

Roma: Recycle Reuse Reimagine: Co-Production with artists, Roma women and families

This event examined the process of co-producing a children's book using art to explore climate justice with vulnerable communities. As part of the *Seasons for Change – Roma: Recycle, Reuse, Reimagine* project, artist and researcher Rosa Cisneros was commissioned to lead in the co-creation of the children's book *Crocodusa Saves the Park* with Roma community members. The book was devised and designed with the support of many grassroots Roma families in several locations throughout the UK. The book, which explores recycling, is currently available in English, Romanes, Romanian and Slovak. Next steps include: translating, printing and sharing the book; a call to action; a wider dissemination through a film and continuing to spread kindness and justice.

This capacity-building event framed the processes of devising and publishing the book and explored the importance of **co-creation** with community members that underpinned the entire book project.

Themes explored at the event included:

- What is co-creation?
- How can academics, artists, researchers, and grassroots community members work together in an egalitarian manner? Why is this important? What impact does this mode of working have on a grassroots level?
- What lessons did the team learn from this mode of working?
- How did a children's book engage Roma families in discussing social and environmental justice?
- How to engage migrant and/or vulnerable communities with recycling and climate justice, given that they may be understandably so caught up in the struggle of day-to-day survival that environmental matters are less of a 'priority'? How to bring this conversation to the forefront? How to acknowledge the inextricable interconnections of environmental and social justice?

Key takeaways:

- Co-creation is about honouring people's voices, their experience, their time, their expertise. This may emerge in a variety of different ways and be shared in a variety of different ways, but all is valuable.
- It's about bringing those different things together and seeing what emerges; to not assume but be open to a process.
- There is real potential through bringing different people from different backgrounds together, working together collaboratively, using arts and culture to engage communities.
- Continue to learn from each other, to listen, to lift each other up, to offer spaces to be seen and heard.

Video: <https://youtu.be/WJ9Zrf-894I>