

# NORTH EAST

## **RACE EQUALITY FORUM**

### **RESEARCH BRIEFING**

#### **No. 15**



## ***Participatory Arts based Methods for Civic Engagement in Migrant Support Organizations***

*Umut Erel (Open University), Tracey Reynolds (Greenwich), Erene Kaptani (Greenwich), and Maggie O'Neill (UCC & RCJRRN) in partnership with Regional Refugee Forum North East and London-based migrant and refugee organisations, Akwaba, Magpie and Praxis (AHRC funded)*

This provides details of a follow-up study to be conducted in part in the North East region.

During our previous research 'Migrant Mothers Caring for the Future: Creative Interventions into Citizenship' AH/K00591X/1 we successfully developed creative methods for migrants' citizenship (Erel et al 2017). In the course of that work third sector organizations expressed a strong need for training to use these creative participatory methods in their own practice.

The proposed project will train staff/volunteers from migrant support organizations and community networks in the North East of England and in London using creative participatory methods for civic engagement, which our prior research has demonstrated to be effective. It will develop impact by extending migrant support organizations' repertoire of effective engagement for this group which is often marginalized from public deliberation. Creative participatory methods allow marginalized migrants and their families to engage and communicate their experiences and viewpoints because they do not require fluent English language knowledge and generate embodied collective knowledges, allowing migrant families to shape debates on issues directly

affecting them.

The project will create sustainable ways to cascade these effective and innovative civic engagement methods in communities and build skills among migrant families by training staff /volunteers in migrant support organizations and community activists. We will produce a short film to ensure that this learning can be more widely shared amongst third sector organisations. The close cross-sector collaboration between academics, participatory arts and migrant and family support organizations will create added value for migrants' civic engagement. Migrant support organizations and migrant families are key stakeholders and beneficiaries of this project.

Sustainability of creative civic engagement methods is a project core aim which will be achieved through a 'training the trainers' programme<sup>1</sup>.

### **Key Aims**

The project addresses the need of migrant integration policy to enhance migrants' inclusion into deliberative democratic processes, particularly young people and women (Casey Review 2016) Participatory creative methods are particularly effective for this (Kaptani and Yuval Davies 2008, Manning and Edwards 2014, O'Neill 2017).

- To build capacity among migrant support organizations in the development and delivery of creative, participatory methods for engaging and integrating migrant families.
- To enhance migrant families' opportunities for engagement with policy issues affecting them, including migration and integration policy and equality issues (race, gender, ability, sexuality)



---

<sup>1</sup> For example, we are organising 2x 12 hour workshops, one in London, one in NE England for 24 staff / volunteers of migrant support organizations and community activists. The workshops offer a total of 60 hours with 60 participants (each participant to attend 12 hours of workshops).

- To facilitate sustainable engagement between migrant families, statutory and third sector organisations to extend public debate on how this impacts on lived experience



- To create a training programme for migrant advocacy organizations that will be documented and disseminated through a short film and toolkit.

Dame Louise Casey (2016) *The Casey Review: A review into opportunity and integration*, London: DCLG.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/575973/The\\_Casey\\_Review\\_Report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575973/The_Casey_Review_Report.pdf)

Erel, U., Reynolds, T., and Kaptani, E. (2017) 'Participatory theatre for transformative social research', *Qualitative Research*, 17 (3) 302–12;

Kaptani, E., Yuval-Davis, N. (2008), 'Participatory theatre as a research methodology: Identity, performance and social action among refugees', *Sociological Research Online*, 13 (5)

<http://www.socresonline.org.uk/13/5/2.html>;

Manning, N. and Edwards, K. (2014) 'Why Has Civic Education Failed to Increase Young People's Political Participation?', *Sociological Research Online*, 19 (1);

O'Neill, M. (2017) 'Walking, well-being and community: Racialized mothers building cultural citizenship using participatory arts and participatory action research', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 41 (1).

**Contact:** For further information, back copies of Information Briefings or Research Briefings, or to join the Network, email [gary.craig@galtres8.co.uk](mailto:gary.craig@galtres8.co.uk)

*The North East Race Equality Forum is a Network of around 300 individuals and organisations in the North East Region committed to promoting racial equality in the context of social justice. No one organisation is necessarily committed to every idea published in the name of the Forum. The Forum is supported by the 'Race', Crime and Justice Regional Research Network, which includes researchers from each University in the region.*