



The Cultural Development Network and the City of Melbourne present

Home. . . Lands? Constructing home and identity with young people from refugee backgrounds through media and technology

2 - 5 pm, Wednesday 23 March, Multicultural Hub, 506 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne.

Addressing issues arising from young people's use of technology in construction of identity and home in a new country. Can resettlement of young people from refugee backgrounds be more successful if identification and communication with home communities is maintained? How can technology assist?

2.00pm Welcome: Nalika Peiris, Unit Manager, Community Development and Social Policy, Moreland City Council, and Member, CDN Board.

2.10pm Keynote speakers: Professor Sandy Gifford and Dr. Raelene Wilding, researchers, La Trobe University Refugee Research Centre. Home Lands Project. In this presentation, Raelene and Sandy explore the questions posed as they emerge out of ethnographic research with the Karen youth engaged in multimedia and transnational communication activities. They reflect on the implications of these performative spaces for settlement experiences, and for programs that aim to support young people with refugee backgrounds in becoming at home in the world.

2.50pm Panellists:

Dave Nguyen, artist, Homelands project. David will discuss his experiences working on the project, especially his engagement with community members and theirs with each other, and his personal experience of moving from theatre to media.

Jen Hughes, digital artist and documentary maker. sMap: The Suai media arts project: documents an exploration of community story-telling in a trans-cultural friendship in our region. Jen will give the inside story on the surprises and inglorious moments behind www.suaimediaspace.org.

Shakthi Sivanathan, Executive and Creative Director, artist, CuriousWorks. Over the last five years, Shakthi and CuriousWorks have researched and implemented a model of using digital media in communities. Shakthi will outline why and what CuriousWorks does, particularly through their projects with refugee, migrant and Aboriginal communities in Western Sydney and remote Western Australia.

3.30 Questions and discussion followed by drinks and nibbles

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Speakers:

Professor Sandy Gifford and Dr. Raelene Wilding,
researchers, La Trobe University Refugee Research Centre, Melbourne.

Professor Sandy Gifford, Director, La Trobe Refugee Research Centre, is a medical anthropologist who studies issues of multicultural youth. Sandy has a special interest in investigating how best to support young people with refugee backgrounds. She has a number of studies that are following young people over time to document their settlement experiences throughout their life transitions.

Dr Raelene Wilding, Senior Lecturer, Sociology, La Trobe University focuses her research on understanding the experiences of migrants seeking to maintain family relationships with information and communication technologies. Her recent books including *Families Caring Across Borders* (Palgrave, 2007) and *Race and Ethnic Relations* (OUP 2009).

Sandy and Raelene are collaborators on the research project *Home Lands*, an ARC Linkage collaboration with the City of Melbourne, Cultural Development Network, APC.au and Centre for Multicultural Youth that aims to investigate whether young people from refugee backgrounds might experience more positive settlement outcomes if they connect and collaborate with peers in and from their home countries.

La Trobe Refugee Research Centre, School of Social Sciences, La Trobe University
E: larrc@latrobe.edu.au W: www.latrobe.edu.au/larrc

Dave Nguyen, artist, Melbourne.

David Cuong Nguyen is a community theatre writer and director with more than ten years experience developing performance projects with young people from marginalised and culturally diverse backgrounds. His recent work includes 'Black Face White Mask', a play created in collaboration with African young people from Flemington (Western Edge Youth Arts), 'The Wall', a play developed with diverse young people from the North Richmond housing commission flats (North Richmond Community Health Ltd), and 'Homelands'. David is passionate about facilitating theatre projects that reflect the ideas and experiences of marginalised and culturally diverse communities.
E: misfitdave@hotmail.com

Jen Hughes, digital artist and documentary maker, Port Phillip.

Jen Hughes is a digital artist and documentary-maker with 27 years experience in media, art and cultural development in Adelaide and Melbourne. Jen has spent the past ten years working on a "documentary in process" exploring the potential of fast evolving digital technologies and art for bridging the digital and cultural divide, to connect her community of Port Phillip with Suai in the southwest of East Timor. W: suaimediaspace.org E: mediacircus@bigpond.com

Shakthi Sivanathan, Executive and Creative Director, artist, CuriousWorks, Sydney.

Shakthi has led CuriousWorks to deliver a series of creative initiatives. The first, in 2005-2007, was *The Migrant Project*, which brought together 40 Sydneysiders with cultural and artistic ancestries from across the globe. This series of live performances and forums, garnered an audience of 2,000 people concluding with a feature film. His second initiative was the development of a model for using digital media in a simple, positive manner in marginalised communities, which has led to long-term community projects in western Sydney and remote Western Australia. His latest initiatives are *The Stories Project*, a program which provides a pathway for potential cultural leaders to become employed, professional, influential media makers on behalf of their community; and *The Lanka Project*, a multi-platform initiative of theatre, audiovisual and community projects bringing the lives of Sri Lankan - Australians to the fore. Shakthi also writes and produces his own music and film under the moniker Asi. Visit curiousworks.com.au and digitalasi.com to learn more.

CuriousWorks W: www.curiousworks.com.au E: contact@curiousworks.com.au

Presenters: Cultural Development Network: www.culturaldevelopment.net.au

City of Melbourne's Arts and Participation Program: www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/artsparticipation

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