

# OUR PRN PGR MANIFESTO

Andrew R Belfield, Ankita Mishra, Beverley D Thomas, Bryony J Vince, Danica JM Darley, Elena M Simon, Franco Ho, Kaltum O Rivers, Kirsty Liddiard, Lauren White, Myra Mufti, Palwasha Amanullah, Philip Draper, Pragma Roy, Sally Thomas, Sheli Smith, Siyi Wang, Sophie Phillips, Tessa E Sawyer, Victoria AR Gale, Victoria Worthington, Ziyad Mohammed O Basahal

## How do we understand our manifesto?

- We think it's important to define what a manifesto is and why we've chosen to create one together. The word 'manifest' means to bring into being and to encourage growth. A manifesto can be a political tool, a form of resistance, new ideas and a call to action to create change. A manifesto is created *together*.
- As part of our discussion of what a manifesto is, we reflected upon the work of others, thinking about examples such as [Manifesto by Bernadine Evaristo](#) and [A nursing manifesto: A call to conscience and action](#) and [Take action for better mental health](#) (Mind 2015).
- We also thought about how our work as participatory researchers often builds on, and is connected to, theories around experiences of race, gender, disability, class and their intersections. Our manifesto recognises the knowledge that has been ongoing by participatory researchers and grassroots organisations across the world.
- It was important to the group to recognise that we weren't doing anything new here; that our aim was to look back as well as look forward. We thought of symbols such as the bird *Sankofa*, the *Unalome* symbol or *Diya* - a lamp with a wick of flame which glows while drawing energy from the oil of the past. We are building on, and carrying the contributions of others, with us.

## Our Mission Statement

- We want to cultivate research cultures that facilitate and support participatory research for postgraduate research communities by rejecting claims to neutrality and objectivity as value-free positions.
- We want to create diverse spaces of belonging and inclusion through deep respect for communities' lived experiences and knowledge as foundational to equitable changes.
- Our work encompasses, and we advocate for, *love, joy* and *care* for everyone involved in participatory research.
- Our mission is to bring people together through engaging in ideas, building relationships, deepening mutual understanding, and finding and supporting people from all backgrounds. We believe that working with, and supporting communities, should always be in constant evolution.
- We want to value all forms of knowledge and the way that it's created and shared.
- And finally, we believe that participatory research cultures allow space to be *radical* and to *rebel!*

## Our Hopes

- Our work will have a positive influence on social justice, ecologies, environments and civic dialogue, listening to the voices of those whose experiences are not yet heard in the mainstream.
- We recognise that to do our work we may need to take risks, to be predisposed to action, to learn by doing, and, if necessary, disrupt the systems that have perpetuated inequality.
- To create inclusive and diverse forms of communication, knowledge and dissemination - valuing all meanings and contributions.
- To dream of alternative futures for participatory research cultures.

## Our Hiccups

- The institutional doctoral process is inherently individualistic and individualising which is often incompatible with participatory approaches and collaborative relationships in and with communities.
- Participatory approaches require invisible and emotional labours that aren't often recognised, rewarded and valued.
- Participatory approaches need and require appropriate time, care and resources in contrast to limits placed through institutional expectations.
- The institutional doctoral process centres an individual contribution to knowledge, typically communicated through a sole-authored thesis.
- Particular forms and mediums of communication being prioritised within the doctoral process.

## Our Calls to Action

We recognise that there are structural changes to actualise our hopes for participatory research cultures, and that these take time and resources. However, we'd like to advocate for small moments of change that are achievable by PRN working alongside the University. We think these are:

- To work with institutional ethics boards to think through the philosophies and practices of participatory research and how to facilitate such projects, particularly for PGRs. These include the creation of a specialist policy guidance document and the option for interdisciplinary ethical review processes.
- To rethink timelines of projects and the funding allocation. We think in order to do participatory research and civic engagement, we need to be slower. We need more time to build meaningful, trusting relationships with our research partners.
- Support and training (e.g. via the DDP) for PGRs needs to be rethought to ensure it is responsive to those who wish to do participatory research projects and an ethics of care is embedded. This also applies to supervisory support in allowing sufficient time and making space for the work that comes with community based, participatory projects.
- Research being novel or creating radical change is challenging for all of us, and it is especially difficult for PGRs. As an institution, we must reframe this to consider how we contribute to our communities instead.
- To challenge what counts as evidence, listen to the existing contributions from PGRs and utilise these to implement change as opposed to gathering more evidence.