

**Statement
Of
Sandy Close
Executive Director
New America Media
Information Policy, Census, and National Archives Subcommittee
Oversight and Government Reform Committee**

**2154 Rayburn House Office Building
Wednesday, February 24, 2010
2:00 p.m.**

“The 2010 Census Communication Contract: The Media Plan in Hard to Count Areas”

New America Media is the country’s first and largest association of ethnic news organizations run by the non-profit Pacific News Service and funded by Ford, Carnegie, McCormick, OSI and James Irvine Foundations, among others.

Last year NAM partnered with the U.S. Census to organize roundtable discussions with over 600 ethnic media representatives in 12 cities across the country. I salute the Census officials who participated in these briefings—from top officials at the Maryland headquarters like A.J.Jackson, Maria Mattos, Steve Bruckner and Raul Cisneros to district directors and local media specialists like James Christie, Tim Harjoe and Lynne Choi Ueda in Los Angeles. Much like Public Health Department officials promoting vaccines, these folks have a missionary-like zeal to convert otherwise skeptical audiences to the Census.

But today I want to talk about our ethnic media partners who participated in the roundtables and what they would want to share with you—not only about how the advertising campaign has worked so far, but more importantly, what they could be doing – indeed must do --during the crucial post-response phase of the campaign. A small investment in those micro-media outlets that serve the hardest to count communities—an investment that let these media shape the messages to their own audiences—would have a tremendous impact.

Over 600 ethnic media practitioners participated in NAM’s roundtables—from media giants like Univision, Asian language dailies, BET and Clear Channel stations to veteran black and Spanish language weeklies, upstart radio and TV stations, to niche of the niche print and online outlets serving Burmese, Ethiopian, Arab, Russian, Mixtec, Punjabi. Samoan populations.

Their hunger to participate in the 2010 Campaign is intense—you could cut the exuberance at these gatherings with a knife. For many media, it was the first time

they'd come together as a media sector in the same city. They get the Census: they get their community's stake in a complete count, and they get their own.

As Juan Carlos of El Tiempo put it in New Orleans, the Census 2000 undercounted Hispanics in that city and Coca Cola dropped New Orleans, and his paper, from their national ad campaign.

But from our first briefing in March of 09 until our last one in early December, ethnic media attendees also expressed a uniform anxiety over the lack of transparency in the decision making process of the Census ad buy. "How do we get in line? Whom can we call? No one answers our emails or phone messages? "

And they expressed frustration over messaging that even when offered in 28 languages was being created by agencies they didn't know and hadn't spoken with in what they described as a top down—one size fits all model. "It's important that Census advertising is being created in Vietnamese," commented Thuy Vu, founder of Houston's Saigon Radio. "But it's not Houston Vietnamese."

Everyone agrees that being on the receiving end of Census advertising would be a great thing, especially when the sector is cash starved by the recession. But ethnic media leaders want to play a bigger role that is consistent with their traditional role as community educators and advocates: they want a free hand to shape the messages for their own communities. In Denver, a local Spanish-language TV station emphasized that when someone goes missing in their community, it's their reporters who respond. Media giants like Univision or Telemundo provide news feeds developed in Miami or New York. They can't customize Census reporting to what's happening at the local level. Those media embedded in local communities are essential for inclusive messaging.

The 2010 Census ad buy is an unprecedented investment in ethnic and community media, no question. Media buyers did an invaluable job—identifying and recruiting 3000 primary as well as secondary and even tertiary media outlets across the country. Inevitably, however, many key media outlets were left out, including some 47% of those who took the time to attend the Census roundtable sessions. Over 70% of those excluded told NAM they never heard back despite repeated efforts to reach Draft FCB or its vendors. Many are frustrated – they don't know why they fell through the cracks. Some are bitter. All very urgently want a role – even if small – and believe, as I do, that together they can move the needle those extra percentage points that will pay off in hundreds of millions of dollars. The only Arab- and English-language weekly in Phoenix serves a community of 100,000. In the aggregate, these niche of the niche audiences add up.

Let me share a sampling of their voices with you:



My name is Maung Maung Kyi and the publisher/Editor of Mandalay Gazette (Burmese Language) monthly newspaper.

The Mandalay Gazette wants to participate in the 2010 census Ad buy.

Please tell me what should I do.

Let me introduce Mandalay Gazette.

It started since July 2006, circulating monthly.

It is a one and only printed media in Burmese community in USA.

It has 32 pages (16 color and 16 black and white) and Tabloid size (17x11inches).

It distributes 12000 copies of every issue to the whole USA for Free of charges.

Please forward this mail to anybody who has the authority to make the ad for 2010 census.

We (Burmese Community) is very passively live in USA.

We want to help 2010 census to be success through Mandalay Gazette.

Burmese has about 100,000 to 200,000 population living in USA.

Please feel free to reply my mail.

Thanks for your attention.

Sincerely,

Maung Maung Kyi

Publisher/Editor, Mandalay Gazette

www.mandalaygazette.com

Dear NAM, None at all. We are expecting to have an ad but none. The Filipino American Journal is the largest-circulated Filipino newspaper in Arizona. It has been published since 1998.

Leo Aromin

Publisher/Editor-in-Chief, The Filipino American Journal

15610 N 35th Avenue, # 8 Phoenix AZ 85053

Dear Sandy,

I hope all is well with New American Media. I want to compliment you and your staff on the excellent job you are doing advocating ethnic media in America--thank you!

Yesterday I called Allied Media who as you know represents the Census (advertising) for the Arab American and Muslim markets. I was never informed officially when advertising would commence vis-a-vis Arab Detroit.com. Amber Akram (media buyer) spoke to me and said a notice was sent out two weeks ago (which I never received) informing me that the Census would not advertise with Arab Detroit. ..

However, late yesterday afternoon, I received an email from Akram asking me to give them lower rates and that they may possibly consider Arab Detroit with their online campaign. I asked her to send me a budget and a flight and then I would develop a media plan.

Just wanted to let you know what was happening with Arab Detroit. I know you are taking a pro-active role in seeing that ethnic media is well represented with the U.S. Census....

Warren

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Warren David

Founder and Publisher, Arab Detroit

Dear Mr. Singh,

As we had mentioned that we still do not have any announcements on our Station for the Indian community and as you are aware we have the largest audience from the Indo-Fijian, Indian and most South Asian communities on our 24 hour Station and also during our programmings on other Am Stations.

We would greatly appreciate if you could please look into this matter for us.



Sincerely,
Roshni Chauhan

Sandy , Unfortunately my publication was not part of the Ad buy as we where told we would be.

Dennis Beaver

THE NW FACTS NEWSPAPER

IF you have any other questions or can inform me why our publication that is the voice of the African American community here in the pacific northwest did not receive an advertisement nor was on the media buy ...

The Facts Newspaper (206) 271-1500

Hi Sandy, Yes, we did get a buy but it went NATIONAL. I didn't get any of the LOCAL buy.

Lizet Vega |La Raza 93.3 FM| Account Manager| x: 455 Market Street, Suite 2300, San Francisco, CA 94105|(: 415-932-5727| 7: 415-543-3753 | www.yosoyraza.com

Dear Sandy,

I hope we have not missed an opportunity to voice our difficulty with obtaining an CensusAd. Azizah has been categorized into various ethnicities, such as Arab, Southeast Asian or even African-American. We have been told our niche market does not fit into one specific ethnic group or category. Therefore we have not received any interest from the Census. Azizah Magazine covers a diverse spectrum of ethnicities and races. I believe that is what gives us an advantage. This is our main challenge and I hope that with your assistance we can create the possibility of obtaining an Ad from the Census.

We really appreciate all of your help and if you need any more detailed information please let me know. I would be glad to give you a call if your schedule permits.

Thanks so much,
Azizah Kahera
Chief Operating Officer, Azizah Magazine

Dear NAM,
Yes!! The Census did a full page insertion order for two months.
Juan Carlos Ramos
Publisher, El Tiempo New Orleans

Hello, Sandy. First of all, I thank you for taking the time to take my call this morning to discuss the exclusion of our radio station(s) in the Riverside/San Bernardino area in Southern California (KGGI, KDIF, KKDD, KTDD, KTMQ, KMYT), especially the spanish station KDIF.

We could definitely increase the strength of the message, at no additional charge, by promoting this on the streets via our stations' promotions.

Juan Marcos
CLEAR CHANNEL RADIO---Riverside/San Bernardino

Dear Sandy.
Years, Months, weeks, days since 2000 Census we were marketing for the contract as we did in 2000. Meetings, emails, advised marketing info....directions... and on ground community grass root connections.... results a big Zero. After listening to President Obama and his appeal to help small business....I felt that the large firms, connections, lobbyist made their power felt.... for themselves and not for small business.

They did not leave the door open and opportunity for sub contracting.

John K, Iranian Radio

PS: Visit our www.businesslife.com...home page click Economic Recovery Forum....then pictorial tour and others....you would have been proud of the diversity we had at this Forum.

*H Sandy, I need your assistance, the U.S. CENSUS did not include The San Bernadino AMERICAN in the initial Ad buy for the Census, and that's unacceptable, can you please contact me personally on Tuesday @ (909) 804.8012 or (909) 252.2624
John*

Hundreds of ethnic media like these are out there, ready to inform and mobilize their communities to participate in the Census. As the Census forms are mailed back after April 1 showing which regions have the lowest response rates, NAM recommends replicating a small but highly cost effective project we've launched with philanthropic dollars to reach American Indian and indigenous communities in California. Call it the SOS (Save our Services) campaign for Census 2010.

The approach, one NAM has pioneered through numerous social marketing campaigns over the last decade, relies on local ethnic media outlets to design their own messaging campaigns and earned media components. The ad buy functions more like a grant for a community based organization which is how many ethnic media actually operate. A McCormick Foundation funded survey by San Francisco State's Renaissance Center last year found that 68 percent of ethnic media leaders it surveyed described their primary goal as service to the community. Less than a third put making a profit as their goal.

Joe Orozco, who runs Hoopa Radio in northern California, typifies the kind of messaging this would generate. Joe says the biggest chunk of money to reach American Indians went into billboards which don't have much of an impact on isolated reservations like his. ("Most of us don't do a lot of freeway driving," he notes). NAM's small grant of \$2000 will pay him to develop a PSA that will grab people's attention: "If we don't let ourselves be counted, they'll say no one lives here and take away our water rights."

Ethnic media reach 60 million ethnic adults in this country, or one out of four adults overall, a 16% growth in audience over five years in contrast to the meltdown of audiences for mainstream media. Even a modest investment of \$2 million in those outlets that have been left out or, like Joe Orozco, believe they have more effective ways to message to their audiences could increase the response rate dramatically in some regions between the crucial period between April 15 and the end of July.

More important, it would acknowledge that not just the primary ethnic news outlets but the entire ethnic media sector has an indispensable role to play in how government communicates with the governed.



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