

# Plain Language Statement

Melbourne Graduate School of Education



## ***Project: Pedagogies of difference: Harnessing teachers' stories of identity and belonging***

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### **Introduction**

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research project. The following few pages will provide you with further information about the project, so that you can decide if you would like to take part in this research. Please take the time to read this information carefully. You may ask questions about anything you don't understand or want to know more about.

Your participation is voluntary. If you don't wish to take part, you don't have to. If you begin participating, you can also stop at any time.

### **What is this research about?**

This project investigates early childhood teachers' identities and belonging. Its aim is to strengthen intercultural understandings in early childhood education and care (ECEC), with a particular focus on teachers. The key research questions are:

- How do teachers experience their own cultural stories and identities?
- In what ways do teachers' cultural stories and identities influence their teaching orientations and practice?
- In what ways can teachers' intercultural understandings and pedagogical implementation of the curriculum (VEYLDF) be strengthened through more nuanced engagements with their own cultural identities?

This project involves working closely with a small number of early childhood teachers in Melbourne to explore their cultural identities and experiences. It is a pilot project that will provide the basis for a larger project in the future. The intended outcome of the project is to develop a draft framework for culturally relevant practices in ECEC, that recognises and values the culture and identities of teachers, to benefit children and their learning.

### **What will I be asked to do?**

Should you agree to participate, you will be involved in one individual interview and two focus groups, all conducted via Zoom with Dr Sonja Arndt. You will also be invited to develop your own cultural stories and reflections, which will be discussed in the individual interview and the second focus group. Focus groups and interviews will be digitally audio-recorded and transcribed by the researchers.

The project is built on several steps to address the research questions:

- **Introductory focus group:** all participants will be invited to attend an initial 1-hour focus group via Zoom. This focus group will introduce the project in a relaxed way and will allow you and other participants to introduce yourselves to the group. The aim of this focus group is to prepare you to engage with your story and identities.
- **Developing cultural stories:** provoked by the introductory focus group, you will have 1-2 months to develop your own cultural story and reflections. In this time, you can choose how to develop these, e.g. in the form of written narratives, or visual representations. There is no set time commitment for this aspect of the project, and you are free to decide how much time to spend on this. Support will be available from the researchers during this time.
- **Individual interviews:** you will be invited to attend a 1-hour interview via Zoom to share and discuss your cultural story and reflections.
- **Final focus group:** all participants will be invited to participate in a final 2-hour focus group to reflect on and share as much as they wish of their cultural stories. They will co-construct a draft framework for teachers to strengthen culturally relevant practices in ECEC.

### **What are the possible benefits?**

The project aims to enhance intercultural attitudes and practices in ECEC by recognising the importance of teachers' cultural identities and their influence on pedagogical practices in multicultural settings. It is possible that you will benefit personally and professionally from participating, through insights into your identity, orientations and teaching practice. You will be given a \$100 voucher as a token of our appreciation for your time and contribution, at the completion of the final focus group.

### **What are the possible risks?**

You will be asked to reflect on your personal experiences, and therefore there is the potential for sensitive information to come up. You will share your cultural story in your individual interview where you can talk through this confidentially. You will be able to decide what you're happy to share with others in the final focus group which will follow this interview. All participants will be asked to respect other cultural backgrounds, beliefs and values. While we anticipate that your involvement will be a positive experience, if participation brings up any negative feelings, please contact Dr Sonja Arndt or talk to a family member/friend. If you'd prefer to contact professional services, you may like to connect with Lifeline 13 11 14 <https://www.lifeline.org.au/> or Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636 <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>.

### **Do I have to take part?**

No. Participation is completely voluntary. You are able to withdraw at any time, although it may not be possible to withdraw any data already collected during the focus groups, due to this being a collaborative process with other participants. For the focus groups,

you will be able to leave at any time, or choose not to respond to particular questions. For the individual interview, you will be able to pause or stop the interview at any time or choose not to respond to particular questions.

### **Will I hear about the results of this project?**

Yes, we will email you and the other participants a summary of the findings. The project will produce a visual/written draft framework for culturally relevant practices in ECEC based on your contributions and reflections. Findings from the project will be available in research publications, including academic journal articles and conference papers.

### **What will happen to information about me?**

Outputs from the research will not include any information which is likely to identify participants. Each participant will be asked to select a pseudonym (another name) to be used, however full anonymity cannot be guaranteed. While every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality, due to the nature of focus groups, participants will be visible to one another and will know what each person said. All participants will be asked not to share anything outside the focus groups which may identify other participants. Data will be stored securely on Melbourne University's OneDrive and backed up on an external hard drive accessed only by the researchers. You may request to access data that we have stored that relates to your participation in the research and does not identify other participants. Any stored information that identifies you will be destroyed 5 years after the completion of the project or publication arising from this research.

### **Who is funding this project?**

This project is funded by a Melbourne University Early Career Researcher grant (\$23,587) awarded to Dr Sonja Arndt.

### **Where can I get further information?**

If you would like more information about the project, please contact the researchers; Dr Sonja Arndt (Responsible Researcher) [sonja.arndt@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:sonja.arndt@unimelb.edu.au), or Dr Clare Bartholomaeus [clare.bartholomaeus@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:clare.bartholomaeus@unimelb.edu.au)

### **Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?**

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Melbourne. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Manager, Human Research Ethics, Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 2073 or Email: [HumanEthics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:HumanEthics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au). All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence please provide the name of the research team or the name or ethics ID number of the research project.