

A Manifesto for Change

**On the ethics
and practice of
teaching and
researching
migration in the
political now!**

Our aim

Our aim is to foreground ethical pedagogy in our practice.

The term 'Ethical' is used here in the sense of being mindful of the outcomes or larger intersections of our practice and then implementing this with conviction to challenge binaries, boundaries and engage as many as possible.

This relates to education contexts within the academic institution and within real-world settings in the context of collaborative work with partner organisations and communities, and so takes us into and outside of the classroom.

Within the framework of our manifesto for change, we commit to a re-centring of ethical practice in teaching, learning and research.

We commit to active learning and reflexive research practice that acknowledges and confronts what feels uncertain and uncomfortable, and where this reflection becomes automatic in the learning environment, not a forced assignment or a box ticking exercise.

We seek to foreground the concerns of communities and the third sector, and reflect this in what we teach, how we teach and in our research questions and methodological approaches to research and those of our students.

In our Teaching and Learning we commit to:

- ✦ **Re-centring fundamental principles of humanity, justice, and equality in our teaching practice. Do we make time to do this? How might we do this? How might this connect to real-world contexts in the political now?**
- ✦ **Checking our 'defaults' and 'go-to's' in our teaching: Where are my starting points historically, culturally, politically, socially? What are my motivations for selecting this subject matter and why now and why me? Whose stories do I include? Whose do I omit? Whose stories am I aware of? Why? What place do my politics and values have in how I teach and the decisions I make about what I teach? How does my practice privilege certain knowledges over others? Do I encourage students to check their 'defaults' and 'go-to's' in their learning?**
- ✦ **Inviting partner organisations and communities in. Do we talk to research partners and communities about ways to include them in our teaching, to bring out of class learning into the class? How can we be creative about innovative learning strategies that can also provide spaces for building networks between the student community and real-world practice (campaign work, volunteering). Are we working with partners to identify opportunities to develop curricula together? Are we making space and time for these conversations to develop. Are we action-oriented collaborators in the classroom? How are we risk aware? Are we creating safe spaces for dialogue but also brave spaces where students may express controversial and challenging views and are asked to be accountable and be challenged by partners, where they may feel discomfort, vulnerable and unsafe as we confront together the challenges of teaching, learning and researching migration in the political now.**

- ✦ **Moving beyond the headlines: We cannot lose context, we must historicize our teaching practice, ensuring students understand the historical context, whilst being responsive to the political now. We commit to pushing back against knowledge only delivered in easily accessible bite-size chunks. We commit to ensuring that we integrate space for slow and reflective learning on 'how we got to this point' and thinking on 'where this could go next' in our teaching programmes.**
- ✦ **Encouraging critical media literacy skills in teaching and learning. What words and labels do we use? How do we frame debates? What tropes are we trapped in? How do we support students in understanding these frames? Critical self-reflexivity means we must also turn these questions on ourselves and consider the frames we use and the ethics of our practice in our language, metaphors and selection of material for teaching.**
- ✦ **Using ongoing evaluation and feedback as an active learning process. Don't leave it until the end of a module. As we teach, check in. Ask students and remind them to ask themselves whether the topic is useful and relevant, and how? Do we do enough sense checking? Has thinking changed over the course of learning? What are students still wondering about? Are they proposing their own independent research that is viable academically but also beneficial to research partners and communities? How do we create spaces for reflections to be made about connections between learning and practice, in both in and out of class contexts.**

In our Research we commit to:

- ✦ Asking ourselves what use is my research going to be to the organisation or communities? It's easy to work out how we will benefit when we have a non-academic research partner, but if we are approaching an organisation or communities, or we have students interested in approaching an organisation or communities, then be explicit in how the organisation or communities will benefit. Ask what is needed? Who is the research for? Are we extracting, collaborating, co-producing, exploiting? Ask our research partners what knowledges do they need? Have an open and frank discussion about whether it is "further research" that is needed, or action.**
- ✦ Defining together what is meant by a meaningful collaborative relationship. Setting clear expectations of each other can be critical to understanding what constitutes a meaningful relationship, why such an approach is necessary, what it might look like in practice, and the underlying ethics involved. What is the appropriate role of researchers in this organisation or community? What is the appropriate role for partners in the research project? What are the roles for partners in the educational context? What methods are we using to decide and evaluate on this together? How do we co-create brave spaces for critical discussion and reflection on what is needed for our collaborations to happen in meaningful ways? How can we be better action-oriented collaborators?**
- ✦ A collaboration that means more than simply gaining access. Integrate collaboration over the long-term, including co-writing with partners on different research outputs and dissemination. Build this into project plans from the beginning. Move the status of research partners from 'research resource' to co-producers of knowledge and write this into proposals for funding. Use existing resources and knowledge about collaboration, but most importantly ask questions of our research partners and be led by their expertise. Remember we might move on after our research is over, but our partners will continue to live its consequences.**

- ✦ **Slowing things down: the political now is pressing and urgent, but the development of relationships and of collaborative work needs time and planning. Factoring in time to our ethical approach creates space for reflection on the salience of the proposed research. Different institutional contexts often operate on different timeframes, discussing and writing this into research proposals, exploring together a range of platforms for realistic dissemination together is good practice.**
- ✦ **Thinking about what language we privilege in our writing. The writing for 'academic' / 'non-academic audience' can feel like a false divide. Instead, we commit to writing with clarity and precision, it is still possible to communicate complex ideas, but do so in a way that doesn't exclude, presuppose a hierarchy of knowledge or privilege one audience over another. Don't make assumptions about knowledge; focus on accessibility across your audiences, not on dumbing down. Non-academic audiences are often more informed than academics audiences.**
- ✦ **Earning our right to be in the field! Prioritise the building of trust in researcher relationships, not only for the duration of the project but beyond. Know who we are contacting, do our homework regardless of the specific research issue we want to explore. And make sure partner organisations also get to know US so that any decision to collaborate is informed across all parties. Building relationships requires a position of solidarity and commitment.**
- ✦ **We will not presume that knowledge is free: the risks and costs – financial, time, emotional labour and other – to research partners needs to be recognised and addressed both by the researchers and research institutions / universities. To make this mutually beneficial it must extend beyond the resources we need from partners to include the resources we can offer – for free or 'in kind'. However this is framed, ensure reciprocity and move away from entitlement. This needs to be part of the conversation when developing the relationship and applies to teaching and researching.**

Our manifesto is a collective endeavour that we want to share with you.

So, who are we?

We are a collective of academics, activists and practitioners from third sector and civil society organisations and students working in the area of migration or studying migration. We came together in June 2018 for a collaborative workshop to discuss fresh approaches to teaching about migration in the political now, as well as reflecting on established approaches.

This manifesto was our key output from our workshop. It still stands today as we continue to work towards our common goals of a critical pedagogy of migration that makes new teaching and learning connections between what, where and how we teach, and between the experiences and expectations of researchers, students and third sector communities.

University of Glasgow, University of West of Scotland, Detention Forum, Right to Remain, Poverty Alliance Scotland, Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER), Refugee Survival Trust, Scottish Refugee Council, Govan Community Project, Scottish Detainee Visitors, Refuweegee, Govanhill Housing Association, Migrant Voice, Waverley Care

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