

Overview

AMES is a specialist organisation providing settlement services, English language and vocational training and employment services to:

- newly arrived refugees and migrants in their initial phase of settlement
- longer term migrants who require support to gain employment and
- international students.

AMES provides services in Victoria and in the western suburbs of Sydney. AMES works with over 50,000 people a year and has delivered services for over 50 years.

AMES has worked for a number of years with SBS and Radio Australia to provide English language programs. In addition to English language, providing settlement information to newly arrived refugees and other migrants requiring orientation to Australian systems and society is a core AMES function. This requires a diverse range of communication channels, languages and strategies. The ABC and SBS have an important role to play in this diversity.

Discussion Questions

5. Social inclusion and cultural diversity

Questions:

- *What opportunities do new digital broadcasting and other platforms provide for the national broadcasters to more effectively deliver programming in languages other than English?*
- *Are there ways of better harnessing new media and broadcasting technologies to enhance the value of the national broadcasters' services to migrant groups, particularly those that are newly arrived?*

Multilingual programming

AMES acknowledges that new technologies provide an excellent opportunity to increase the diversity of programming in languages other than English.

As outlined in the discussion paper, the current SBS Radio schedule is reviewed in line with ABS data. While this is an objective measure, it can disadvantage new communities who may be small in number but have a greater need for information in their first language. A review every five years risks missing trends of new arrivals which often change based on world conflict.

1. *AMES recommends that data on new arrivals from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) be considered on at least an annual basis to plan for programs in new and emerging community languages.*

"Inform, educate and entertain all Australians ..."

Settlement service providers such as AMES provide critical settlement information and support services for newly arrived migrants and refugees. However new arrivals have much to learn about a new country, a new lifestyle, a new workplace, new welfare, political, education and health systems. Most new arrivals, especially those from refugee or refugee-like backgrounds, need time and regular on-going access to key settlement information in their first language to process this amount of information. SBS has the opportunity to provide information in first language through regular radio programs and the online environment.

In some intakes, the majority of new humanitarian arrivals and refugees have low levels of literacy in their first language. While they may be able to speak and understand one or more languages they are unable to read and write fluently. Information transmitted orally in first language with visual support where possible is essential for the successful settlement and social inclusion of these newly arrived communities.

2. *AMES recommends that in planning new transmission services and programs priority be given to providing information for new and emerging communities so as to most effectively "inform, educate and entertain all Australians, and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society."*

Analog transmissions in community languages

New technologies such as digital radio vastly improve the capacity for programming in a range of languages. AMES is pleased to see the proposed roll out of new channels outlined by SBS and the opportunities to provide for further diversity of languages.

Under the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS) entrants are provided with a Household Package including a television set and AM/FM radio which currently provide access to analog transmissions. It is envisaged that the equipment provided after the change over to digital in 2013 will include digital televisions but available funds may not allow for digital radios.

3. *AMES recommends the allocation of an/a number of analog radio channels to provide community language information and programs for most recent arrivals.*

Online resources and information

Most newly arrived refugees do not have access to computers and the internet in the home, particularly during the first 12 months of settlement and rely on access through schools, AMEP Centres, libraries and other public venues. That said, many young refugees and migrants are quick to engage with information presented online and keen to use this medium to get to know their new country.

4. *AMES supports further exploration of the uptake of non-English language programming by diverse small communities and language groups via podcasts, vodcasts and other audio/visual online formats.*

Joined-up services

As an expert settlement provider, AMES develops settlement information content and English language learning resources in numerous community languages. Settlement information in particular targets newly arrived communities and is developed and updated in response to changing migration trends. These resources are developed in consultation with client communities to ensure information is conceptually appropriate and well targeted.

AMES already works with the ABC to develop content for off-shore English language learning programs produced and delivered by Radio Australia via the web. AMES also works with SBS to produce English language content for delivery via an AMES online delivery platform.

The opportunity exists for national broadcasters to extend their work with organisations such as AMES. Such joined up services could draw on the expertise of specialist settlement providers for content to enhance the value of the national broadcasters' services to migrant groups, particularly those that are newly arrived.

5. *AMES strongly supports the proposal that national broadcasters deliver English-language education and settlement information programming targeted to particular refugee and migrant groups in Australia as part of a national broadcasting suite of educational content.*

6: Presenting Australia to the world

Questions:

- *Should consideration be given to expanding or enhancing the overseas services provided by the national broadcasters, and if so, in what form and to which countries?*
- *What is the appropriate relationship between Australia's foreign policy objectives and the overseas broadcasting activities of the national broadcasters?*

The ABC's international services, Radio Australia and the Australia Network, have an important role to play in the Government's priority of enhancing Australia's engagement with the Asia-Pacific region.

The English language learning programs provided by these services are an integral part of this engagement - not only with rapidly developing economies such as China, but with less developed economies in the region. The current multi-platform delivery of the ABC's English language learning content to the region is an ideal and effective way to deliver relevant and engaging programs that can be accessed at times that suit the particular audience in addition to scheduled broadcasts.

While the actual mix of platforms will change over time with the uptake of new technologies, this type of mixed platform delivery has a lot of potential for expansion both in terms of audience-relevant contexts and content for English language learning as well as improving reach and expanding the listener/user base for English language learning in specified target countries (for example Burma, North Korea).

The use of first language support (as employed in Radio Australia's popular multi-platform English language learning programs for Mandarin, Bahasa Indonesia, Vietnamese and Khmer speakers in the region) to explain programs, support learning and impart cultural information is an important part of these programs.

Australia's international broadcasting services are an important part of its successful cultural diplomacy. These services have much to offer in terms of improving communication and understandings, and enhancing Australia's standing in the region as an established, consistent, reliable and relevant source of information and quality Australian content.

In terms of English language learning, examples of this are the programs recently developed by AMES and produced and made available by Radio Australia listed below. These programs meet a range of audience needs and sit well with Australia's foreign policy objectives of engagement with Asia and furthering Australia's cultural, commercial and social links in the region.

- *English for study in Australia* prepares young people from the region to study in Australia - Education being a major export market for Australia
- *English for Business* improves regional cultural understandings in conducting business with English language speakers - contributing to economic growth
- *English for Tourism and Hospitality* prepares audiences to converse in English in a hospitality and tourism context - an industry with great employment opportunities across the region.

These kinds of programs are highly relevant for residents in their own countries seeking to improve their knowledge of English language and Australian culture and gain employment as well as for those wishing to do business with, study in, or migrate to Australia, and contribute to improved access and outcomes, and social inclusion.

7. *Efficient delivery of services*

Questions:

- *Should additional funding options for national broadcasting programs be considered, such as user-pay systems for programs distributed online, or open contracting for public interest content? If so, how might such arrangements operate, and to what types of content should they apply?*

Pay-per-view content

Access to information about Australia and to English language learning programs is critical if newly arrived migrants and refugees are to settle successfully. Refugees are not in a financial position to pay for these services and the Australian Government funds programs such as the Integrated Settlement Services Strategy (IHSS) and the Adult Migrant Education Program (AMEP) to provide settlement programs and services.

6. *AMES strongly recommends that the free-to-view or free-to-listen approach be retained for settlement and educational material and programming targeted at newly arrived groups.*