



PRAXIS, PROJECT NEWS, RESOURCES /// MONDAY 6 DECEMBER 2021

Publication Launch: Transforming Conflict and Displacement through Arts and Humanities (December 2021)

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PRAXIS is delighted to announce the launch of a new publication '[Transforming Conflict and Displacement through Arts and Humanities](#)', by Post-doctoral Researcher Dr. [Robyn Gill-Leslie](#), following the launch of our flagship report '[Heritage for Global Challenges](#)' by Dr. Francesca Giliberto in February, 2021.

“This report brings together vast amounts of insights which are relevant, timely and useful, given the current fragility of our world. It also brings to light how equitable partnerships for research look, and the value they bring to communities and societies in fragile settings, and, what this means for progressing towards the Sustainable Development Goals.”

– Dr Neelam Raina. Associate Professor of Design and Development and Challenge Leader for Security, Protracted Conflict, Refugees and Displacement, Global Challenges Research Fund, UKRI

[Transforming Conflict and Displacement through Arts and Humanities](#) draws on data compiled from 113 unique Global Challenges Research Fund Conflict and Displacement projects and explores what Dr. Robyn Gill-Leslie calls the “missing middle”, a robust

discussion of arts-based methodologies— “where methods stem from, how projects adapted or changed their methods, and how methods affected the project outcome.

Featuring 10 dynamic case studies from AHRC-GCRF funded projects that exemplify the practical value of arts and humanities methods in unstable contexts, this report addresses the critical gap of *how* arts-based methods are effecting significant change at the local, national, and international level, and addressing the Sustainable Development Goals.

“Things we find difficult, you tried to show it in front of us, which motivated us...We really like everyone’s story a lot. Everything is to learn from the stories ... keep going on, help each other, don’t just sit quietly, everything is there. This is the first time someone has come here, talked to us, asked us. So, we also felt good about it...and this itself is an honour to us.”

– Audience member reacting to the theatre performance hosted by the AHRC-GCRF funded project ‘An Exploration of Mental Health and Resilience Narratives of Migrant Workers in India Using Community Theatre Methodology

Case Study: An Exploration of Mental Health and Resilience Narratives of Migrant Workers in India Using Community Theatre Methodology

**The following extract is adapted from the ‘An Exploration of Mental Health and Resilience Narratives of Migrant Workers in India Using Community Theatre Methodology’ case study featured in the report by Dr. Robyn Gill Leslie (2021).*

The Mental Health Resilience India project focused on co-creation of mental health and resilience knowledge to raise mental health awareness and support through community theatre engagement with migrant slum dwellers.

In terms of mental health research, the “deficit” story has already been told—what people lack or are missing from their mental health: anxiety, depression, etc. This project attempted to turn this into a more positive story—working with a community to see what they have overcome, dealt with, and managed. As Principal Investigator Raghunath Raghavan states, “*this was a method geared towards finding joy*”.

To develop a community theatre output, the project focused on asking participants to plot the stories of their lives and the journeys they had made, from which a theatre script would be devised and performed. By actively avoiding “idioms of distress” in these stories, the project team instead focused on how people had *navigated* their lives through difficult issues: destitution, religious difference, family stress.

The outcome was “Sunu Sunu” (“Listen listen”), a short narrative drama with actors from the internal migrant community and the theatre partners in Pune. This work enabled the internal migrant community to reflect on how they constructed resilience for mental health and wellbeing; and helped community members to work together to construct a story of resilience.

This research project highlights the need for a more holistic approach to mental health of internal migrants and the importance of recognizing a range of “ordinary” resources for resilience, including family members and inner strength. In particular, the research project demonstrated that if ‘we’ understand the *capacities* of people and communities to co-produce and participate in their own good health and well-being, this could reduce their need for top-down, expert-driven interventions.



Theatre interaction with community members. Photo by Raghunath Raghavan

Read the full case study and more in the report [here](#), available to download now!

We want to hear from you! What stood out most from the report for you? How do the themes and ideas explored in the report resonate with your own research or how might you use or apply some of the learning from the report to your future research? Let us know at changingthestory@leeds.ac.uk

TAGS: AHRC ARTS AND HUMANITIES CONFLICT DISPLACEMENT GCRF METHODS PRAXIS PUBLICATION UKRI

