

# Many Voices

“And Still I Rise.”

Maya Angelou

Change over time has been a major theme of this project. Whether looking back towards votes for women, or forward towards gender equality, the role of political activism in helping make those changes is clear. Changes in cultural traditions and practices can also evolve naturally or be forced on communities, especially those that move. The move from life on the road to a more settled lifestyle in houses and trailers has not been easy for the Gypsy and Traveller communities. It is a life loved, although hard and has been largely forced on the community through land enclosures and evictions, leaving young Gypsies and Travellers ‘betwixt and between’ memories of a proud past and discrimination and prejudice against modern Gypsy and Traveller life.

*Ghost Gypsy*, a script and film, written by Sharon Muiruri Coyne, in collaboration with Kushti Bok and Life Changing Choices, follows Violet, a young Traveller, and her struggles with her own identity, how she is defined and treated by others, and how she learns to be proud of who she is. She has to find her own voice, just like many other women and girls struggling to achieve equality. Violet is one of many voices, singing to be heard.

Modern politics needs to represent these voices, which is why this project encourages all young people to speak out, speak up, act and vote to make a difference.

The following film and script are linked primarily to:

- Drama and Performing Arts – live performance, working to a script, role play, characterisation, teacher-in-role, hot seating, thought tracking, tableau, writing in role, etc.

But can also link to:

- History – women’s suffrage, liberal reform, social and cultural change in post-war Britain
- Citizenship – democracy and government, identity and diversity, rights and responsibilities
- Politics – extension of the franchise, social reform
- Sociology – social issues, feminism, power and inequality
- English – language techniques, writing for an audience, speaking and listening
- British Values – Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect and Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and those with none
- SMSC – Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development
- Rights of the Child – Article 12 – a right to an opinion and for adults to listen and take it seriously
- PSHE – mental health, safety online, preparation for adult life
- RE – Christianity, Catholic Christianity

## Activities

### ***Drama***

Use the film and script with the Teachers Guide to explore *Ghost Gypsy* over a period of weeks, ending in a performance to other students and classes in the school using several Theatre-in-Education techniques. See ‘Dramatic strategies’ document.

### **Other curriculum subjects and whole school approaches**

Use extracts of the film and script with the Teachers Guide to explore key themes from *Ghost Gypsy* that link best to your curriculum and topic. Particularly useful are Scene 2 - that links to identity and diversity, racism and bullying; Scene 5 - that links to the Suffragettes, votes for women and social reform; and Scene 7 - that links to human rights, political protest and the rule of law. Read or watch those scenes and use the accompanying activities to explore these issues, and more, with your students.

### **Teacher guidance**

You will need to ensure your classroom is a safe space to talk about racism, bullying and controversial issues. There is a lot of stereotyping and prejudice towards Gypsy and Traveller culture and a particularly negative portrayal in the media. Use the language guidance included in the teaching materials to help you. Respect is key and listening to each other. Model respectful language. Avoid using stereotypes, assumptions and generalisations, 'all' and 'every' can be over used. Students need to be specific and personal 'in my opinion' and 'in this example.' Asking questions about where opinions come from can help students be more specific and relate it more to their personal experience and help avoid stereotypes and generalisations.

Throughout the topic you can start and finish with big questions to reflect on, for example:

**Are Gypsies and Travellers a 'lost tribe'?**

**Why does racism still exist if we are all one human race?**

**Does voting matter?**

**Is peaceful protest the best way to affect change?**

Collect your own big questions to explore, discuss or debate.

Teaching materials included:

- Photos, mini biographies, quote sheets and useful websites for Emmeline Pankhurst
- Ghost Gypsy short film, final script and Teaching Guide
- Scene 7 extract and discussion
- Manifesto for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community
- UNCRC summary
- Identity map examples
- Definition of key equality terms; Gypsy, Roma and Traveller definitions; Language and vocabulary information
- Photos of contemporary GRT lifestyle
- Photos of traditional GRT lifestyle
- BBC Article on Sara la Kali
- Gypsy and Traveller culture comparison chart
- Scene 2 extracts – Violet and Pricilla's reactions to racist bullying
- Scene 5 extract and Pricilla and Lottie's struggles activity
- Suffragette posters
- Drama strategies
- Role-on-the-wall template