



**'Working Together To Create Change: the added value of
using participatory action research methodologies with
asylum seekers and refugees'**

LGA Summer Event Tuesday 5th July

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PAR METHODOLOGY

- PAR originated in the countries of the South. Early proponents were Paulo Fréire and Orlando Fals Borda.
- PAR was launched at the Cartagena World Symposium 1977. The methodology emerged from revolutionary and developmental politics and interpretations of the works of Marx (we need to understand the world and to change it) and Gramsci ('common sense' into 'good sense' or 'critical knowledge' through mutual recognition, collaboration).
- PAR is rooted in the principles of:
 - Inclusion
 - Participation
 - Valuing All Local Voices
 - Transformation/social change
 - Partnership Working that is Community Driven and Sustainable



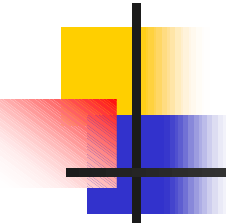
IMPACT OF PAR (PA)

- Gives voice to marginalised people (without reducing them to versions of ourselves)
- Enlightens and informs
- Raises awareness (Visual artistic can say so much more than words alone and reach a wider audience)
- Makes visible people's experiences and ideas for change – can feed into social policy
- Reflective (provides opportunities for people to think through issues and make visible their concerns, experiences, hopes – without the tension that can emerge when dealing with sensitive issues)
- Produces change – is transformative – with the participants not *on* or *for* them
- Is empathic – counters the tendency to reduce the Other to a cipher of the oppressed or marginalised
- Opens up spaces of resistance and can challenge stereotypes and address the multi-layered problems of urban decline especially in relation to multi-agency working/partnership working
- Working together to develop analysis and collective responses and outcomes enables people to have a stake in their community/society fostering inclusion and regeneration.
- Adds Value



Role of Researcher? Whose Knowledge Counts?

- encompasses social research (mixed methods), action or intervention and the production and exchange of knowledge:
 - Collective research –train co-researchers; build capacity, reinforce skills
 - Value all voices
 - Produce and exchange new knowledge
 - Safe Space for Dialogue (eg., work in Bradford)
 - Interventionist - action oriented -transformative



New Arrivals Access to Employment and Training in Leicester and Charnwood

- **Commissioned by GOEM**
- **Research Team:**
- Maggie O'Neill and Fiona Galli In association with Fiona Aldridge NIACE and ASSET UK – Resolving Differences Community Facilitators; Asset UK Volunteers; Soft Touch and Charnwood Arts; and NRAdvisors



New Arrivals Access to Employment, Training and Social Enterprise in Leicester and Charnwood

- **PURPOSE:** To identify key features across both horizontal and vertical processes of social inclusion that promote equality of access to training, employment and social enterprise for New Arrivals in Leicester and Charnwood.
- Funded by GOEM- a follow on from New Arrivals access to Leicester City Education and HO Resolving Differences programme.

The logo graphic consists of a vertical black line intersecting a horizontal black line. To the left of the intersection, there are three overlapping squares: a yellow one at the top, a red one in the middle, and a blue one at the bottom. The word "AIMS" is written in a blue, sans-serif font to the right of the vertical line.

AIMS

- Map New Arrivals access to employment, training and social enterprise.
- Highlight what Leicester and Charnwood are doing well in promoting access to training, employment and social enterprise.
- Consult new arrivals through creative consultation methods.
- Examine the impact of:
 - community cohesion initiatives
 - the race relations amendment act
- Make recommendations in consultation with key stakeholders to improve access and inclusion



CONTEXT

- Migration/Globalisation/ emergence of multi-cultural societies and trans-national identities
- Community Cohesion/Pathfinder
- Strategic Partnerships – local and regional
- EMCARS
- Strategic Plan for Interpreting and Translation services (Leicester East PCT)



Methodology

- Community networking/interviews (n=53)
- Agency networking/interviews (n=64)
- Creative Consultation – Charnwood Arts and Soft Touch (7-12 weeks of workshops)
- Stakeholder Event (NRA support)
Important to foster local ownership and effective communication with communities and key stakeholders.



Issues for Young People aged 14 -19

- Isolation from mainstream services
- Racial abuse/incivilities
- Employment issues
 - Long shifts
 - Night shifts - e.g., 19 yr old 12 mths
 - Low wages
 - exploitation
- Training and LLL – limited support – most at LC-some using Learn Direct
- Language barriers
- Stress of being new arrivals
- Trauma of exile/loss
- Dispersal at 18yrs

What is a refugee? “You are no-one in this country, and you have no-one”

- Support agencies: Dreamers, Loughborough College, Connexions, Nightstop

Young People Are Assets

- multi-lingual speaking between 3 and 5 languages.
- Highly self motivated
- Incredibly hard working
- High level of achievement and aspirations



Barriers to access:

Many barriers to accessing training, employment and social enterprise:

- Language
- Knowledge and information about rights/access/courses/standards/quality
- Confidence
- Funding - Financial costs/tuition fees/not all costs are covered.
- Unfamiliarity with the British system and agency workers unfamiliarity with rules re status
- Childcare



Partnerships and joint working to foster access to: training, employment and social enterprise in Leicester

- All agencies documented partnership working as a key aspect of their work. Examples:
 - College partnerships
 - Multi-agency fora
 - Jobcentre Plus and Leicester City Council - REP
 - **ASSET UK** (asylum seekers) and Refugee Employment project (refugees) (Capacity?) and **OQDP** and **RASAP**
 - **NIACE**, de Montfort, Leicester College partnership on access to HE -2yr partnership
 - **Local Alchemy** partnerships – BildIT - ILM
 - **New Arrivals Project** Partnerships
 - **Beamont Leys Forum** and Asset, LC and Babington
 - **Somali Development Services**, RD, Foundation Housing, Nimah Centre, LCC and **AES**



Partnerships & Good Practice for Social Enterprise in Leicester and Leicestershire

- Asset UK & Business Link (BL)
- LSEP fund Somali mentor
- Somali Voluntary Organisation Partnership initiating talks with Social Enterprise East Midlands (SEEM) , BL, Leicestershire co-operative development agency (LCCDA)
- LCCDA, referrals to LABA, LACBA, Prince's Trust, BL
- MEEM referrals to SEEM
- Local Alchemy
- CAN and CAN Report



Partnerships and joint working to foster access to: training, employment and social enterprise in Charnwood: examples

- Asylum Seekers Forum – a mechanism for the co-ordination of info and services
- Connexions, Job centre Plus, Loughborough College
- 'Dreamers' youth service, Connexions, Loughborough College, Nightstop

“There is a commitment to partnership working in Charnwood...the BC is increasingly trying to be an outward facing council” (key stakeholder)



Community consultation summary findings

- Lack of info and co-ordination to new arrivals
- Confusion about what they can and cannot access
- Participants want one stop shop
- Participants want citizenship information
–laws, rules, rights, access to services



Summary of KEY Findings

- Significant number of partnerships – but there is a need for greater co-ordination
 - Good Practice examples of strong links between horizontal and vertical processes – eg., through the Hoops NRF funded project managed by *Equality and Diversity* theme partnership Leicester LSP; multi-agency fora in Leicester and Charnwood
- Lack of overall co-ordination between agencies in this sphere (*Shared leadership/partnerships/co-ordination*)
- Gap in understanding the issues and needs of new arrivals (*communication/information/co-ordination*)
- Absence of community voices and concerns in service planning and provision – link to NR agenda (*Participation, inclusion, integration*)



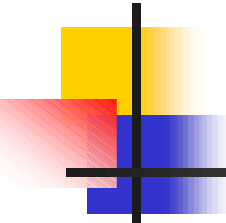
Recommendations

1. Development and adoption of a high profile, high priority strategic lead on New Arrivals in Leicester and Charnwood. *Leicester and Leicestershire Vision.*
2. Development and adoption of a strategy for inclusion across training, employment and (social) enterprise. This could be an evolving, reflexive strategy, progressively developed over time through:
 - the development of a partnership to steer co-ordination of information, services, and research (Community Cohesion Project Team is one possible group to take this forward in Leicester/ and multi-agency forum in Charnwood)
 - regular participation across horizontal and vertical agencies.
 - reflection on progress in its implementation.



Communication and Co-ordination of Information

- Vertical and Horizontal agencies to work together as partners to share ownership/leadership.
- A map showing the routes new arrivals might take to accessing training, employment and social enterprise.
- Streamline and standardise the system across the FE sector with regard to access and admission
- Develop further opportunities for collaboration between colleges to develop advice, signposting and provide a map or route to accessing appropriate courses.
- Support and develop partnerships across HE and FE
- Information pack for employment agencies/new arrivals and employers
- Social/Enterprise agencies to develop co-ordinated response and support



Participation and Inclusion (key to integration)

- Ensure opportunities for the voices of new arrivals, *spaces for safe speaking for dialogue*
- Role of Charnwood and Leicester multi-agency fora – good practice/shared leadership
- The E & D partnership has a framework that could help implement the recommendations
- The Leicestershire and Leicester City Learning partnership has a framework that could help implement
- The community cohesion project group at LCC
- *interpreting and translation strategy* developed by Eastern Leicester PCT.
- Identify support to be delivered by social enterprise agencies
- Data mapping on refugees/psa



Equalities and Diversity

- raising awareness of RRAA and equalities legislation and ensuring it is in place in strategies, frameworks and in practice.
- raising awareness amongst employers and trainers and business support agencies of the value of working with new arrival communities and Racial Equality and broader Equalities legislation.
- continuing to support, sustain and mainstream community cohesion.
- develop greater awareness and understanding of the needs of UASC and the dispersal at 18 of young people who were not supported by social services

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Resources

- Regionally and locally creative use of funding and sharing resources to support access
- Sustain and where appropriate develop and mainstream current partnerships and projects
- Develop long term funding strategies and work with social enterprise agencies to support funding strategies (see section 9.4 resources).
- Use existing partnerships to develop joint funding bids/proposals – one partnership to take accountable body lead, but group to develop joint service planning.
- A mini mapping of the partnerships/networks and their impact would provide useful data to address overlapping and creative use of resources.
- Social enterprise can be a sustainable vehicle for delivering some of the support services



Impact of CC Activity

- Overall positive

LCC – “There is a CC project team chaired by Rodney Green and of course the LSP that has a number of members co-opted onto it from a broad range of multi-agency backgrounds”.

- “Resolving Differences and Pathfinder have helped us to understand community cohesion”. IDea report and RD have had real impact.

CBC “We need a sub group of the LSP to look at community cohesion” “The expertise is within the voluntary sector” (KS) “Community Cohesion is not just about Race” (KS -L)



Impact of RRA Act

- Places a duty on all public authorities to promote racial equality – to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, promote equal opportunities and promote good relations between different people from different racial and ethnic groups.
 - Limited responses
 - Some were very positive “The cross over work needs to take place and make the links- cross over orgs i.e., with health and police for eg. What is happening in health and Police”
 - Some individuals (interviews and questionnaires) said in theory but not always in practice
 - Responses to Q about RRAA often focused on general equalities



CREATIVE CONSULTATION

Charnwood Arts and DREAMERS
YOUTH GROUP

Artist Paul Gent consulted young members of 'Dreamers' and created a comic – this is an excerpt.



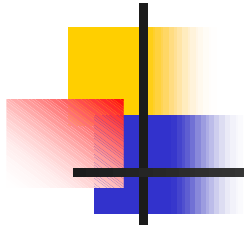
SOFT TOUCH and ASSET UK

Soft Touch co-operative using Participatory Arts worked with a small group of asylum seekers to create a billboard and posters for the Shires shopping centre.

Do you choose to see the contribution of



refugees and asylum seekers to the UK £conomy



Do you choose to see the contribution of refugees and asylum seekers to the Leicester Economy



New Arrivals put more into the economy than they take out. Numerous studies show that they pay more in taxes and National Insurance contributions than is paid out in welfare benefits.

From Refugee Project Made in Development, The Credit and Benefit Leicester City Council

Over the past 20 months, 150 asylum seekers have taken part in the Niace Assat UK Project in Leicester which involves volunteering.

From UK Project Website