org/post/482113>)

Our final workshop for the series was held in Makassar, South Sulawesi, hosted by the Kiri Depan community and held at the Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar.



Planning the workshop with our hosts at the university – Makassar, South Sulawesi

With about 20 people attending, the workshop followed the usual format, the first session introducing the need for independent online video communities, especially using free and open source software, an intro to the EngageMedia project, and latest technologies for syndication and video downloading software like Miro.



Our hosts Kiri Depan translating the workshop – Makassar, South Sulawesi

The second session was a practical hands-on session about using video compression software and learning to prepare media files for online media distribution. We finished the workshop with a joint screening – playing videos from the local community along with videos from the EngageMedia online community.



Students and filmmakers at the workshop at the Unismuh – Makassar, South Sulawesi



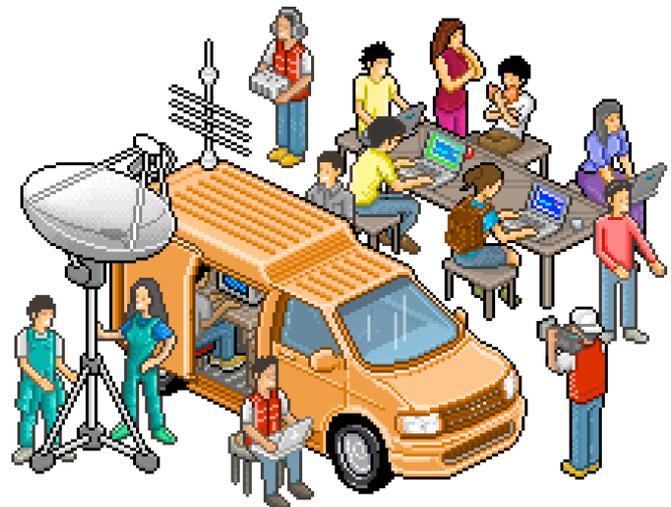
Organisers from Kiri Depan, EngageMedia and workshop participants – Makassar, South Sulawesi

3. Transmission Asia Pacific

As part of my first trip, I also attended Transmission Asia-Pacific, which was also organised by both EngageMedia and Ruangrupa. This trip covered my travel costs from Australia to Indonesia for my first series of workshops for the fellowship.

From May 19-25 2008, 55 video activists and free software developers met in Sukabumi, West Java, Indonesia, for Transmission Asia-Pacific (TXAP).

The event brought together people from 16 different countries for five days of workshops, skill-sharing, screenings and discussions.



Transmission is a network of citizen journalists, video makers, artists, researchers, programmers and web producers who collaborate around online video distribution tools for social justice and media democracy. The objective is to make independent online video distribution possible (using FOSS) by building the necessary tools, standards, documentation and social networks.

TXAP followed the previous Transmission event co-organised by EngageMedia and held in Rome in 2006, and two other events held by other organisations subsequently in London and Amsterdam. On this occasion we partnered with the Jakarta-based arts and culture organisation Ruangrupa to organise the event.

Session topics included open source content management systems, coordinating content sharing between film festivals in the region, online/offline distribution models (particularly in relation to the low-bandwidth situations many people in the region find themselves in), video compression with FOSS tools, copyright/left, a look at the Indonesian video art/activist scene, video making and distribution under repressive regimes, project sustainability, an examination of community video approaches in different cultural contexts, and many, many more.

The event was a great success and an ongoing supportive network has formed from the meeting, as we had hoped. With EngageMedia planning more than 20 workshops in the Asia-Pacific region in the coming 18 months, we feel the network will only become stronger.



Transmission Asia-Pacific Attendees

4. Conclusion

I feel that one of the most fundamental ways to encourage both peace and social justice in our region is to begin conversations with our neighbours – to share our stories and deepen understanding between us. This can now begin to be achieved in a grassroots way using online communications technologies, and through the power of the moving image.

The Dunlop Asia Fellowship is an important initiative in assisting young Australians in their efforts to make lasting contributions to Australia-Asia relations through people-to-people exchange and interaction. The value of such face-to-face meetings is very high when it comes to forming real collaborative relationships and routes for cultural exchange. This fellowship was also a chance to further these conversations about the issues of our times through social-networking and the sharing of independently produced video about social and environmental concerns.

During my fellowship I was able to share new media skills with many video makers around Indonesia whose exposure to online technologies has been very limited so far. In practical terms I was able to deliver online video distribution skills to approximately 200 students, independent video makers and artists, and formed ongoing working relationships which will greatly enhance both EngageMedia's work and my own career working in Asia into the future.

The fellowship was incredibly rewarding both personally, and in terms of passing on media skills in Indonesia. I believe I was able to meet the fellowship's aims - to help enable the sharing of stories from independent video makers, ordinary citizens, traditional artists and their communities across our borders. These collaborative partnerships with artists and community media practitioners here in Asia can introduce local Australian audiences to regional concerns and in turn help bring Australian ideas and experiences to our neighbours, promoting understanding across our cultures.

5. Financial Report

The budget for my Dunlop Asia Fellowship included a \$7500 contribution from Asialink, and a \$1,872.05 contribution from EngageMedia. **Please see the Financial Report attached below for more information.**

ENGAGEMENT MEDIA ASIALINK ACTUALS

Item	Trip 1	Trip 2	Total (AUD)	Total Asialink	Total EM
Travel Accommodation and Meals					
Flights / Departure Taxes / Travel Insurance	\$0.00	\$2,163.95	\$2,163.95	\$2,163.95	\$0.00
Domestic Transfers / Travel	\$149.10	\$301.27	\$450.37	\$450.37	\$0.00
Accommodation / Meals	\$144.00	\$527.40	\$671.40	\$671.40	\$0.00
Sub-Total Travel Accommodation and Meals	\$293.10	\$2,992.62	\$3,285.72	\$3,285.72	\$0.00
Correspondance, Materials and Incidentals					
Correspondance	\$0.00	\$85.80	\$85.80	\$85.80	\$0.00
Technical Equipment	\$168.00	\$0.00	\$168.00	\$168.00	\$0.00
Workshop Costs	\$0.00	\$316.42	\$316.42	\$316.42	\$0.00
Sub-Totals Correspondance, Materials and Incidentals	\$168.00	\$402.22	\$570.22	\$570.22	\$0.00
Language and Translation					
Bahasa Indonesia Language Course – CAE Melbourne	\$378.00	\$0.00	\$378.00	\$378.00	\$0.00
Translation - Workshop Materials and Workshops	\$0.00	\$205.40	\$205.40	\$205.40	\$0.00
Sub-Total Language and Translation	\$378.00	\$205.40	\$583.40	\$583.40	\$0.00
Wages, Living Allowance and Administration					
Preparation of Training Materials	\$480.00	\$372.05	\$852.05	\$852.05	\$0.00
Living Allowance – Consultation, Training and Development	\$926.53	\$2,404.13	\$3,330.66	\$2,208.61	\$1,122.05
Sub-Total Wages, Living Allowance and Administration	\$1,406.53	\$2,776.18	\$4,182.71	\$3,060.66	\$1,122.05
Administrative Costs					
Office costs, application, accounting and acquittal	\$750.00	\$0.00	\$750.00	\$0.00	\$750.00
Sub-Total Administrative Costs	\$750.00	\$0.00	\$750.00	\$0.00	\$750.00
TOTALS	\$2,995.63	\$6,376.42	\$9,372.05	\$7,500.00	\$1,872.05