African Australians 2009

I must first acknowledge the hard work from individuals who have come up with this marvellous idea that surrounds the general wellbeing of people from African background in Australia. However, I totally disagree with the use of “African Australians” to describe the African migrants or the African refugees. I’m not sure if it reflects any kind of diversity of people from African backgrounds as the report claims.

To me the use of the “African Australians” is just a reflection or a version of the African Americans. Through gross human sufferings they went through, the today African Americans opted to be called so, which in a way gives a trace to their African origin, thus becomes more of an ancient history. The case in Australia is totally different in that Australia is a nation of immigrants and if we start naming people by connecting Australia with their backgrounds, then we will have the British Australians, Croatian Australians........and so forth. The point I’m trying to bring out is that, while it might not have any cynical meaning to its usage here in Australia, to those of us who understand History and appreciate it, the usage of the “African Australian” refreshes and echoes the hardships that the African slaves went through in America. It would be the same as, “British Australians”, which will give a flashback to the suffering the convicts-who happened to be ancestors to most of us in Australia, went through. If we are talking of diversity of people from Africa, then a better term to use is “African Communities or African Community in Australia.

Although I disagree with the wordings, I would have a suggestion on the empowerment of Africans communities in Australia to boost their own development. By empowerment I mean training Africans to help or serve their own communities here in Australia. I recall the project we started with Family Action Centre in Newcastle to engage young African refugees in sports and cultural activities in the Newcastle area. The project served a great deal, there was leadership mentoring program which was tailored to train young African leaders to manage their sporting teams. While serving their own community, the young leaders were also being paid which helped solve the problem of unemployment. The initiative also helped boost the interaction between the young Africans and the wider Newcastle community. If something like that could be promoted Australia wide, it would solve many problems and those of us who genuinely want to see a stable African community in Australia would definitely have the results.