

Interculturalism: Art and Policy



Report on the Fourth Practice Exchange for Intercultural Capacity-Building

15th -16th December 2010, Sidcup, London, UK

*This event was organised by Platform for Intercultural Europe and Border Crossings
in association with Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance.*



**PLATFORM FOR
INTERCULTURAL EUROPE**

in collaboration with

Border Crossings

and

Rose Bruford College
of Theatre & Performance

Overview

The Fourth Practice Exchange for Intercultural Capacity-Building was held on 15th -16th December 2010 in Sidcup, London, UK. It was organised by Platform for Intercultural Europe and Border Crossings in association with Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance.

The Practice Exchange involved 53 participants from fields of arts and education, from diverse cultural backgrounds in the UK, along with guests from Austria, Belgium, Slovenia, Sweden and Italy. Artists' intercultural work with ethnic minorities was showcased and discussed by participants made up of theatre practitioners, art consultants, anti-discrimination activists and academics.

Professor Nesta Jones (Head of Research at Rose Bruford) and Sabine Frank (Secretary General of the Platform for Intercultural Europe) welcomed participants and provided the context for the event. The first day presented a range of diversity arts practice; the second day provided viewpoints from the perspectives of policy-making, academics and anti-discrimination. Michael Walling (Artistic Director of Border Crossings and Visiting Professor at Rose Bruford) provided an overview of his work and the tensions between art forms and policy. He introduced the guiding questions for the event, which were:

- Does the intercultural work of the cultural sector transform into social and political progress?
- What can cultural work contribute to civil society that other agencies cannot?
- What is the level of political awareness in the cultural field?
- Are there true synergies between cultural/artistic work and awareness raising/political campaign work or is cultural work insular?
- How do intercultural arts relate to campaigning for equal rights, social justice, and anti-discrimination?
- How can policy stimulate intercultural dialogue through artistic work?
- Is there a specific role for European institutions in the development of intercultural dialogue?
- Does the work being done in intercultural dialogue represent a patchwork of efforts or a unified social movement?

Jatinder Verma (founder and Director of Tara Arts) gave a keynote presentation, outlining the development of diversity arts practice and intercultural theatre from the 1960s, in the context of mass migration to Britain from the Caribbean and South Asia and the campaigns for civil rights and equity. David Tse Ka Shing (Director of Chinatown Arts Space and founding Director of Yellow Earth Theatre) spoke about his work with British East Asian communities. John Martin (Director of Pan Intercultural Arts) presented his approaches to working with refugee communities. Gabrielle Lobb (from Polygon Arts and Freelance Educator at the British Museum) and Femi Elufowoju Jr (Associate Artist at the Almeida Theatre and founder of Tiata Fahodzi) shared their experiences of dialogues between diverse communities and the cultural sector. Dan Rebellato (Professor of Contemporary Theatre at Royal Holloway University of London) spoke of the impact of globalisation on theatre. Hardish Virk (Audience Development Consultant, and director of Multi-Arts Nation) shared his experiences of audience development and research with South Asian Communities. Ansel Wong (Managing Director at Tsingtao Associates Limited) spoke of the need to claim public space for minorities and challenge exclusion, with particular reference to carnival. Graham Jeffery (researcher and academic at the University of the West of Scotland) discussed the contradictions of policy that artists grapple with and the need for effective and hybrid forms of evaluative processes.

The presentations were detailed and they are represented as fully as possible here, as they provide a valuable insight into practice and personal experiences of cultural practitioners working in the UK working with intercultural issues.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Platform for Intercultural Europe

The Platform for Intercultural Europe¹ developed as a civil society response to the European Union's Year of Intercultural Dialogue in 2008. It was launched with the support of the European Culture Foundation² and Culture Action Europe.³ The Platform links people and organisations promoting intercultural dialogue at a grassroots level with those who work in policy, working with agencies both within and beyond the field of culture. It is recognised by the European Commission as a 'Structured Dialogue' partner – which offers the opportunity to influence cultural policy making in the EU.

In September 2008, based on consultations throughout the year, Platform published a manifesto: *The Rainbow Paper – Intercultural Dialogue, From Practice to Policy and Back*.⁴ This described approaches and aspirations towards meeting the challenges of diversity and outlined a series of recommendations: *educating; building capacity by organisations; monitoring for sustained policies; mobilising across boundaries; and resourcing of Intercultural Dialogue*. Alongside this, the Platform has been campaigning for a continuation of the work begun in the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. For example, in advocating for a *working group on Intercultural Dialogue*⁵ in the EU Council, with designated experts from member governments to work on this topic at a European level. Indeed, this has now been agreed as part of the *EU Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014*.⁶

In June 2009, the Platform held the European Intercultural Forum in Brussels, and a General Member's Meeting at which it adopted a formal membership structure. At the same time it outlined a programme of activities based around the aspirations set out in the Rainbow Paper. This included contributing to the Brussels Culture Forum in September 2009, information and newsgathering, membership services and a series of invited seminars described as 'Practice Exchanges', of which the event in Sidcup is the fourth to date.

The Practice Exchanges enable the Platform to bring together a diverse group of individual practitioners and organisations from the fields of culture, education, youth and social work, work on minority rights, anti-discrimination and human rights. The meetings are held in different parts of Europe to reflect the distinctive peoples, cultures and histories that shape intercultural dialogue within countries. They both enable participants to share their work and discuss best practice, and inform the shape of the policy proposals that the Platform makes to the European Commission as a recognised civil society interlocutor.

The following Practice Exchanges have taken place:

Intercultural Capacity-Building in Organisations: Malmö, Sweden, 15/16th June 2009. In partnership with the Nordic Forum for Interculture and hosted by Spiritus Mundi. Thirty experienced representatives from cultural and civil society in Norway, Sweden and Denmark took part.

From Intercultural Dialogue to Intercultural Democracy: Vienna, Austria, 20/21st November 2009. It was hosted by IG Kultur Österreich and took place at WUK Werkstätten und Kulturhaus in Vienna. There were forty participants from the cultural sector and from minority and migrants' rights organisations, mostly from Austria, but also from Hungary and Romania.

¹ www.intercultural-europe.org

² www.eurocult.org

³ www.cultureactioneurope.org

⁴ <http://rainbowpaper.labforculture.org/signup/>

⁵ The Need for an EU Council Working Group on Intercultural Dialogue under the Open method of Co-ordination, May 2010

⁶ Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014 - Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the member states, meeting within the Council, 3046th EDUCATION, YOUTH, CULTURE and SPORT Council meeting Brussels, 18th and 19th November 2010.

Intercultural Dialogue in the Workplace: Rome, 28/29th May 2010. This was in cooperation with Italian trade union confederation CGIL, looking at the topic of the work place as a primary place for intercultural engagement and the negotiation of rights and entitlements of immigrant workers. There were 70 participants made up of CGIL officials and members, as well as representatives of civic organisations.

This Fourth Practice Exchange has been organised in partnership with [Border Crossings](#),⁷ in association with [Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance](#).⁸

Border Crossings is an arts organisation working in intercultural exchange and collaboration, engaging with a broad range of culturally diverse artists and audiences, both in the UK and internationally. Since 1995, Border Crossings has collaborated with artists and companies from Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Croatia, France, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, India, Ireland, Mauritius, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Sweden, the USA and Zimbabwe, as well as the diverse communities of the UK. Border Crossings productions have toured the UK, Brazil, Egypt, France, Hungary, India, Mauritius, Mexico, the Seychelles and Zimbabwe.

It is an established member of the Platform, and offered to host the Fourth Practice Exchange as part of its programme to engage culturally diverse artists in dialogue with civil society and policy-makers. The organisation's priority in the current UK and European context is to open channels of communication between communities, many of which are becoming increasingly isolated from one another and dis-engaged from a wider social and political discourse.

1.2. UK Context of The Fourth Practice Exchange, Sidcup, December 2010

Britain has been viewed as being particularly progressive among European countries in terms of policies and practice around ethnic and cultural diversity. However, recent years have seen a marked shift in attitudes, the current economic crisis amplifying prejudices alongside severe cuts in public spending which threaten to undermine community cohesion and integration. Many voices now speak out against the concept of multiculturalism, and there are minority parties such as the British National Party and UKIP who are highly vocal in their opposition to migrants and the EU.

In this environment, increasingly there are examples of authorities pursuing initiatives which damage community relations and reveal a lack of dialogue. In April 2010, without any consultation, 218 CCTV cameras – 72 of which were covert – were installed in the [Washwood Heath and Sparkbrook districts of Birmingham](#),⁹ two of the city's predominantly Muslim areas. Angry residents demanded their removal when it emerged that the funding for the project had been given to West Midlands Police from an anti-terrorism fund. The cameras were turned off following widespread protests and police promised that there would be no further involvement from the counter terrorism unit. In the same month came a defining moment of the General Election when Prime Minister Gordon Brown – on a staged walkabout in Rochdale – was unexpectedly challenged by a Labour supporter. In a four minute conversation, Grandmother Gillian Duffy asked about the taxes she pays, government debt and student loans. She also told Brown: *'You can't say anything about immigrants. All these Eastern Europeans, where are they flocking from?'* As he was being whisked away in his car, Brown complained to his aides *'That was a disaster. Well I just ... should never have put me in with that woman. Whose idea was that?'* and called her *'bigoted'*. The off-camera comment was nevertheless captured for the media, as his [Sky News microphone had not been switched off](#).¹⁰ For many, this was the moment that New Labour lost all credibility, serving to illustrate the gap between the politicians – those who want to avoid any potentially controversial topics (particularly those involving race and prejudice) and have all discussions 'stage-managed' – and their electorate, people who want to hear an open and honest discussion about the effects of immigration (and other issues). The subsequent election resulted in the narrowest of Conservative victories,

⁷ www.bordercrossings.org.uk

⁸ <http://www.bruford.ac.uk>

⁹ www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/jun/04/birmingham-surveillance-cameras-muslim-community

¹⁰ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/election_2010/8649448.stm

requiring it to enter into a coalition with the Liberal Democrats, the first coalition government in the UK outside of wartime.

The coalition government has predictably insisted it will slash [immigration](#)¹¹, with a cap on migrants from non-EU countries. It has also pushed forward a huge range of cuts in public spending, announcing the biggest cuts in spending since World War Two, savings intended to amount to about £83 billion, with most Whitehall departments facing an average reduction of 19%. The Chancellor, George Osborne, told Parliament that 490,000 public sector jobs would be cut over four years because the country had "run out of money". In particular, the cuts in higher education (40% of cuts imposed on university funding for the next 3 years) and the introduction of tuition fees led to a wave of protests across the country and [mass rallies outside Parliament](#),¹² which turned into violent clashes. Local authorities have been promised large cuts to their grant support. By way of example, Sandwell Council in the West Midlands has been asked to make cuts equal to 20% of its budget. In order to make savings required, Birmingham City Council expects to reduce staffing from 19,000 to 12,000. Nationally, one fifth of libraries are expected [to be cut](#).¹³ Somerset Council has cut its arts budget by 100% and proposes to cut funding to 20 of its [libraries](#),¹⁴ leaving only 14 open. The Arts Council itself recently received a 29.6% reduction in its national budget - one of the consequences being the withdrawal all new funding for [Creative Partnerships](#),¹⁵ a £38.1m-a-year initiative that has brought professional musicians, artists and actors into English schools for nearly a decade. Many of these schools are in areas of high social deprivation, where the opportunities for children to engage with and benefit from creative and intercultural practitioners will be severely limited. Cultural provision (with the exception of libraries) is not a statutory requirement in the UK. With a combination of severe cuts to core statutory services and cuts to the national bodies who support culture (or their abolition in the case of the [UK Film Council](#)¹⁶), the UK faces a bleak environment which will not enable diverse voices to be heard.

At the close of 2010, it seemed a particularly appropriate moment for the Platform for Intercultural Europe to mount the first of its Intercultural Practice Exchanges in the UK with Border Crossings. What follows is a summary of the presentations and the issues raised and discussed over the two days against the contentious and combative background of '[a dark new philistinism](#)'.¹⁷

2. Day One

2.1 Welcome

The meeting was opened with a welcome from Professor Nesta Jones, Head of Research at Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance. The college was originally founded in 1950 (as the Rose Bruford Training College of Speech and Drama) and is one of the UK's leading drama schools - the first of its kind, in 1976, to offer a BA (Hons) in Acting.

She noted that the college has always been at the forefront of vocational and practice-based training, with a robust and inclusive [approach to research](#)¹⁸ and a perspective both international and multicultural. This created the potential for intercultural performance in both discipline-specific and interdisciplinary contexts. She said she was pleased to see the participation of a number of their Visiting Professors and Fellows in this Practice Exchange and looked forward to the presentations and subsequent dialogues.

¹¹ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/nov/21/david-cameron-immigration-cap-economy>

¹² <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2010/nov/30/student-protests-tuition-fees-rallies>

¹³ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2011/jan/07/library-closures-brent-council>

¹⁴ A blog documenting library closures and protests: <http://alangiibbons.net/?paged=2>

¹⁵ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2011/jan/09/creative-partnerships-funding-cut>

¹⁶ <http://blogs.ft.com/westminster/2010/07/death-of-the-film-council/>

¹⁷ Charlotte Higgins, A dark new philistinism is behind Britain's arts funding cuts <http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/2010/nov/14/arts-funding-cuts-universities>

2.2 Sabine Frank, Secretary General of the Platform for Intercultural Europe

Sabine Frank presented an outline of the work of the Platform for Intercultural Europe, particularly in relation to policies that reflect Europe's cultural diversity and increased dialogue between people of different backgrounds. She also explained the concept of a 'practice exchange' as a space where practitioners and representatives of organisations come together to both exchange practice and insights, that can be drawn upon in the Platform's advocacy work. She noted that Europe was an entity that the British didn't feel they quite belonged to, but expressed the hope that participants would use their contacts in whatever capacity and at whatever level to ensure that the British government plays a full role in co-operation at a European level.

She wished to reassure the participants that Brussels and EU institutions was not simply full of lobbyists from the pharmaceutical industry to the energy corporations trying influence policy in order to maximise their profits, but that there are also broad range of rights and value based lobbyists and associations wanting to influence policy for the common good. This is the family of NGOs that the Platform for Intercultural Europe belongs to.

The Platform exists to promote the concept of interculturality, the idea that people from different origins and backgrounds are and should be developing a new 'we' in society through their mutual engagement. She stressed that the Platform associates interculturality with the idea full free and equal participation in society. She noted that interculturality contrasts with three things. Firstly, it contrasts with a mere tolerance of diversity, which is uncaring about difference and about other cultures. Secondly, it contrasts with the emergence of parallel cultures, which do not make an effort to interlink with each other. Thirdly, interculturality is also something in opposition to racism and discrimination.

Although the roots of the organisation are in the arts (through an initiative of the European Cultural Foundation and Culture Action Europe) she argued that their mission lay in interculturalism. Intercultural dialogue is not simply about the arts, but it is something that can be facilitated by the arts, to address the social-political questions that arise from migration, mobility and the existence of minorities. Their aim is to create alliances between the arts sector and other sectors on these issues.

Although there was an overwhelming concern about the effect of cuts being imposed by the UK government, participants at the Practice Exchange were encouraged to focus on the significance of cultural and arts activity for community cohesion and for equality of participation, and to consider the insights and evidence that can be brought to policy-makers, in order to strengthen the support for the arts.

2.3 Michael Walling, Artistic Director, Border Crossings

Michael Walling¹⁹ is Artistic Director of Border Crossings, and Visiting Professor in the Research Centre for Intercultural and Multicultural Performance at Rose Bruford College. He has directed in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas, and published extensively on intercultural performance. He is also director of 'Origins: Festival of First Nations'.²⁰

Michael gave an overview of the work of Border Crossings, creating new intercultural, multi-media theatre in response to the contemporary globalised world. He talked about their interest in the borders between different cultures and how they can be crossed, the tensions that operate on them, and the tensions between different art forms, the arts and wider society - and policy in particular.

He emphasised the value of being part of the Platform for Intercultural Europe and having the opportunity to find out about what's going on in continental Europe. He referred to the European Cultural Forum in Brussels last summer, where he was pleasantly surprised that European official after European official stated how important they recognised the cultural

¹⁹ <http://bordercrossingsblog.blogspot.com/>

²⁰ <http://www.bordercrossings.org.uk/Productions/Default.aspx?ProdID=13>

sector to be within much broader areas of policy, and the significance of culture to what they were doing from foreign policy to education to social policy and health. He referred to the founding documents of the EU, which he noted didn't mention culture very much, but he believed that now the EU has come to the realisation that culture is central.

"Perhaps the only thing we can talk about is culture, because Europe has never been a political entity or economic entity, but there is something we can recognise as a European cultural identity, albeit very diverse and multi-lingual and very complex full of different forms and expressions, which is both exciting and inspiring and deeply problematic. It can sound like, everyone else keep out, keep your non-European practices out of here. So we need to delve deeper into what defines a European cultural identity and that (for me) is its diversity and its permeability, its openness to the outside."

He believed that Interculturalism was something that had long been at the heart of the European tradition. He referenced Monteverdi sitting in Venice amongst the traders from the Levant and North Africa and the different sounds he would have heard and been influenced by. He spoke about Shakespeare's London, where the theatre was reinvented and the English language reinvented due to London's rapid growth as a trading city where people from all over the then known world converged. With regard to the British tradition of tolerance, he thought that tolerance was not enough. He referred to Goethe's definition: *Tolerance is what you get when you decide that you're going to live with someone inferior to yourself.* He then noted that Goethe's 'Faust' was perhaps an example of the benefits of intercultural dialogue, as it was not modeled on Shakespearean tragedy or Greek tragedy but on Sanskrit. He concluded that it is essential to acknowledge equality and acknowledge difference.

2.4 First day: Guiding Questions

The first day was structured to look at diversity arts practice, with the following questions as a guide:

- Does the intercultural work of the cultural sector transform into social and political progress?
- What can cultural work contribute to civil society that other agencies cannot?
- What is the level of political awareness in the cultural field?
- Are there true synergies between cultural/artistic work and awareness raising/political campaign work or is cultural work insular?

3. Day One Presentations



3.1 Intercultural Theatre as a Paradigm for European Modernity - Jatinder Verma

Jatinder Verma is a founder and Director of [Tara Arts theatre Company](http://www.tara-arts.co.uk/).²¹ The group was established in response to the racist murder of a 16 year old boy, Gurdeep Singh Chagger, in Southall, first producing the anti-war play, 'Sacrifice', by Bengali writer Rabindranath Tagore. In 1990, he became the first director from among Britain's migrant communities to be invited to stage a play at the National Theatre - his adaptation of Molière's 'Tartuffe'.

Jatinder first spoke about the paradoxical beginning of Interculturalism and of European civilisation - Zeus as a white bull adding a Phoenician Princess to his retinue. To the Phoenicians it was viewed as a forceful abduction, a theft, yet he noted that power rests with he who captures the Princess. The use of the word civilisation itself has a new resonance since 9/11, with the introduction of the phrase 'clash of civilisations'.

"Other words too - ethnicity, diversity, multicultural, intercultural, citizen, immigrant, refugee, asylum seeker, mixed race, ethnic cleansing - an array of lexicons to describe, delineate, distinguish, demarcate - between us and them, the 'others', who long to break through our borders and change our way of life. Coloured Africa and Asia have leaked into dazzling white Europe. More so than faith, language or class, colour in Europe is the undertow affecting intercultural relations."

He gave a historical outline of the development of diversity arts practice from the 1960s, when Britain experienced mass migration from the Caribbean and South Asia, resistance to discrimination in work places, subsequent Race Relations legislation and the development of a fundamental belief in the equality of all citizens. In 1976, a publication by Naseem Khan, '[The Arts Britain Ignores](#)',²² fully opened the debate, making a case for official recognition of these other diverse arts, and opened the door to funding. At the same time, there were a series of street explosions by the children of the first generation of migrants, rebelling against their parents and against institutional authorities - particularly the Notting Hill Carnival and the Southall Riots of that year. Despite inequities in state support, there grew a new landscape of independent black or minority-led culturally diverse arts organisations. The climate which led to their emergence also gave rise to extraordinary individual artists like Salman Rushdie.

He proposed that the road Britain has travelled since the 1960's suggests that social and political progress is in an intimate embrace with intercultural work. The modernity of Britain is entwined with its interculturalism. It is impossible to walk the streets of London or any other British city and not encounter intercultural sights, sounds and smells. Interculturalism has introduced a critical taste of the other. The transformations in our diet and stomach reflect a change in our sensibilities to different cultures. Tara itself produced cross-cultural adaptations of classic texts by Gogol, Molière, Ibsen and Shakespeare, transposed to Asian settings and with multicultural casts. He felt he might be describing a past golden age as diversity is no

²¹ <http://www.tara-arts.co.uk/>

²² Naseem Khan, 'The Arts Britain Ignores: The Arts of Ethnic Minorities in Britain'. Publisher, Community Relations Commission, May 1976. http://world-of-books.com/?id=_8QrAAAAMAAJ

longer an explicit priority for the Arts Council. The cuts may undo the work of past decades - the notion of multiculturalism or interculturalism is under severe strain.

He believed theatre contests certainties and constructs worlds. It is made from a patchwork of other arts, music, dance, literature, sculpture. Intercultural theatre adds a layer of quotation, an interweaving of other languages, stories and other sensibilities into the narrative. Yet culturally diverse arts is peculiarly burdened by the push and pull of social worth versus artistic value. He asked if anyone ever posed this particular question to the National Theatre or the RSC: '*What is your social worth?*' The usual question asked is, '*Are you making good art?*' He believed what will endure of intercultural experiments is artistic worth, how it changes the head and - more importantly - how it changes the shape of the heart. He concluded that there exists a deep desire of human beings to speak, to find a voice, and that conversation is an inherent condition of intercultural work and the impulse for equity.



3.2 Working With British East Asian Communities - David Tse Ka Shing

David Tse Ka Shing is Creative Director of [Chinatown Arts Space](http://www.chinatownartsspace.com/)²³ in London, and founding artistic director of [Yellow Earth Theatre](http://www.yellowearth.org/).²⁴ He was winner of the Windrush Arts Award 2004, and is a Fellow of Rose Bruford College.

David presented an outline of a variety of projects with British East Asian communities and experiences - Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Tibetan - mostly working with theatre. He explained how most of his work has been '*political with a small p*', concerned about the struggle for liberation of a young individual or minority against an authoritarian older regime. This struggle is universal and specific, intergenerational and intercultural. However, he believed that even doing quite mainstream work, like a musical, would be political in the current context, given that British East Asians (BEA) are one of the three largest ethnic minority groups in the UK but are still the most invisible in terms of their presence in arts and culture. He had worked with industry professionals to raise standards and opportunities for BEA individuals, such as mentoring schemes for writers, challenging the enforced invisibility imposed by the media.

Amongst the BEA communities in the UK, the Japanese had good support from Japanese trusts and foundations, the Korean community had an impressive community centre in London, the Vietnamese had a gallery space in Mayfair, but he felt the British Chinese community - despite being the longest established - didn't receive similar support from their country of origin. He noted that culturally the Chinese have been slightly suspicious of artists - the common belief is that artists are failed academics or professionals. Confucius placed great emphasis on education and British Chinese feel great pressure from their parents to succeed. He himself had done a law degree first to placate his very traditional mother. This great emphasis on education explains why two generations of working class Hong Kong Chinese from the rural new territories have produced children who are academically the most successful in the UK. The British Chinese are supposedly the model minority - hard working, conscientious, law abiding, quite the opposite of the stereotype of Triads and gangsters you see all the time on the TV in the West.

²³ <http://www.chinatownartsspace.com/>

²⁴ <http://www.yellowearth.org/>

"I came here as a child from Hong Kong in 1970 aged six. When I bought a flat in 1992 was the first time I felt I had roots here and wanted to stay here."

Art is not regarded as serious work, so persuading BEA community centres and weekend language schools to facilitate artists to work with their young people can be fraught with difficulties. You need to stress that drama is good for public speaking and assertiveness and good for their future careers as professionals. As with funding bodies, progress in this sector relies heavily on gatekeepers giving new talent an opportunity.

He spoke of how knowledge of the language, the mother tongue, is important in working with this community, particularly the older generations, both in speaking to them on a personal basis and in terms of promotional material. Indeed, the use and application of home language is increasingly vital with many communities. He referred to a recent report by the Institute of Education and the National Centre for Languages, which showed that English is the second language for 40% of London pupils - in the borough of Tower Hamlets it rises to almost 75%, revealing the level of linguistic diversity in urban centres.

He expressed the need to have a good understanding of history before 'lecturing' other cultures on their failings. He gave an example when in 2008 he had undertaken a large-scale outdoor project in Trafalgar Square at the time of the launch of the Beijing Olympics. This was a piece inspired by Chinese Creation myths, involving elderly members of a Tai Chi group from the Chinese Community Centre in Chinatown. He had been interviewed on national news media about the project yet was asked by a Caucasian interviewer 'to defend' the Chinese Government's record on human rights. He felt it was unlikely that at the opening of the 2012 London Olympics, questions would be asked about atrocities in Iraq or Britain's involvement in the Slave Trade. He noted that Confucian culture is about respecting social hierarchies, and it is vital to have this awareness in dealing with these communities and understanding what is appropriate and at what time. However, one effect of the rise of China as an economic power is an increasing awareness of the BEA community in the UK. He referred to [the BC Project](#),²⁵ established in 2006, which aimed to increase the presence of the UK Chinese community in the British political arena. On the other hand, it's difficult to assess how much intercultural work translates into policy and strategy. There was often tokenism - as in 'Oh, it's the Beijing Olympics and so China is flavour of the month' - rather than a strategic approach towards developing artistic relationships or truly representing diversity in the UK.

"One thing that cultural work can contribute to civil society - which other agencies cannot - is shared moments of compassionate insight. When in a group of diverse people a shared experience happens, perspectives are challenged. Audiences laugh or are moved to tears. Cultural work can collectively feed the soul. Those are moments when we suddenly move beyond ourselves, our own limited understanding, when we get a glimpse into another world-view, another perspective, and a discovery of others' and our own humanity."

He believed intercultural work enabled us to engage and access other cultural groups amongst us, so we communicate more effectively with one another. There are true synergies between cultural artistic work and awareness raising and political and campaign work. Mutual respect amongst different groups comes from genuine engagement and dialogue and is a two way street. He felt artistically diverse work should be embraced - in the same way that we enjoy and consume the diversity of world cuisine on our doorstep. If we let our stomachs lead the way, then our hearts and minds will follow.

²⁵ <http://www.bcproject.org.uk>



3.3 Working With Refugee Communities - John Martin

John Martin is Director of *Pan Intercultural Arts*.²⁶ He has undertaken extensive work with refugees and other marginalised communities. He taught Britain's first course in non-western theatre techniques and their accompanying philosophies at Goldsmiths' College. He is Secretary of the Commonwealth Theatre Laboratory, author of 'The Intercultural Performance Handbook', and is a Visiting Professor at Rose Bruford College.

John gave an outline of the work of Pan Intercultural Arts, an organisation dedicated to the exploration of cultural diversity through the arts and how such work can inspire and implement social change. This is achieved through workshops with young people who are marginalised and at risk of social exclusion, with performances, festivals, seminars and conferences. Pan Intercultural Arts helps its participants find a voice through drama, dance, music, writing and film.

Interculturalism is a very potent word, which for him means coming together, finding new solutions, new resolutions, new conversations, new hybrids - and if it is done with respect and without post-imperialist feeling of superiority, it can be very powerful.

The work he was engaged with arose from considering the question: 'What kind of art should happen in a multi-racial society?' Pan Intercultural Arts evolved from a high art research body - a multi-racial group of people who were looking to redefine our theatre and what it is and what it might be - into a multi-racial group doing theatre which was not something recognisable as Western or South Asian or Chinese but a hybrid, which was energising and dynamic and something new. He outlined the three main strands of work of Pan Intercultural Arts.

Arts Against Violence Programme

This began from work in one particular area of London where two or three racial groupings were 'at war with each other', working in those communities to try and find artistic ways to get an understanding that the problems 'the other' faces are often the same problems you face yourself. One of the biggest barriers the programme tackled was the sense of territorialism between different groups of young people, enabling young people to gain a voice and engage in a positive debate on issues raised, bringing together groups in a safe and neutral space. This work is ongoing and is now engaging with gun and knife crime issues.

International Theatre for Development Programme

Pan Intercultural Arts has taken their experience and approach to communities overseas in post-conflict and post-disaster communities, working with NGOs, the Red Cross, British Council, and other agencies. Such organisations recognise the potential of theatre to engage with social problems or post-disaster situations and initiate discussion with affected communities to find solutions and alternative futures. Pan Intercultural Arts receives funding from international NGOs, trusts and foundations - rather than from the Arts Council - because it is using the arts as a delivery mechanism, to tackle some of society's problems. An essential ingredient of this work is the training of local people to learn the methodology used by Pan Intercultural Arts, thus building capacity and empowering them to carry on in the longer term.

²⁶ <http://www.pan-arts.net/>

"If the UN wants the people in the Irrawaddy Delta to come out of post-cyclone apathy and start rebuilding their bridges and redigging their latrines, then yes, we will use theatre to do that. But boring old theatre which isn't any good and isn't relevant isn't going to do it. It's got to be good theatre. Theatre for development is theatre first and foremost. It's got to be excellent theatre for the audience it's aimed at. We are always looking at the artistic side of it to be the most engaging, the most provocative, the most inspiring to the audiences that come along."

Refugee Arts Programme

Work with refugees is an enormous area of work and often misunderstood, and receives little sympathy in the national press. Projects have developed through strong links with partners such as the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture. Pan Intercultural Arts utilises the empowering part of theatre to give refugees some avenues into a normalised existence in this country. Pan Intercultural Arts mostly work with young people 17-21, who have come into this country as unaccompanied minors, who have to go before a judge at the age of 18 and prove they deserve to be here as refugees. He explained that the key thing to understand about the refugee experience is that they're afraid, they have a great fear of going back, a fear of loss of liberty and life – and some have extreme trauma because of their experiences of violence. They're also alien to this society which has given them refuge. What they have in common is their fear and alienation – and this work offers them creativity as a thing in common. It's also an anchor in their life. Pan Intercultural Arts works in getting people to realise their potential as human beings, engaging with other people in conversation, in creative play. He asked: *'What is theatre about? It's about play, it's about generating ideas, sparking inspirations'*. Theatre has that potential to remind people of the joy of creativity, of re-accessing your creativity.

John explained their approach to this work in some detail. He noted that the basic skills actors learn - of standing properly, breathing properly, looking someone in the eyes, opening up the body - can have amazing psycho-physical therapeutic effects on young people. He gave examples of a young refugee who said, *'Now I go to college and I can stand up and give my presentation because I've learned how to stand and how to speak. I can go to my lawyer and tell him my story so he can represent me properly in court. I can now go to court and make eye contact with the judge because you've taught me how to do it, and in my our culture you would never do that - but because I never did it, the judge thought I was shifty and wouldn't allow me to stay in the country.'*

Some refugees Pan Intercultural Arts worked with wanted to continue to explore their creativity further, so formed a group called Fortune. From trawling round the museums of London, they created a performance called 'Asylum Road', which was about the history of asylum in this country, from the Huguenots onwards. This was performed within the confines of a shipping container. Everyone's favourite refugee, Paddington Bear, an illegal immigrant from darkest Peru, also made an appearance in the piece. John explained that Pan Intercultural Arts never insisted on knowing the personal stories of refugees they worked with. Given their 'astonishingly awful experiences' of war and violence, they did not require them to retell that story. He said that it was important to concentrate on the present and the future, asking the question of *'Where are you now and where do you want to go?'* Of course, some of the participants did draw on their past experiences and wish to talk about them in the process of making the performance.

The Fortune group then worked on a project around the universal theme of Love, starting from love stories from their background cultures. Love is something they see as a destructive force, a terror in our society, a bond that someone will betray, trust that will be broken – because this was their experience. This confounds the expectations of a Western/UK audience, who have a very different perspective on the idea of love. The piece ends in a trial, where love is judged to be a good or bad thing.

The group are currently working with Pan Intercultural Arts on a new piece called 'The Taste of Memory', about what food means in modern multi-influenced society, the concept of the transferability of foods into a new culture, how food changes when it comes into a new culture. Our food is the result of generations and flows of trade and immigration. It's not just the food

itself; it is who was there and where it was, the occasion around it, the 'who you eat it with'. Food is indeed a kind of metaphor for the mixing of cultures.

In conclusion, John stated that these approaches are what they would call Arts Theatre for Development, or Theatre for Social Change because it is putting people into a position where they can find a voice for themselves and feel a part of the society around them, building their capacity within contemporary multi-faceted British society. He believed the value of this work with refugees was that it helped them feel just as important as others and that they had a contribution to make British culture.

"It allows them to first of all gain respect for themselves again. They can stand up and speak. They do have a voice. They can interact with other people. They can interact in a way that they can get jobs, they interact in a way they can go into education. They can own something, they can own their own piece of art and they can invite people to see it."



3.4 Dialogues Between Diverse Communities and the Cultural Sector – Gabrielle Lobb and Femi Elufowoju Jr.

There were two presentations in this section, followed by a short panel discussion along with Michael Walling and David Tse Ka Shing.

Gabrielle Lobb, Director of [Polygon Arts](http://www.polygonarts.org.uk/).²⁷ Fellow at the Imperial War Museum in London, developing Holocaust Education projects with young people excluded from mainstream schools and also with the Roma community. She is also a freelance 'creative educator' at the British Library.

Polygon Arts works across art forms, bringing communities together, linking communities, trying to find the creative space between the communities. This was their definition of interculturalism - linking with communities, looking at that shared creative space between the communities - rather than each looking at their own individual places, learning from one another rather than about one another. Gabrielle focused in particular on work with the museum sector. She explained how these questions and interests around interculturalism were integral to their work with museums, looking at how collections are formed, who made them and their choices and decisions, who they are displayed for, and who is coming to access them, who are the audiences and what does it mean to them.

"Objects are starting places for stories or conversations, the way people react to them... it opens up something in people. There is something very special about the first time you can handle an object, something from your own community that's under-represented in wider society. There's a feeling of ownership and recognition and pride and many layers of meaning that you can have by touching and holding that object, that enables a freeing up to tell and reveal and share your own stories."

This work involved taking the objects in a collection as a starting point for stories or conversations. She spoke of the curiosity and fascination that came from community members in having access to original objects or being in close proximity to them. She talked about the

²⁷ <http://www.polygonarts.org.uk/>

educational outreach work during the development of the [Sacred exhibition](#)²⁸ at the British Library, which showcased sacred texts from Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths – drawing out commonalities between the faiths. The British Library has one of the world's great collections of ancient manuscripts, ranging from the earliest known complete text of the New Testament, the Codex Sinaiticus, and one of the earliest Qur'ans in the world, from the eighth century, to one of the finest Hebrew Torahs to survive from the medieval period, the Portuguese Pentateuch.

Questions of representation come up highly charged in those spaces. This is where you come to gaze at something which is 'other'. Often you can't touch it, the way it has been acquired is controversial and the interpretation and stories that are being told are told by the acquirer. There are so many layers to peel away. Individuals were particularly interested in the texts that were specific to their own faith, which Gabrielle felt was understandable in that she felt it was important to feel secure and familiar with your own identity before you can appreciate something else. With the Sacred exhibition, people felt both represented and valued.

She outlined a photography project which linked five faith schools – Sikh, Hindu, Jewish, Roman Catholic, Muslim - working with people who had little opportunity to meet with people outside of their own faith community. The project took place over a whole school year, finally collaboratively creating an exhibition of their lives and their own stories across the faith boundaries. The project involved teenagers aged 14 – 15. The immediacy of photography as an art form was important to this project. Both the making and sharing of images and later touring the exhibition created an ongoing conversation between participants. The project provided an opportunity to combat stereotypes, creating images that were perceptive and challenging. She gave one example of an image created by Muslim girls of themselves in burkas in a Charlie's Angels type pose.

The length of the project, over a year, allowed for meaningful relations to develop. The participants had discussions about the common symbols that cropped up repeatedly in the imagery – flames or candles meaning one thing in a specific religious context that also could be read in a more universal way. Participants also learned photographic skills and techniques, visited photographic exhibitions, and looked in-depth at a specific photographer they chose to study. As well as bringing together the students from the different faith schools, the project also brought the different teachers together, building an ongoing intercultural dialogue.

*Femi Elufowoju Jr is Associate Artist at the Almeida Theatre, London and Founder and former Artistic Director of [Tiata Fahodzi](#).*²⁹

Femi spoke about his experiences in relation to the emergence and rise of an African Theatre culture in the UK. Black performances in Britain have a long history. Already in 1772 records show no less than 15,000 people of African and Asian descent living in London, yet there is no real acknowledgement of this heritage attached to the British psyche. A fundamental yet little known fact is that one of Britain's most outstanding composers Samuel Coleridge-Taylor - born in Holborn in 1875, who achieved fame by composing his work *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* - was actually the son of a London trained Sierra Leonean doctor. Coleridge-Taylor's achievements and contributions are virtually forgotten today.

The 1970s and 1980s saw the emergence of new Black companies bred out of a desire by artists and communities to create and champion work that expressed their own experiences, and thus tackled racism and opened opportunities for diverse people to become involved in the arts. These companies encouraged new work by Black playwrights, both through productions and workshops. In terms of demographics, Britain had migrants from all over the world, people mostly from former imperial colonies – yet while theatre by Caribbean peoples in Britain flourished, the presence and contribution of the African artist remained suppressed. It was the Caribbean voice which was the strongest with the work of the younger playwrights dealing with issues of identity and generational conflict between Caribbean-born parents and

²⁸ <http://www.bl.uk/sacred>

²⁹ www.tiatafahodzi.com

British-born children. The success of this consciousness enabled the birth of more Caribbean led organisations among them Carib, Temba and Black Theatre Co-operative (now Nitro), then Black Mime Theatre, Strange Fruit, Double Edge and Talawa Theatre Company.

Femi explained how he first travelled to Nigeria in 1974, at the age of 12. His only cultural experience of Africa, apart from living with his parents, was seeing legendary Highlife musician King Sunny Ade playing at Old St. Pancras Town Hall. In Nigeria, then experiencing an oil boom and wealthy economy, he found himself surrounded by '*an explosion of eclectic creativity*' - from the customary Eid celebrated Durban Horse Festival to masquerade festivals, from a Ola Rotimi World premiere to a launch of a new Chinua Achebe novel. Though inspired by this to become an artist, his parents wanted a lawyer in the family and he attended law school. In 1985, after eleven years in Nigeria, he came back to England and spent the next ten years retraining academically and professionally within the arts. In 1995 he set up Tiata Fahodzi – setting out to produce world-class theatre which conveys, celebrates and challenges the cultural experiences of Africans. Tiata Fahodzi commissioned and developed new writing as well as reinterpreting African and European classics. Their remit was to serve an all-inclusive British audience. They staged one major production each year as well as showcasing new, emerging talent through initiatives such as Tiata Delights, a festival of new writing and concerts of African Music which became an annual fixture. It participated in AFRICA 95, a nationwide season of the arts of Africa held in the UK in 1995. He felt that the main challenge for these synergies and partnerships was how to sustain them. He noted that Britain had to wait another ten years before the organisation of AFRICA 05. Though it turned out to be the biggest celebration of African culture ever held in Britain, many of the audiences had dissipated in the long gap between the events and had to be reconnected with.

In recent years, the work of Tiata Fahodzi has focused on greater access and delivering work to a wider range of audiences – for example, working with [Eastern Angles](#),³⁰ they undertook touring African theatre to rural areas of East Anglia – primarily a white community. He felt there was an increasing awareness in the UK that African theatre should not be pigeon-holed just as something 'exotic' but which had the ability to reach out to many audiences. He felt this demonstrated that just a few performances in a local Parish hall could have a disproportionate effect, that it could have a role in social cohesion and be a catalyst for community cohesion, discussion and dialogue - a brief connection that could have a major impact of cultural and social value in the local community.

Femi was concerned that artists are forcibly and continuously made to split their focus from the creativity of their artistry to concentrate more on how to sustain the medium of its existence financially. Artists must now be seen more as accountants and financiers with acute financial literacy and vocabulary skills and be adept at enhancing and sustaining the financial capacities of their organisations. This was, he felt, a far cry from developing the seed of an artistic ingenuity or developing organisational capacities and forms to respond to tomorrow's challenges. He explained that his challenge now was to 'step away from the box', to avoid being classified, categorised or 'pigeon-holed' in a certain way.

"I've occupied a box for 20 years. I was fascinated by this box I could occupy and run with. I wanted to create a new interface between the traditional British theatre institution and the audiences. I loved being a pioneer in the emergence of African theatre in the mainstream of Britain, the exponent of the heritage but then I got tired. I felt like I had exhausted every nuance of ingenuity in my head, trying to create a synergy between Africa and the British state. It was working, but it was time for someone else to come along to develop the company. I've fulfilled my mission statement and I'm not the messiah for a particular sensibility. Now I don't want to be judged by the box. I want to be able to do Chekhov or Shakespeare."

Although he wanted to step outside the box, he believed he would always bring his African sensibility to a piece of work, but he had been taken aback by the reaction to his desire to do something different as an artist. He had been told, '*What are you doing? You want to do*

³⁰<http://www.easternangles.co.uk/>

Chekhov, we've got 1400 people doing that already. You're from Africa. You can't come and do Chekhov, you can't come and muck around with a particular construct which is fixed in its parameters'. He gave the example of how he had recently pitched an idea for a radio drama to a commissioner. He explained it wasn't black, it wasn't African, that he had no particular national or religious or even gender connection to the theme – it was something new for him. He was told to come back with something that he was innately connected to, about his heritage. He was told he was a 'specialist area'. Femi asked this question of himself: 'Am I not good for anything else but the colour of my skin?' This was now the challenge, how to escape from the box that had been constructed for him. He stated the need for artists to move away from their embryonic sense of being, to have the freedom to choose.



3.5 Interculturalism, Globalisation and Cosmopolitanism - Dan Rebellato

*Dan Rebellato*³¹ is Professor of Contemporary Theatre at Royal Holloway University of London. He is an award-winning playwright and Editor of the 'Theatre & ...' series of books, including his own '*Theatre & Globalisation*'.³²

Dan began his presentation with reference to the second round of the 2002 Football World Cup, when Italy played South Korea and was knocked out by a late goal by Ahn Jung-Hwan, who played his domestic football for Perugia football club. The owner of Perugia made a statement to the press saying he is no longer welcome at the club, and was quoted as saying, *'I have no intention of paying a salary to someone who has ruined Italian football.'* He was told this was completely illegal, so he had to renege on it the next day. This was one illustration of globalisation and *'the weird unsettling effects it has on our culture and on the possibility of intercultural encounters of various kinds'*. The individuals who play for national football are rooted and local, whereas at a local football team level you clearly see the great global flows of labour. Chelsea was the first English team in history to put out a team with no English players at all. For the owner of Perugia, Ahn Jung-Hwan had betrayed those local ties and loyalties which globalisation has done so much to erase.

Dan explained that he favoured a limited and mainly economic definition of globalisation – simply put as *'the world wide expansion of global capitalism'*. Theatre, however, is very hard to make into a commodity - a stable single object that can be reproduced and bought or sold in a free market. This is because of its 'liveness' and unpredictability. Every performance will be slightly different and it's laborious to transport theatre work.

"While technological advances make it easier to reproduce objects, theatre is made in much the same the way as 300 years ago. There is no technology that makes actors act faster, or makes rehearsals quicker or more efficient. So it doesn't have access to the commodities of scale that other industries have."

The most successful attempt to commodify theatre would be the mega-musical, such as 'Cats', 'Miss Saigon', 'Mamma Mia'. The global box office revenue for 'Phantom of the Opera' is equal to the combined top three film receipts ever. He explained that if you get the rights to produce one of these musicals, they don't just send you the score through the post - you get the score,

³¹ <http://pure.rhul.ac.uk/portal/en/persons/dan-rebellato%282fccb129-f04e-4e0c-bce7-0d1eb77f3e30%29.html>

³² <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/7771773/Theatre-and-Globalization.html>

the sets and lighting design of the original production along with a set of instructions of how to make the show and all the associated merchandising which you have to sell. It's more like an identikit, a franchise. It has a consistency of standard, just like a Big Mac is supposed to taste the same wherever you are in the world. Indeed, it is often referred to as McTheatre.

In reaction – or revulsion - to this development, there has been a revival of very local, specific theatre, such as the community play usually performed by members of the local community about some episode in the history of the local area, or site specific performance by people like Punchdrunk or Shunt, which take, for example, a warehouse and create an environment. These are unrepeatable events, contrary to the spirit of 'The Lion King'. Dan was sceptical if these opposed or were counter to the effect of globalisation. He felt local self sufficiency was dubious when it comes to culture, that cultures should not be walled off from each other. The localist argument that says if you have a particular concern and duty of care within your community then implies a certain disregard for people outside that community, and it can become an institutional selfishness. The opposition is not really between Global and Local. The problem is not the false homogenising universalism/globalism that wants to feed us all Big Macs and make us listen to Andrew Lloyd Webber. The challenge rather is to embrace a richer and deeper universalism which is cosmopolitanism, a belief that everyone on earth is part of a single moral community.

While this universalism might seem abstract and woolly, in the theatre you can care about abstractions. He noted that we do odd things in theatre – *'like care about people that don't exist'*. Theatre offered a great opportunity to think about people who are unlike ourselves, to *'encounter people who are not like you'*. On the one hand you go to the theatre because you want to see yourself, to understand things about yourself, to see yourself reflected back. On the other hand, you also go to encounter things you have never thought of before.

3.6 Evening Performance

Participants had the opportunity to attend a performance at Arcola Theatre, *'Gandhi and Coconuts'* by Bettina Gracias, a comedy about a lonely young Indian wife, a new migrant to the UK, who stays at home while her husband is out at work all day in the city, who finds solace in her imagination, with Mahatma Gandhi and his friends coming around for tea. The piece was directed by Janet Steel and produced by [Kali Theatre](#).³³

4. Day Two

The second day was structured to look at the perspective of policy making³⁴, of campaigning for anti-discrimination and at academic viewpoints. The following questions were used as a guide:

- How do intercultural arts relate to campaigning for equal rights, social justice, and anti-discrimination?
- How can policy stimulate intercultural dialogue through artistic work?
- Is there a specific role for European institutions in the development of intercultural dialogue?
- Does the work being done in intercultural dialogue represent a patchwork of efforts or a unified social movement?

³³ <http://kalitheatre.co.uk/whats-on/gandhi-and-coconuts.html>

³⁴ Helen Burrows, Chief of Staff to Ed Vaizey MP, UK Minister of Culture, had been scheduled to make a presentation on this day, attend, but was unfortunately unable to attend due to illness.



4.1 Working With South Asian Communities - Hardish Virk

Hardish Virk is an Audience Development Consultant, and the Director of [MultiArts Nation Ltd.](http://www.multiartsnation.com)³⁵ Clients have included Arts Council England and National Theatre of Great Britain. He has nearly 20 years experience working in the arts, specifically with a focus on marketing, PR and audience development.

Hardish explained that he wanted to share thoughts on audience development and how thorough research supports strategic marketing. He said he had worked in different sectors - health, social and education - where he had developed the practice he called 'social marketing', which he defined as a process of getting to know your communities in order for them to become audiences. Although, in this instance, he was talking about South Asian communities, he believed the principles applied to other hard to reach communities and non-traditional audiences.

Definition of audiences

- by ethnicity, age, gender, etc
- traditional or existing
- new audiences
- customers
- participants (i.e.: through workshops and outreach)

Social Marketing and New Audience Development

- using non-traditional methods
- based on understanding the community of people you are targeting
- taking into account the social and cultural backgrounds of the community
- developing a tailored marketing/audience development plan

Reasons why we need to use the Social Marketing method

- communities are diverse; groups and individuals need to be considered
- their experiences, expectations, needs, perceptions, religious and social lifestyles can be very different
- if we truly want to engage with the diverse communities living in our locality or the country as a whole, we need to be relevant and accessible and become socially aware of our market
- if our services are publicly funded, then there is a responsibility to make the work accessible to as diverse a community as possible and it also makes business sense.

He noted sometimes organisations were encouraged to engage with specific targets and communities to access particular funding streams – and organisations often will do so to secure funding, but he questioned whether that was actually real engagement. It was vital to build sustainability into the plan, not just as a one off to get access to a pot of funding. He believed that it was important to take the approach of not simply building an audience for a

³⁵ www.multiartsnation.com

single piece of work, but to build it also for the organisation, building, festival, space and brand.

"Research is fundamental. There are sets of communities within communities. There is no such thing as a South Asian community. If we just look at the geography of the people based in this country we can be talking about India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, even East Africa, Kenya, Uganda in terms of migration, and within that a great deal of diversity in terms of faith and lifestyle."

He asked participants to undertake two exercises in order to demonstrate how information can be gathered and shared. In the first exercise, participants were asked to form pairs and tell each other the following information: *Your name and the type of organisation you work for. Your role within the organisation. The profile of communities/audiences you engage with.* This information was shared back with the whole group and the findings noted on flipcharts.

The second exercise was also in pairs, with the following questions, and also fed back to the whole group: *Where do you find your audiences and communities? How do you engage with your audiences and communities? What are the challenges?*

Hardish highlighted the amount of information and issues that had been uncovered through these brief exercises. (This was also an opportunity for all participants to find out about each other.) He stressed the value of speaking to people in order to find out what actually works in a given circumstance. He encouraged people not to separate personal experiences and knowledge from the workplace (which people often do). Exercises like these helped find commonalities and would help an organisation define the needs of the plan. Everyone's contribution and knowledge was valuable. It was important to build on the existing knowledge, both from within an organisation – getting people to share information across departments to avoid duplication of efforts – and with the community, identifying those 'gatekeepers', people who know what's going on and who have influence in the community but also to go beyond and speak with those not affiliated to any organization or community movers and shakers.



4.2 Claiming Public Space for Minorities and Challenging Exclusion – Ansel Wong

Ansel Wong³⁶ is Managing Director at Tsingtac Associates Limited, a change management consultancy. Originally trained as a teacher, he has worked across public and charitable sectors, with an in-depth knowledge and experience of race equality and diversity issues.

Ansel reflected on some of the issues that had arisen from the presentations thus far, which had defined different aspects of the cultural landscapes of the arts that we all occupy and that we all practice in. He called it '*an artscape*'. There were three issues underpinning the cultural sector today: the commodification of art, the homogenisation of art, and the associated flow of people and information (due to global forces) that affect how we converse and communicate across cultural difference and boundaries.

³⁶ <http://archiveshub.ac.uk/features/anselwong.html>

In this landscape were other factors: the legislative framework in the UK – for example, the nine protected characteristics in the new [Equality Act](#)³⁷; an increasing multiplicity in the ways we can be defined; the demographic changes in the cities - 50 per cent predicted to be non-white in the next 10 years; the fragmentation of communities, into ever smaller groups and sub groups, each with own distinctive needs and lifestyle; the dominance of young people, with their own unique characteristics, with the domination of visual literacy as opposed to the written word. Finally, there was a challenge around national identity and a sense of belonging. *'Who is British? Who is not British? Who is ethnic and not ethnic?'* Amidst this complexity, there is a matrix - a kaleidoscope of individuals and groups - that rearranges itself, reforms, reacts and realigns according to different heritages, allegiances, operating along different fault lines and boundaries. He related to the new 'we' as invoked by the Platform for Intercultural Europe – a shifting configuration that does not stand still, 'ticking several boxes' of identity at the same time or none.

"I have lived more years in this country than my country of origin, Trinidad and Tobago. My father came from Canton in China, my mother is of African-Carib-European descent. When my father died - when I was about 2 or 3 - my mother remarried a first generation Hindu from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. I grew up in a Hindu household. Am I part of your South Asian community? Am I part of South East Asian community? Where is my box? What is my box?"

He felt that the gatekeepers, even amongst those present, were blocking the emergence of the new 'we', which is a prerequisite to fusion and a new form of art. To demonstrate what he meant by fusion he spoke about carnival and the 'we' involved in the creation of carnival. From his experience, he then described the complexity of carnival.

The Carnivals in London and in continental Europe, particularly Rotterdam, acknowledge their parentage of the carnival in Trinidad and Tobago. They exist as a network of the diaspora. It is not simply an export of the culture, it is a reinterpretation and redistribution. But what is the accepted orthodoxy among our funders, our performers, our spectators, the media? Is carnival a challenge to the social hierarchy of the host societies, or is it an affirmation of values or of a sense of community? Is it free, is it licentious, is it spontaneous? What are the essences of the event? Is it music, costumes, mythical characterisation, rum, food, colour, grandeur, height, satire, theatre, masquerade? Carnival encompasses extreme forms of performance. It is not a singular art form - it is an integrated framework for a live performance in an open public space, rooted in a diversity of disciplines and discourses revolving around the human body, space, time.

It is also a major festival, live art - in constant motion - taking on the shifting demography of the community it is held in. It is not a Caribbean festival, it is British or Dutch. Wherever it appears, wherever it situates itself, it assumes this identity, the realities of those communities. The space it occupies is contested - it must be controlled, observed, policed. There are exclusionary measures and pressure from the policing authorities, saying it is a risk in terms of health and safety, of terrorism, of crowd control. The engagement with the audience is becoming limited, so you process rather than perform, rather like the Lord Mayor's Show. The carnival is measured by the extent to which the number of arrests and public disorder is reduced year by year, not by the brilliance of its masquerade, not the innovation of its art forms, or the choreography of the dancers, not by the creative composers or its designers.

The contested space is occupied by the *roti* vendor and the Polish hot dog seller; it is occupied by the forbidden, the ritualistic, the moral, the immoral, the formal, the informal, the black, the white, the Asian, the African, the Jamaican, the Brazilian, the heathen, the Christian, by the samba band and the t-shirt man. The challenge for us is not whether any one constituency has a legitimate right to occupy the space but how each will use this space and develop it for the benefit of everybody. This battle for the physical and artistic space mirrors the wider struggle for recognition, for justice, for equal rights.

³⁷http://www.fpb.org/hottips/601/The_Equality_Act_2010:_protected_characteristics_and_types_of_discrimination.htm



4.3 Graham Jeffery – Navigating Cultural Policy (Artists, Communities, Conflicts and Conversations)

Graham Jeffery³⁸ is a researcher and academic in arts education, creative learning and cultural policy. He is based at the [University of the West of Scotland](http://www.uws.ac.uk).³⁹ He is the author of book 'The Creative College: Building a Successful Learning Culture in the Arts', published in 2005.

Drawing on his background in education and the arts, Graham focused on policy matters - how to navigate policy and what is and what is not considered policy.

What is policy?

As Graham defined it, policy essentially directs how money is spent and how resources are allocated. It determines which organisation gets what, how and under what conditions.

Why do we need policy?

Graham asked us to consider why there is any need for cultural policy at all. In a statistical sense, the need was to achieve fair representation of people from different backgrounds in the arts industries and to ensure equitable access to cultural resources. He pointed out that people from BME backgrounds were proportionately under-represented, particularly in the higher echelons of large cultural organisations - despite years and years of positive and anti-discrimination initiatives advancing equal opportunity policies. The arts sector is not an inclusively staffed sector. Rather recruitment depends highly on networking, and there are 'gatekeepers' in place. One reason why cultural policy is necessary is that it is important to think about those issues and what can be done to address them. Another reason for policy is democratic notions of access - who gets access to culture, what access do they get, whose culture is being represented in arts institutions?

Cultural policy is a contested space. Artists get caught up in the shaping of strategies, in the discourses about policies - whether this is about the creative industries, notions of social inclusion or the idea of neighbourhood renewal (as espoused by the previous Labour government). He believed all artistic practice existed within these symbolic struggles, in between what artists want to do or choose to do, how their work is shaped and discussed, how it is funded or not funded.

Policy makers like to think in very functional terms – 'we put x in, we get y out'. So artists construct various functional arguments: around the economic value of the arts –in talking about the creative industries, economic development, enterprise, and export products – and around social benefits – what the arts do for communities. Anthropological arguments are also made – that culture is a basic human gift, that art is a fundamental characteristic of what it takes to be human. This last is the one artists themselves may feel most comfortable with, but it is too philosophical for politicians. They don't like philosophy - on the whole they want functionality. Artists and cultural practitioners have an ambivalent relationship to policy makers. Policy makers like simple answers like: art is good because it contributes to urban vitality, good design creates nice places for people to live, public art improves the environment and so on.

³⁸ <http://www.generalpraxis.blogspot.com/>

³⁹ <http://www.uws.ac.uk/schoolsdepts/mlm/staff/graham-jeffery.asp>

Graham questioned how the new Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government will deal with the fractures between market driven, entrepreneurial models of culture (which are now being pushed in UK) and the international charters on culture and human rights which Britain has signed up to, which are about protection and rights. He said that cultural policy is clearly not a single thing. There are many layers of policy, from international charters on Human Rights and how governments choose to interpret them to national cultural policy and policies at a city level, even policies at a neighbourhood level. There are the policies of individual artistic or cultural organisations. There is very rarely any congruence between what is being said at these different levels. The way cultural policy is experienced between practitioners is as a space of fractures and fissures, of contradictions and difficulties.

Currently, we are seeing a fundamental shift in the way that we publicly fund cultural activities and education. The infrastructure for funding and for training people is being stripped. Even just within the confines of the UK - supposedly a single country, which in fact we experience as a complex matrix of conflicting and fractured little communities of all kinds - we have totally different trajectories for cultural policy, for higher education policy and so on. For example Scotland endorses the principle of free higher education - where young people pay nothing to go to university, while even higher tuition fees are introduced in England.

Graham then spoke of his background in music and music education and work in Newham in East London (at Newham Sixth Form College from 1994) before the Olympics and before anyone had heard about the borough. Working with a whole cluster of arts organisations such as Theatre Royal Stratford East, and East London Dance, they constructed a curriculum, which was about how to build collaborations out from the college into the communities, creating a huge amount of interchange. He then went to the University of East London to set up a programme called 'Performing Arts In the Community', established in 1999, an early attempt to give people skills to work in intercultural ways in community engaged, participatory practices.

"The very fundamental principle that led to this idea - that we could begin to change the way institutions operated in relation to very diverse communities - was the clear understanding that if you want to be an inclusive institution, you have to change the institution. The institution has to change in order to understand and engage with what students are bringing to that experience. It was not about getting the students to change to fit in with the values of the institution."

Policy was played out in struggles over the curriculum in schools. The Education Minister Michael Gove recently spoke about how young people should be the authors of their own future. However, Gove also said he was '*passionately concerned that we introduce more and more young people to the best that has been thought and written*'.⁴⁰ Graham emphasised the contradiction apparent here - on the one hand, young people are to be the authors of their own futures and culture, and on the other hand a paradigm of knowledge is applied to them which says 'there are these canonical texts which you will learn'. There is a separation of knowledge which can be tested, measured and assessed, where the knowledge resides with the master teacher at the front of the room - from the idea that we learn and know things through active learning. While some do involve the testing of technique, the arts are fundamentally active forms of learning. Culture is the hidden dimension of absolutely everything. Everything is underpinned by cultural practice. As [Raymond Williams](#)⁴¹ said, culture is one of the most difficult words in the English language to define - it's very hard to pin down.

Graham spoke about the rebranding and reinvention of Newham which occurred as the Olympic juggernaut rolled into town, about the tensions between an area of economic and social deprivation and the creation of urban spectacles proposed as solutions to some of these

⁴⁰ http://www.michaelgove.com/content/michael_gove_speech_westminster_academy

⁴¹ <http://pubpages.unh.edu/~dml3/880williams.htm>

problems – whereby areas could be presented by policy makers as culturally rich and economically poor at the same time. He told of the many narratives of the East End - as *'the ultimate urban laboratory for capitalist intervention, the ultimate urban laboratory for representations of criminality and deviance, ever since Jack London and beyond'*. These places are deeply fractured, fissured, contradictory, caught up in these enormous global processes over which individual people largely feel they have very little control, places of struggle and cultural contention.

Culture gets promoted as a solution. City governments are interested in urban boosterism, in place making, in selling their place as culturally distinctive. He noted how both Boris Johnson (the Mayor of London) and the new incoming national government have continued to use the language of cultural inclusion, the language of urban multiculturalism, while systematically stripping out the funding for the kinds of programmes which enable those things to happen.

Graham said that he liked the idea of culture as a negotiated space rather than a dialogical space. It encapsulated that idea of power relations. He posed the question, *'What is the role of the artist within those negotiations?'*⁴²

"Should the word 'dialogue' be replaced by the word 'negotiation'? The word negotiation at least begins to acknowledge the power relations that exist in a conversation with two people, or a community and an institution (such as a university)."

Graham posed the questions: *How do we engage with Policy? What evidence can we bring to policy-making?* He proposed the following:

We have evidence of a **body of knowledge about practice**: We know how people learn instruments, there are skills and techniques and methods which are inherent to being human.

We have evidence of **processes**: There are increasing number of studies which document artistic processes and ways of working with communities (i.e. the applied theatre movement, participatory music making).

We have **outcomes**: The work itself is an outcome, a product. There are wider social outcomes, though clearly contested. *'Can art promote intercultural understanding? Can art change peoples perceptions?'* Yes - but what do we mean by that? There is a need for more precise evidence and specific examples, from the conversations that surround the work.

"Engagement with policy is not engagement with a monolith. It's a fragmented and crazy world. The policy world is as much a hall of mirrors as the artistic world - and if you understand that, it becomes much easier to navigate, because you're not trying to find the Holy Grail all the time. You're just trying to find something you can hang your practice on and somewhere you can negotiate your practice into."

Are there artistic ways of producing artistic evidence? Reflective cycles of work? Sophisticated studies draw on a lot of these approaches - social value, artistic value, evaluation of the products, how they work. There are hybrid forms of evidence gathering. But this doesn't reduce itself down to a simplistic approach that policy makers can easily understand. However, he concluded that do need far more sophisticated models of what we mean by artistic practice than simply the reductive ones that say it is economic, social, cultural. It is a more variegated and sophisticated model.

⁴² In relation to these questions, Graham credited the work of a doctoral student Chu Yuan Chu at Grays School of Art, an intercultural practitioner who works in socially engaged visual arts.
<http://www2.rgu.ac.uk/subj/ats/research/students/chu.html>

4.4 Discussion Group 1

Facilitated by Michael Walling

Contributions made during the discussion can be grouped under the following themes:

Communication with Policy Makers

- There was recognition of the need to construct a more effective mode of discourse between the cultural sector and the policy sector.
- A '*cultural language of evidence*' needs to be developed - language, which is very clear and understandable to policy makers.
- There was a worry that negotiation between a funder and an artist is almost always '*a conspiracy to deceive each other*'.
- The need for improved networking was highlighted – smaller organisations coming together to achieve specific goals related to policy or funding at a local, regional, national or even European level.
- Policy must be questioned and positive opportunities sought to engage with and challenge the '*gatekeepers*'.

Evaluation and Evidence

- The value of statistical information was recognised – gathering systematic data about demographics. It was also recognised that it required considerable resources to gather sufficient amounts of data.
- Smaller cultural organisations do not have the resources to gather sufficient quantities of data and therefore often rely on soft data – anecdotes, comments.
- Studies of cultural impact have been either very quantitative and data driven (numbers of participants, age, social class, ethnicity, qualifications achieved) or qualitative (utilising people's stories and experiences). Participants agreed with Graham's assertion of a need for a more hybridised model in order to make evidence robust.

Threats and Opportunities

- With cuts in municipality and local authority funding, alongside those of national funding bodies, there is a reduction of the basic infrastructure of support.
- The coming struggle for control over local cultural resources in the UK – local library closing, the schools being shrunk, the swimming pool shutting - was a unifying struggle.
- In an environment of '*cut and decline*' in the UK there would be more commonalities to be found with practitioners and people in the developing world; facing the issues of access to basic cultural resources, access to spaces to make work, access to a video camera to film it, networks to '*get stuff out there*', the ability to enable people to participate.
- It was noted that many cultural organisations in '*the rich fat West, sucking on the milk of government funding for our lavish outreach projects*' are now finding themselves with fewer resources. This may create an opportunity for greater inventiveness, '*resourcefulness*' and solidarity: working in partnership, sharing resources as well as intelligence and developing a collective voice to lobby commissioners of cultural projects, funders and other stakeholders.

- Some participants noted that artists needed to be part of a wider social and political struggle in which '*we are a manifestation rather than think we are something special*' and not simply concern ourselves with the arts sector alone.
- There were parallels with the activism of the 60s and 70s beginning to emerge, a re-engagement of young people in political and social struggle.



4.5 Discussion Group 2

Facilitated by Sabine Frank

Contributions made during the discussion can be grouped under the following themes:

Identity and Representation

- Different communities do decide for themselves how open or closed they wish to be. It was suggested that most people feel proud of their culture and wish to show and share it with outsiders.
- Others expressed the need to talk more of fusion rather than integration. When a country receives new people, its culture changes irreversibly and the newcomers are also changed.
- It was suggested that individuals could only truly represent themselves and not any community or group. It was considered problematic if individuals are considered to be the 'ambassadors' of a whole culture.
- Young people are creating new identities, often by [using social media networks](#),⁴³ within which it is increasingly difficult to tell the difference between Asian, Black, Somali, African, Afro-Caribbean young people in terms of their cultural allegiances, lifestyle and dress. They are ignoring the gatekeepers of faith or politics, the Arts Council and their parents.
- It was recognised that much of diversity arts and creativity was hidden from view. Where artists have engaged with political movements – for example, with *The Indian Workers Association* - much of this engagement happened at a local community level, 'under the radar' and thus often in isolation.

Working with Complexity

- The view was expressed that too many generalisations and simplifications of specific cultures are being made – broad brush descriptions which 'ghettoise' communities.

⁴³<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-12193773>

- Likewise, it was emphasised that cultures are not monolithic blocks but a complex web of identities – this could lead to the isolation of different communities from each other.
- However, there was also caution that complexity should not be used as an excuse for inaction - complexity is a process of understanding the cultural landscape of the UK and Europe which must nevertheless enable political decision-making.

Working with Policy Makers

- There was a suggestion that if we insist on recognition of a complex matrix of 'super-diversity', then we may create our own barriers between practitioners and policy makers, who need pragmatic ways of making policies for cultural diversity.
- Given that policy makers function with the logic: '*I am using money for the public good and someone has to give me evidence that what I'm funding is a public good*', asking them to consider too many cultural complexities, might have the adverse effect: 'Let's ignore it' or 'Oh, it will happen anyway.'
- It was suggested that cultural practitioners and policy makers should work together as allies. It was proposed that our biggest problem was not government or political structures or policy makers but the commercial entertainment industry, which by way of reaping the benefits of mass production, homogenises us, reduces us to consumers with fixed profiles.
- There needed to be a greater concerted effort from artists and arts organisations to engage with policy makers. Cross-sectoral and cross-departmental partnerships are key. There had been a lack of willingness to share and work in true partnership, and there had not been sufficient individual responsibility to tackle the issues of devising and implementing policy collectively.⁴⁴

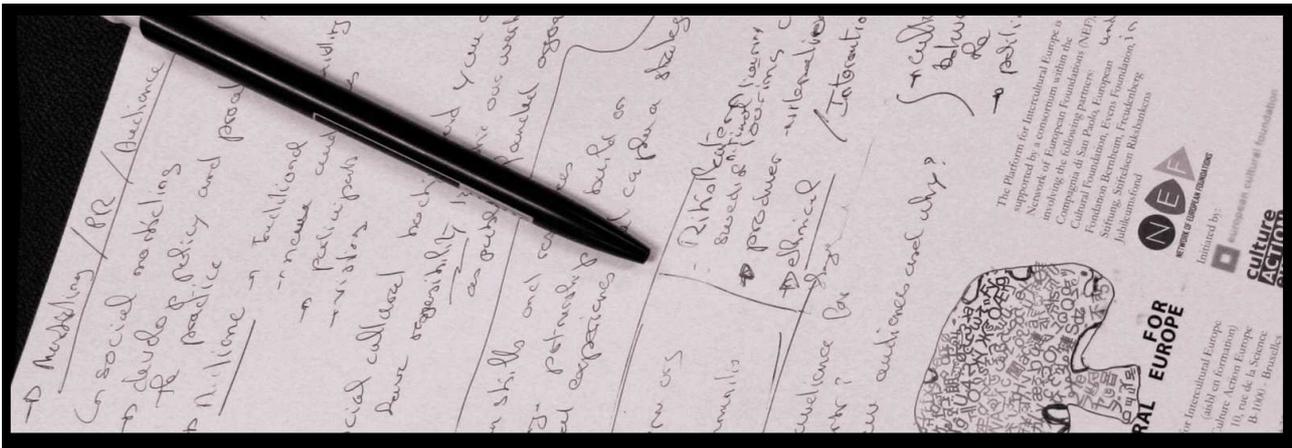
4.6 Film Presentation

The Practice Exchange ended with a screening of the film '*Rumba from the Jungle*', a short documentary film looking at the evolution of African People's Dance in the UK. It was produced by [MeWe Youth Theatre](#).⁴⁵ The film combined a number of interviews with practitioners about the role of African dance in UK society with reportage of a community arts project, engaging diverse young people in an African dance performance for Kingston Carnival. [Vernon Kizza Nxumalo](#),⁴⁶ a member of the youth theatre, described the context of the film and explained how he had become involved with the arts.

⁴⁴ There are some examples of emerging networks willing to address these issues. For example, see http://www.empaf.com/groups/empaf_federation or <http://www.a-n.co.uk/air>

⁴⁵ <http://www.mewe.org.uk/youth/>

⁴⁶ <http://www.vernon.moonfruit.com/#/nayt/4544837651>



5. Summary

While the guiding questions provided a useful starting point for the Practice Exchange, the presentations and discussions diverged widely, covering a whole range of examples of intercultural work. However, some key points have arisen from the two days.

Campaigning for equal rights, justice and anti-discrimination

- While much has been achieved in the field by culturally diverse, independent arts organisations and by many outstanding artists of non-British origins, equity in public funding distribution remains an issue, as does access to national cultural institutions. The struggle for free, full and equal participation of all in cultural life irrespective of their colour, origin or beliefs carries on – and is indeed sharpened in the current climate of ‘austerity’.
- The key protagonists in organisations dealing with diversity face the challenge of pursuing the cause of equity without suffocating in a “tick-box” world of classification and the expectation that they will represent or exclusively serve “their community”. The multiplicity of identities in the 21st century UK resist easy definition and challenge ideas of national identity.
- With the exception of the Scottish Artists Union (specific to Scotland), there is no national representation or lobbying body for the arts, which also campaign on political issues – though some individuals may be members of trade unions such as BECTU (the UK’s media and entertainment trade union). It was pointed out that networks of activists had existed in the past (late 1970s through to the late 1990s), through groups such as the Association of Community Artists, the Shelton Trust and the Campaign for Cultural Democracy, though there exists barely any documentation of [this history](#).⁴⁷
- It may be argued that many of the campaign aims of these organisations were indeed fulfilled, and thus the flow of activism decreased: in the 1990s, funding for the arts exponentially increased, and significant strategic bodies such as the Arts Council were restructured to take account of demands (shifting away from an approach based on art forms to multi-disciplinary teams with specialist interests in audience development, participation, engagement, arts and health, disability, diversity, business partnerships and so on). Local authorities employed arts development teams as part of their local government provision (whereas 30 years ago there were none). Major arts institutions looked beyond their buildings and deployed outreach and education teams in the community. ‘Fine’ artists began to describe their work (whether related to a gallery space or not) as ‘socially engaged’. However, in the current climate of austerity and retrenchment, much of this may disappear and the vital development and campaigning role again falls back upon the artists themselves.

⁴⁷ Owen Kelly’s book on the development of the Community Arts movement in the UK, ‘Community, Art and the State, Storming the Citadels’, published by Comedia in 1984, is one of the few existing examples.

- Participants felt there was a strong political awareness in the field (of UK government structures and strictures). Cultural work was not insular. They expressed to each other a clear understanding of the impact of their actions and their projects - if not an easily recognisable way of measuring impact for policy makers. This awareness though did not necessarily translate into areas of policy, action or even solidarity. It was pointed out that there had been a high level of competition over funds between arts organisations in the UK. In recent years, there has not been much cross-sectoral collaboration, or a common united voice to articulate the value of the work.
- The advent of social networking technologies, and their wholesale adoption by young people, offered new and exciting opportunities to advocate, to campaign, to communicate and to network. However, many participants felt there needed to be more advocacy - through the production and dissemination of documentation through as wide a range of media as possible. The achievements of practitioners in diversity arts and the positive experiences of intercultural dialogue were hidden from sight, away from the mainstream. There is a need to celebrate and promote these achievements.
- There was discussion about the role of conflict in shaping and defining culture – in that creativity can come out of tension and difficulty and struggle. It was noted that creativity often doesn't come out of simple situations *'where everyone knows what they're supposed to be doing'*. It comes out of a contested situation where people are wrestling with issues and ideas. Indeed, it may be said that conflict is a prerequisite for creative practice. Much of the work of diversity arts over the years had precisely engaged with these struggles for equal rights, social justice, and anti-discrimination. In terms of advocacy perhaps this is an appropriate time to recall what Frederick Douglass, an escaped slave and social reformer in 19th century United States of America, once said: *"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."*

Social and political engagement

- The experiences shared by participants revealed that work in the field of Intercultural Dialogue was a positive force in breaking down barriers and prejudices. As was stated by Jatinder Verma, cultural work had the ability to engage the heart as well as the head.
- Participants felt that all arts practice was intercultural on a number of levels – through negotiations about identity and practice, in devising and producing art with a diverse range of people (class, age, race, experience), then in engaging with an audience and in reflecting on their reaction to it. In this sense, social and political engagement was an essential feature of the work, as cultural workers have the tools for attitudinal change.
- Globalisation and rapid shifts in forms of communication require us to develop a greater engagement with complexity, uncertainty and the unknown. Intercultural work is a way of understanding and dealing with the impact of change and the increasingly complex world we live in. This is particularly true of life in urban centres, where cities produce (and encourage) more fluid identities and the characteristics of human populations change fast.
- Intercultural work is a way of *'experiencing the Other'*, eroding stereotypes and increasing understanding and empathy through personal engagement. We are changed by our interaction with other people. Exposure to other cultures and different life experiences enriches our own lives and perspectives. Our social and intellectual mobility is increased through this stimulus.
- The idea of *'curiosity'* surfaced in several discussions – it was suggested that if we can increase curiosity in 'minority' cultures among 'host' or dominant culture, then we will break down prejudices. If on the other hand we try to tackle prejudices directly, they might reinforce and dialogue will not take place.
- Culture in the UK is the result of a historical process of fusion – a country where *'the favourite food is pizza and a curry'*, where *'the language comes from Latin and Saxon and Hindi'*, and where the music comes from both the Blues and from Celtic folk traditions. Intercultural work recognises and celebrates this.

- Artistic work has many layers. It is about perception and reaction, narrative and sense-making, human relationships and emotion, and about questioning and playing with the rules rather than blindly following them. Participants and presenters suggested that these are precisely the qualities needed if we are to navigate the currents of transition and change towards a more sustainable, effective and fulfilling global culture.
- The 'gatekeepers' (whether in government or in funding bodies or national institutions) need to be engaged with in a more effective way, perhaps by setting specific aims and objectives. For example, one aim might be to encourage a broader curiosity about 'world performance', as it was felt there was a dominance of Eurocentric-European-American playwrights in theatre in the UK. As one participant commented: "*A quarter of the world's humanity is Chinese. How many stories are not being told? Why would I not want to at least hear some of a quarter of the world's experience of what it means to be a human being. Let's be curious about the world, let's not just listen to the world as dictated to us by a very small clique of people.*"

The role for European institutions in the development of intercultural dialogue

- As was pointed out early in the event, the UK can be insular, highly parochial and inward looking – 'Little Englanders'. People in the UK do not automatically see themselves as part of Europe - in conversation, people will refer to 'on the continent' or 'in Europe', as if the British Isles are separated from Europe by one thousand miles of water, rather than (at its narrowest) a mere thirty four kilometres. Participants felt that engagement with artists, agencies and organisations working across Europe provided valuable insights and examples to learn from. These opportunities are greatly welcomed. However, engagement with the political institutions of the European Union and their role in cultural-policy-making is another step, which is not easily taken.
- There is ongoing confusion between definitions of art and culture in policy, which need to be untangled. In some respects, the policy statements from funding bodies can be very broad (and vague) and '*all things to all people*'. The current [DCMS policy statement](#)⁴⁸ was pointed to, as one example, being reduced in effect to four points, which some participants felt '*might as well simply say, Art is a good thing*'. Artists felt they were often spending inordinate amounts of time on constructing reductive policy statements rather than creating work. On the other hand, the DCMS have responsibility for broadcasting - this is a dominant area of cultural policy, where there are indeed highly detailed policy documents. There is a pertinent role for EU institutions in facilitating the sharing of good practice in policy from across Europe, providing different and new approaches.
- Participants felt that policy often focused on how well something was managed rather than asking, '*Was it any good?*' Participants wondered if there were ways to evaluate which didn't involve monetary (or other quantitative) measures? There needed to be hybrid and more sophisticated ways to express why the arts matter: the value of arts in terms of education, of giving the voiceless a voice, of the health and well-being benefits it bestows etc.
- There were discussions on questions of evidence: How can the claims that the arts make for themselves as being '*transformational or revolutionary or deeply empowering*' be corroborated? Many grand statements are made, by a range of institutions including the Arts Council itself as a justification for funding. [How do we know any of that is true?](#)⁴⁹ Exposure to examples of models of practice from outside of the UK could provide inspiration and knowledge on how to navigate these shifting cross-cultural tides of opinion.

⁴⁸ Our mission is to realise the nation's creative and sporting potential and our goals are to offer world class culture, media and sport, to unlock talent and to improve well-being. We aim to improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries. DCMS, July 2010

⁴⁹ There are some interesting reflections on this to be found in this article at - http://twentiethcentury.com/saul/who_will_be_transformed.htm

- Some participants suggested that the challenge was to make the huge demographic shifts of the last 30 years visible in the governance bodies and leadership positions of the cultural flagship institutions and touring theatre companies: equitable representation of diversity in positions of power, influence, and advocacy. Again, a non-UK perspective and experience on how other institutions had tackled these issues would be greatly welcomed.

- Participants recognised that there was a gap between the language used by those working in policy and those working in cultural organisations - this created a barrier to forming effective partnerships. This kind of Practice Exchange (in Sidcup) provided an opportunity to learn more about the impact of policy on their work. Having opportunities to engage with transversal, international networks (such as the Platform for Intercultural Europe) and learn from them were regarded as essential. Policy makers and cultural practitioners needed to come together more.

6. Recommendations

Overview of suggestions for actions made by participants or synthesized from the discussion:

Recommendations	Field of Action	Addressees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and share the language: Research commonalities and differences between the language of cultural policy and that of cultural practice. This could be done by means of a series of workshops over one year with the aim of publishing a glossary of useful or new terminology. Develop new partner relationships to deliver these workshops. 	Research	Civic organisations, Researchers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on good practice: Support documentation and dissemination of good practice in intercultural dialogues. 	Research	Platform for Intercultural Europe with its resource collection on Intercultural Dialogue "Panorama"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and share the conversation: Commission a model project with cultural practitioners, which can demonstrate 'best practice' to policy makers. This can result in an annual publication for dissemination on the web or in Internet forums –over a three-year period. 	Cultural Practice	Arts Agencies, Funding Bodies, Civic Organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and share the ideas: Help uncover and develop arguments about what the arts can offer to the making of intercultural societies, and their benefits to community cohesion. This can be done through seeking partners for publication, seminars and documentation. 	Cultural Practice, research	Practitioners and researchers from the arts and from other fields

- **Establish comprehensive evaluation models:** Studies of cultural impact have been either very quantitative and data driven (numbers of participants, age, social class, ethnicity, qualifications achieved) or qualitative (utilising people’s stories and experiences). Both forms of analysis need to be combined in order to make evidence robust.

Research, policy-making

Research institutes and their funding bodies
- **Create and share the evidence:** Examine the need for a ‘think tank’ on culture and evaluation – what exists out there, if anything? What could be brought into being to gather trans-national data from local sources? Seek to create an alliance with academics (who are exploring in the arenas of social sciences, arts and humanities) for the establishment of effective methods of evaluation.

Research, policy-making

European Commission,
National policy makers,
Academics,
Civic Organisations
- **Reduce and navigate policy incongruence:** There are many layers of governmental policy and many different policies of individual artistic or cultural organisations. They are rarely congruent and practitioners experience them as difficult. While policy-makers and lobbyists should work to ensure more coherence, practitioners should pick what policy allows them to claim support for their work.

Policy-making, cultural practice

EU and national policy-makers,
Civil servants,
Cultural practitioners
- **Change institutions:** Institutions have to change internally before they can be more inclusive of the diverse communities around them.

Policy-making, organisational practice

Cultural Institution and their funding bodies
- **Strengthen synergies and mobilisation capacities of cultural organisations:** Smaller organisations need to form stronger networks around specific goals related to policy or funding at a local, regional, national or even European level.

Networking

Local, national and European Civic Organisations
- **Build alliances:** In times of public funding cuts, grass-roots organisations must take recourse to greater inventiveness and solidarity. They should emphasise working in partnership, sharing resources as well as intelligence and developing a collective voice to lobby commissioners of cultural projects, funders and other stakeholders.

Networking

Grass-roots, local, national and EU civic organisations

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ANNEX

Event evaluation questionnaires: Summary of forms submitted

Response : 12 out of 46 participants

How they found out about the event :

Invitation : 6 – Platform website/email : 4 – Border Crossings website/ mailing list : 2

Word of mouth : 0 – Other : 0

Who replied (when specified) :

Male : 8 – Female : 4

Age groups : 25-40 : 5 – 41-55 : 6 – Not specified : 1

None considered themselves to have a disability

Ethnic group : white : 8 – Chinese : 2 – Asian : 1 – Other ethnic group : 1

Not living in the UK : 2 (SE and SI)

Reasons to attend :

Platform and Steering Group members – General / work interest in intercultural arts, policy or theatre – Exchange of ideas, learn and debate - Academic interest (research on inter-dialogue in migrant literature) – Worry about the situation of the arts in the UK.

Comments :

The overall comments are positive, the sessions were seen as informative, stimulating and even provocative, well facilitated, useful, with a good overview of various perspectives and of the UK situation. The issues addressed were seen as important and it was felt that a good balance was struck between artists and policy speakers.

Some wished more time could have been devoted to reflection, discussion and round table sessions with practice exchange and concrete examples of pro-active work. A marked interest was expressed to get to know “European” colleagues better, share views, formulate needs, find solutions together, ways to reach them and translate them into policies.

The absence of government and “policy-makers” was felt.

It was suggested to add an audience perspective and that the process could be a bit more participants driven. One participant expressed a doubt as to whether giving so much room to the issue of minorities was a “good door” to Intercultural Europe.

All in all, the exchange was considered as an inspiring and good overall starting point with hopes to continue with similar initiatives.