

**Creative Exchange Peer Leadership Network Study Group: Ethics and Purpose**  
**Notes from Group Meeting 11<sup>th</sup> Feb 2007**

Present: Janna, Jennifer, Emily

Apologies: John, Zory

The following questions (as a starting point) shaped our discussion:

- What is ethical practice with/in refugees and the Arts?
- Where does use of stories play a part of cause difficulties?
- What is the purpose of the work that we do?
- Who is it for?

The group decided that there were two useful strands of ethical practice and purpose to discuss:

- Use of personal stories and traumatic/past experiences as inspiration for work
- The question of sharing cultural and multi cultural art forms

Within this, three pointed questions help us to challenge these strands:

- Who is the work for?
- When is it right to draw on personal experience? Is it ever right?
- Linguistic definitions and uses, in particular definition and self-definition of 'refugee'

Within these categories, there will be inevitable links to be made.

The following table will inform the group's forthcoming study visits, and the forthcoming discussion of the Peer Leadership Network:

	<b>Personal stories/past experiences</b>	<b>Sharing cultural art forms</b>
1. Who is it for?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do we ask people to tell stories?</li> <li>• Why do we make the professional decision to avoid telling stories?</li> <li>• What purpose to artistic recreations of true stories have?</li> <li>• When does someone have the responsibility to decide when and how stories are told?</li> <li>• Is the cathartic/emotional experience of stories for someone other than the teller's gratification?</li> <li>• Is there ever justification for telling stories as release/political statements/social justice tools. Who should make this decision?</li> <li>• Are there different rules for work with young people?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is receiving the artistic experience (is it for the 'refugees' themselves or for the host community to feel better about 'an active demonstration of multiculturalism'?)</li> <li>• Whose <i>need</i> is it? (box ticking/feeling better/relieving suffering?)</li> <li>• Is it ever done in the name of 'duty'? Is this a bad thing?</li> <li>• Do people really want to 'mix up'?</li> <li>• What is the value of providing culturally specific work?</li> <li>• How well attended are mixed cultural events for 'refugees'?</li> <li>• Are there times when mixing is appropriate and times when it is not?</li> <li>• Being individual rather than 'common human' can guard against stereotype?</li> <li>• Being a group is supportive?</li> </ul>
2. When is it right to draw on personal experience, if ever?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should memories and work drawing on memories <i>always</i> be avoided?</li> <li>• What are no go territories?</li> <li>• What is cathartic? Is it the same for everyone?</li> <li>• Is protection the same for everyone?</li> <li>• Where does the urge to tell stories come from? Should we stem the urge or encourage it?</li> </ul>	
3. Use of 'refugee'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When does work with refugees promote the artist rather than the refugee? When does this balance change?</li> <li>• Why particularly with 'refugees' do we</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When is the label in terms of publication, production and publicity actively useful?</li> <li>• When does the label compromise quality (ie in 'refugee' literature?)</li> </ul>

	<p>avoid the experience of stories? Is it to do with being perceived as vulnerable, disenfranchised, 'poor'? Would we expect the same rules to be applied to other similarly labelled groups?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How much does defining oneself as a refugee shape personal identity?</li><li>• Do my experiences define me?</li><li>• Is there any justification in using the word refugee for funding purposes?</li><li>• <b>What is a refugee?</b></li></ul>	
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Other questions to ask directly to Study Visit hosts:

- What do you define as a refugee/asylum seeker and how do you monitor this within your work?
- What is the expressed purpose of your work?
- Where did the need to work with 'refugees' come from that led to this project?
- How do you define, deliver and monitor ethical practice?