



The Tree of Life narrative approach





- Born from a collaboration between REPSSI and Dulwich Centre Foundation and between Ncazelo Ncube & David Denborough

Key principles:

- * 'Riverbank' position
- * People always respond
- * Implicit in responses are skills, values, abilities and special knowledges
- * There is always a social history to these
- * Rich story development



Part One

- Drawing a Tree of Life
- 'Riverbank' position



**Roots: Where we come from
... what we belong to ...
are connected to
– rich textual heritage**



**And/or:
– our deep rooted survival skills**

Ground:

Where we live, what we choose to
do each day

The present / landscape of action



Trunk: What is valued / skills

- what people value/care about
 - think collectively
- through the eyes of others
 - trace the histories
 - rich stories



maths

computer

20 > 19
123



writing



skipping



reading



dancing

running



swimming



drawing

Branches – horizons

“The branches to me are about how I want to do this thing. To love and be loved.”

Our hopes, dreams & wishes

- combination of big hopes and smaller
 - self, family, community
- hopes have a history (trace them!)



Leaves: Re-membering lives

Those who are special to us

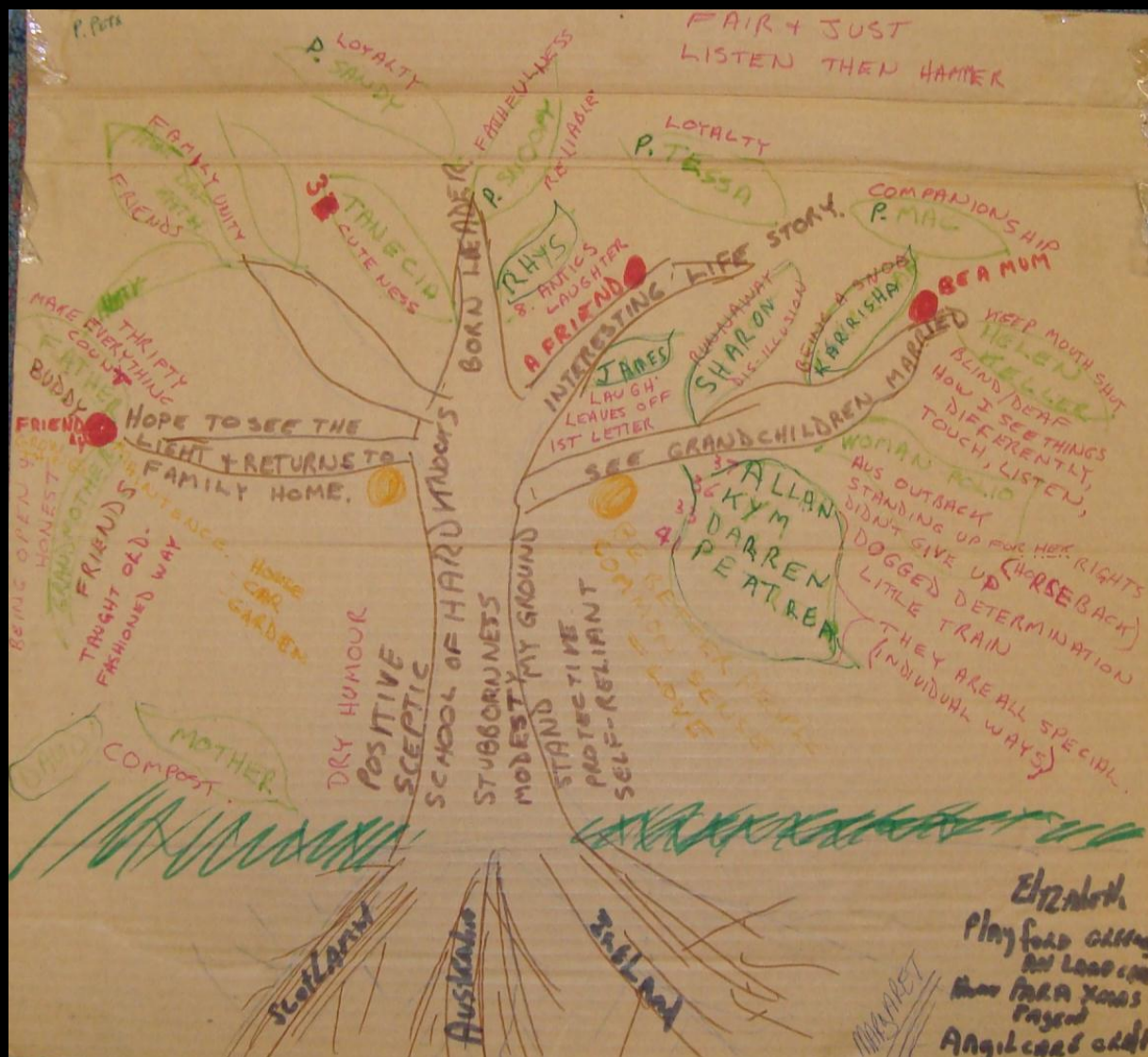
- Alive or no longer living



Fruits: Legacies bequeathed to us
What those special people have given to us



Seeds: Legacies we wish to leave
Gifts we wish to give to others



Part One

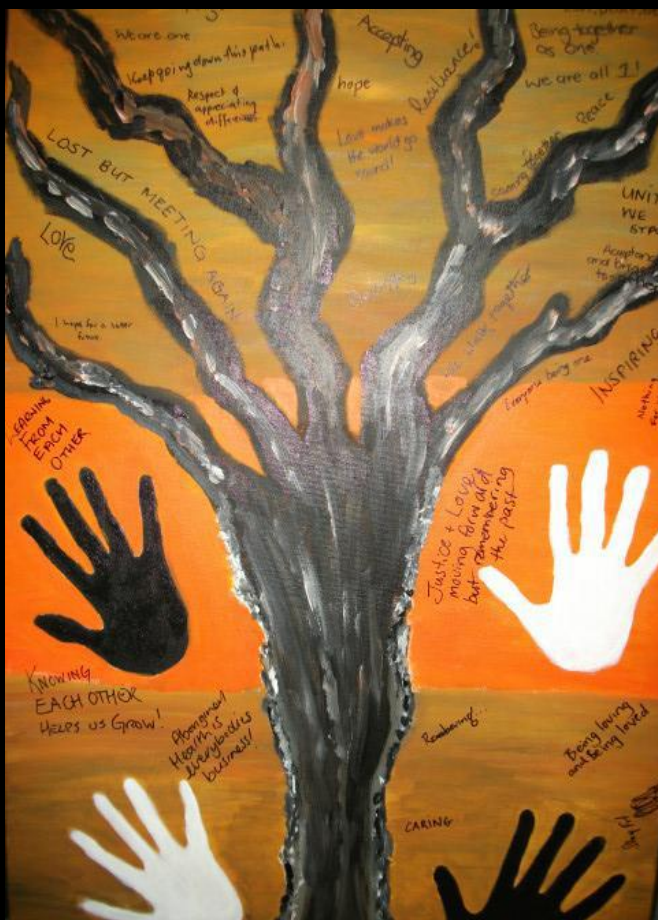
- Drawing a Tree of Life
- 'Riverbank' position



Part Two: Forest of life

- Moving from individual to collective





‘the invention of unity in diversity’ Paulo Freire (1994, p.157)

Pedagogy of hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the oppressed.

New York: Continuum.



‘communitas’ Victor Turner

a shared sense of unity among
individuals which ...

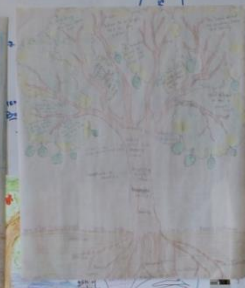
‘preserve individual distinctiveness’

‘is not a merging in fantasy’

do not depend on ‘in-group versus out-
group’ opposition

Turner, V. (1969). *The ritual process:
Structure and anti-structure*.
New York: Aldine de Gruyter.





Tree
Trunk
Branches
Leaves
Roots
Fruit
Seed
Bark
Wood

1. One apple
2. One apple
3. One apple

Part Three: The storms of life

- Externalising the problem
- Collective disclosure
- Eliciting responses



1. The *name* of a special skill, knowledge, practice or value that gets you or your family through hard times
2. A *story* about this skill, knowledge, practice or value
3. The *history* of this skill, knowledge, practice or value. Who did you learn it from/with? Who would be least surprised to hear you talk about this?
4. Is this linked in some way to *collective* traditions (familial/community) and/or cultural traditions? Are there proverbs, sayings, stories, songs, images from your family, community and/or culture with which these skills and knowledges are linked?

<https://vimeo.com/220929702>

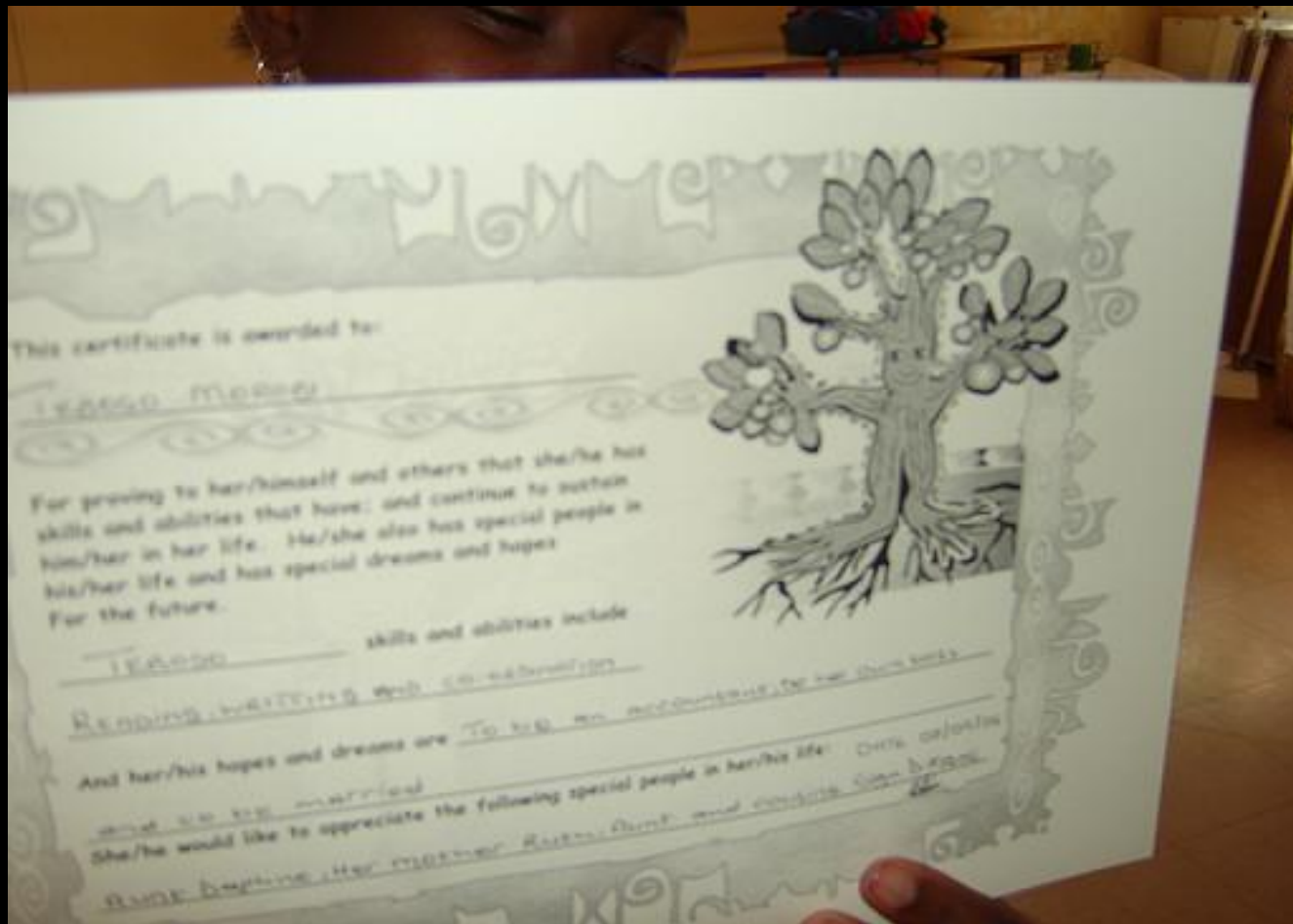
<https://vimeo.com/220921724>

Life-saving tips:

Special skills and knowledge
from young Australians



Part Four: Celebration, certificates & song

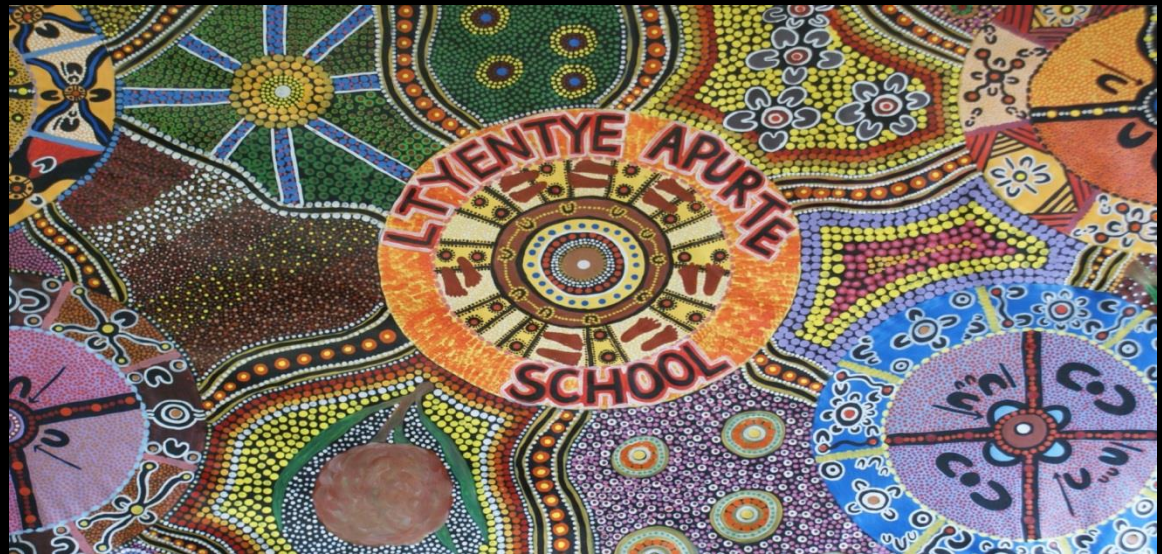




Innovations / New developments



- * Exchanges of collective documents: Australia, Nigeria, Palestine
- * Family work from Sweden
- * Couple work from Uganda
- * Linking to spiritual/cultural traditions
- * Roebourne *Growing strong children parenting program*



Tree of Life Theatre

The Tree of Life

Stories of the Refugee Experience

This project is generously supported by Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, the Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors, Miller Technology High School & Auburn Community Development Network.



Artist: Karen Amelia Brown

Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre presents

The Tree of Life

Developed by refugee young people from the Liverpool area, this work represents the culmination of drama and storytelling workshops held over the last 6 months. The performance will be a sharing of the joys, sorrows, terror, relief and humour of the refugee experience.

This performance represents the end of stage one of an ongoing project to assist refugee young people to honour their past and build resilience for the future.

Project Coordination: Catherine Maguire-Donvito
Artistic Direction: Ruth Hartcher-O'Brien
Counselling Support: Max Schneider



When: Friday, 12 November, 1.00 pm & 7.00pm
Saturday, 13 November, 7.00 pm

Where: Casula Powerhouse Theatre
1 Casula Road, Casula

Tickets: \$10 (extra donation optional)

Bookings: Casula Powerhouse: 9824 1121
Enquiries: reception@casulapowerhouse.com

*Join us for a memorable experience: cry,
laugh and never be the same again!*

Tree of Life Theatre

Play Explores Child Refugee Experience | Stage Whispers - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.stagewhispers.com.au/news/play-explores-child-refugee-experience

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Play Explores Child Refugee Experience

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Play Explores Child Refugee Experience



On Thursday 8th and Friday 9th of September (2011), 18 teenagers from South Western Sydney will come together to share their experiences as refugee children. *Tree of Life* by Treehouse Theatre is a montage of true stories, and a sharing of the joys, sorrows, terrors, relief, and humour of the refugee experience.

The *Tree of Life* explores the human experience of refugee children, as trauma survivors, asylum seekers, resettled refugees and Australians.

These 18 adolescent refugees from Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo have developed and will perform this work to redefine their refugee experience from pain and suffering, to survival and triumph.

Tree of Life is based upon a trauma recovery program, however it has been expanded to integrate the teaching of English language, cultural competency and performance skills with trauma recovery to equip these young people to become the best Australians they can be.

School counsellor Catherine Maguire-Donvito and drama teacher Ruth Hartcher-O'Brien are the artistic directors of Treehouse Theatre, initiated in 2010. The *Tree of Life* performance is part of Treehouse Theatre's ongoing project that assists young refugees to honour their past and build resilience for the future.

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auditions

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PRG

6:41 AM
19/09/2011



Tree of Life / Team of
Life combination



Researching the Tree of Life

Scale for researching 'personal and cultural narrative coherence'

- * Shows pride in their family history and culture
- * Has hopes and dreams for the future
- * Is grateful for what others have offered in their life
- * Takes pride in what they are good at.

This scale had good internal consistency in our samples.



Dulwich Centre Foundation

www.dulwichcentre.com.au

<http://www.dulwichcentre.com.au/tree-of-life.html>

dulwich@dulwichcentre.com.au

www.narrativetherapylibrary.com

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