

University of Derby

***One story, many journeys:
an auto/biographic narrative case study
of a community-university partnership***

***Mokili esalama po totambola na yango, kasi to tiya na moto te
The world has been made to walk on and not to be carried on your head.***

By

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Declaration

Except where specific references have been made to other sources, the work in this thesis is the original work of the author. It has not been submitted, in whole or in part, for any other degree.

Peter Walker.

Peter Carl Walker

December 2015

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Abbreviations

A8	New European Accession States (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia)
ABCD	Achieving Better Community Development
AISD	African Institute for Social Development
ACU	Association of Commonwealth Universities
ALP	Adult Learning Project
BAAT	British Association of Art Therapists
BME	Black Minority Ethnic (community)
BNP	British National Party
CBPR	Community-based Participatory Research
CCA	Congolese Community Association
CD	Community Development
CDF	Community Development Foundation
CDX	Community Development Exchange
CMR	Complete Member Researcher
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CVS	Community Voluntary Services
CUPP	Community University Partnership Programme
CURA	Community University Research Alliance
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
EdD	Doctor of Education
ELLIS	English Language for Speakers of Other Languages, learndirect®
EMCCAN	East Midlands Caribbean Carnival Arts Network
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
EU	European Union
FCDL	Federation for Community Development Learning
FRY	Federal Republic Yugoslavia
GOEM	Government Office East Midlands
HACT	Housing Associations' Charitable Trust
HDI	Human Development Index
HDHS	Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEIFF	Higher Education Initiative Funding
ICAR	Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees
IDP	Internally Displaced People
ILR	Indefinite Leave to Remain [in the United Kingdom]
INSEAD	Institut European d'Administration des Affaires
IND	Immigration and Nationality Directorate
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LVSC	Leicester Refugee and Asylum Seekers Voluntary Sector Forum
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NASS	National Asylum Support Service
NCCPE	National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement

Abbreviations (continued)

NHS	National Health Service
NOS	National Occupational Standards
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PAT	Portable Appliance Testing
RCD	Congolese Rally for Democracy
RCO	Refugee Community Organisations
RT	Research Transcripts
SCDC	Scottish Community Development Centre
SEF	Statement of Evidence Form - Self-Completion form, Home Office
SG	Steering Group minutes
THE	Times Higher Education
UDPS	Union Democratic Social Progress
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Ufi	University for Industry
UKBA	UK Border Agency, previously IND
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for refugees
UWM	University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
VOCW	Voice of Congolese Women

Abstract

This is the story of a project to connect the resources of a university to the struggles of a group of Congolese asylum seekers in the city of Derby. It represents a case study of a whole process: this includes a specific project established to explore how a university might fulfil its stated goals of being closely anchored in the local and regional community; and how it might engage and marshal its resources to provide educational and maybe research opportunities, while giving priority to community-based projects that tackle social disadvantage. The thesis is made up of a number of overlapping elements: there is the story of the project itself, of why the University became involved, and the nature of the interaction with a particular community, as seen through the eyes of some of the Congolese and me the project coordinator/researcher. It includes my struggles to establish a steering committee with the Congolese and the creation of a range of educational/recreational resources to help members of a community manage the difficult, stressful and even traumatic processes of asylum. The project led to the establishment of a community association and various initiatives to dialogically engage with the community and gather diverse narratives. Finally it led to various outcomes leading to what might be a 'Reconnecting the hearts and minds' project, that created spaces for story telling for a number of women and men migrants.

The project also included an evaluation, which developed at its core, into a collection of narratives chronicling the difficult processes of forced migration, where people experience the pain of family separation, the dislocation of landing in a foreign country. A country whose language was different, whose customs were strange and where the processes of claiming asylum could be alienating, and where racism is experienced. We can call this project and its evaluation a piece of action research with a series of narratives at its heart. The project and evaluation together raise questions about the role of creative activity and narrative in managing painful transitions.

There is another story within the bigger one, however, a story of a project coordinator and his relationship with the community and the University of Derby... of initial enthusiasm followed by marginalisation and the closure of a supportive community development unit in the University; and of the placement of this role, for want of a better home, in the marketing department. This is also a narrative of registering for a doctorate, of being rejected, and of seeking to think through, with the help of others, what a good enough doctorate might entail. The end product has become a process of auto/biographical narrative reflexive research in which the narratives of the migrants intertwine with the researcher's own; around the themes of dislocation, and of the struggles for voice and agency. The basic threads of the study are of a dislocating experience, and of how resources of hope can be found in creative activity – whether a sewing class, telling stories, fashion shows or engaging in auto/biographical narrative reflexivity. The basic argument has to do with tokenism and the disrespect that can surround university civic engagement as well as how asylum seekers are treated callously more generally; but also how resources of hope can make a difference. There is also the troubling issue of voice in research and whose story really counts; of a white, middle class male engaging with distressed women migrants, and of what might have been a silencing of the women concerned. But through values of commitment, and of learning to listen, the project became more dialogical, as evidenced in the women's stories.

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I am profoundly indebted to my supervisors, Dr Val Poultney and Professor Linden West, the Chair of the first viva voce examination, Professor Dennis Hayes, and to my first examiners Professor Margaret Ledwith and Professor Angie Hart, both of whom retired from the process. Their collective inspiration nurtured this journey. From the black canvass of my failure at the viva voce examination in 2012, the Chair through his humanity must have seen within such a bleak landscape, a pinhole of light: one through which this vastly revised thesis has been able to project an image – a story – of a moment captured in time. It is with particular gratitude therefore over the last phase of this work that I acknowledge how Professor Linden West has helped me seek to reveal this moment auto/biographically: for me; for and with members of the Congolese community with whom I worked, and for the university that employed me. I thank the Chair, Professor Richard Hall, and my examiners of the thesis, Professor Kate Maguire and Professor June-Boyce Tilman, for their critical contribution that enabled me to conclude this journey of learning and endeavour.

I am privileged to have made many friends in the Congolese and other communities who have played their part in this work, and should like in particular to name Mado Ngalula, Mado Nyota, Ghislaine Lipindo, Wivine Maniata, Helene Kabongo, Mirali Nabintu, Muanda Diangindu, Germaine Ngoy, Julia Mboku, Laurence and Marco Kitenge, Modeste Mbo, and many, many others. I am grateful for the generous advice and support given to me in this work by Jangir Khan, from the Pakistani Community. Other colleagues and friends also supported this project in ways that were very helpful and varied, two of whom I single out: Janet Brown for her unstinting support of the project throughout, and for hosting one of our largest events, the Community Awards Evening in 2011 at the University of Derby, and George Mighty, Chair of West Indian Community in Derby, for his loyal support, his encouragement, enthusiasm, and friendship. Without the backing of Betty (Albertine Paka Di Phoba), Voice of Congolese Women, I could not have achieved what little I did in this case study. I thank her for her tireless help and guidance, for her inspiration, for her enduring friendship, and for her resolute determination that we can make a difference.

The enthusiasm and wisdom of the University of Derby Press Team spurred me on through the early days of this project – so my thanks go to Peter Gallimore, Simon Redfern, Sean Kirby, and Annie Wake especially. The professionalism and devotion of the following people from the university has created a legacy of what was achieved: Richard Hannaford through his creative graphic design, Hannah Davies through her sensitive film making gifts, Matt Howcroft, and then student, Neal Morgan, for many of the wonderful photographic images. It is the clever skills of Mair Perkins I thank for the final illustration appearing in the body of the thesis. I want also to thank Nick Stein and Jamie Bird for their early support in helping me appreciate the role of therapeutic arts within the case study. I extend a huge thanks especially to Jill Bunce and the outstanding students who contributed so meaningfully to this work: art therapist student, Anna Ludovico, and later, dance psychotherapy students, Maria Charalambous and Andria Papanicolaou.

Recovering from my examination failure at the first viva voce examination – of having been so poorly prepared - to have to sit a second viva and re-write the thesis twice has been an indescribable slog, and not without its humiliation – of always feeling I was on the back foot, and how I might recover from such a loss. It has been a journey of redemption for me too, as I gained clarity to write about what had happened during what became such an amazing period of research and discovery. It is within this context that I thank Lindsay my wife and soul mate for encouraging me, for giving me the confidence and the determination to continue on this journey. I thank her for her tolerance of me during some very difficult times, in my attempt to write honestly about what has been done.

Dedication

*I dedicate this work to the memory of
Morro Mwamba Wa Ba Mulamba – an
international journalist and human-rights defender
from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Africa.
He died on 2 December 2001*

Morro held a light to the world that cannot be extinguished

Chapter One: Introduction

Bakatisaka ebale pona komona kitoko ya Mboko te: Do not cross a river to see the beauty of the city – you must have purpose when crossing borders.

The above is an African proverb written in Lingala, the main language spoken by the Congolese community central within this study. The translation or transliteration of its meaning is provided by a community member, in an attempt to embrace these ancient traditions; of not romanticising the ‘other’, but rather to increase knowledge.

Introducing the study and its elements

The thesis started as a piece of community development work carried out by me on behalf of the University of Derby, with a group of about 200 Congolese asylum seekers living in Derby who had travelled from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in central Africa. The thesis embraces this community development to become a case study expressed within the imagination of auto/biographic narrative research; in the generation of others’ stories and my own. The thesis chronicles attempts to provide resources and support for a displaced community, and then to interrogate the meaning and impact of what was done. The thesis introduces members of the cast – people in the Congolese community, people from the university, bringing the thesis to life and theorising critical moments that occurred. There is a reflexive interrogation of the research role, including a narrative of doing a doctorate. The thesis explores this case study within the context of whether a university has a duty for the wider society it serves – both locally and globally. It identifies that the role of the modern university has become more business centric, directed by central government as a servant of the economy. The thesis illuminates how these forces have, especially in relation to serving communities, hollowed out the university and removed a vital part of its core – namely the civic duty of the university. The thesis identifies that wider conceptions are emerging whereby a modern university might consider if it is to once again play a more wholesome

part in society, in wrestling with the issues that society faces, and in which the university has a concrete part to perform. By turning outward, for example, by visualising students rather than as customers, might encourage ‘lifewide learning’ as global citizens, rather than in them shaping satisfaction rates upon which a university might now turn.

This case study within the scope of a university is small, and was carried out with limited resources, but represents what might be possible. In the words of the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, ‘small projects are important’ (Age of the Do-Gooders, 2015), and can be catalytic both symbolically and practically, in illuminating the need for change, and significant in bringing it about.

The thesis and its questions

The three inter-dependent dimensions of this study are the University of Derby (and universities more widely), me as the researcher, and members of a forced-migrant community. The three research questions at the heart of the study are:

- What are the experiences of a forced-migrant group settling here in Derby during the period of asylum, and in what ways has this study supported the community to make a difference?
- What are my experiences, participating in such a case study and how can they best be integrated into community development practice, including interrogating the contribution of a practitioner/researcher like me?
- What is the civic role, if any, of the modern university – and how might this benefit the modern university and act for the betterment of society?

The Congolese community in Derby

The focus of this research is a with an African forced-migrant group of about 200 Congolese asylum seekers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Central Africa, who started to arrive in Derby from 1998. These people had fled their homeland, travelling to the

United Kingdom to seek sanctuary, to settle and start new lives. Unlike refugees who have permission to come here, and some economic migrants who may travel and work here freely, asylum seekers must rely on the discretion of the state in the country in which they claim sanctuary. This process can be painfully slow, and for some might take many years, with an uncertain outcome. At the time of this study, many from the DRC were asylum seekers, and some had failed their application becoming themselves destitute. Since their arrival in Derby, leaders within the Congolese community had formed several small community groups but struggled to win funding. They had no resources and remained a fragmented community across the city. Without external support and facilitation, it seemed a step too far for this newly arrived community to move forward. This was also true for other forced-migrant communities living in Derby.

This case study engaged with the Congolese community in Derby to illuminate forced-migrant displacement, in an attempt to understand their complex needs. This was done by working to support this group of people to improve the quality of their own lives, in partnership, always trying to engage as equals, recognising that achieving such equality is deeply problematic.

The University and community development

The beginnings of this study arose through my own increased involvement in the asylum community in Derby from about 2002. It began through a commitment I developed for bringing about social justice, by understanding and supporting asylum seekers dispersed here upon their arrival in the United Kingdom. I wanted to make a difference to the lives of these dispossessed people, especially in their early days of settlement in a city where there was no mainstream provision for such forced-migrants. This commitment started whilst working for a training company, Support Into Work, as learndirect® and business manager. Working

there for five years, I increasingly engaged with asylum seekers and became a part of the Derby Refugee Forum, a small charity dedicated to this goal.

My employment at Support Into Work came to an end in 2006 when learndirect changed its provision, moving from supporting the long-term unemployed to acquire skills in literacy, maths and ICT as part of the pathway to work. Instead, learndirect moved into supporting business enterprise. I then left the company to join the University of Derby as Project Officer to support a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) project, run through the Centre for Community Development and Regeneration.

The ERDF project was a complex and large project of almost £300,000, built up out of 50:50 matched funding. This match was achieved by evidencing student volunteer hours, at agreed hourly rates, against defrayed project expenses, on a monthly basis. This was a partnership project between communities in Normanton, the University, its students and staff, and local third-sector providers, overseen by Derby City Partnership. I had the privilege of working with Gersh Subhra, Director of the Centre for Community Development and Regeneration at the University of Derby, who directed me and gave me confidence in those early days.

Through his passion, I started to absorb the deeper values that good community development work demands.

Gersh introduced me to the notion and importance of a critical community development approach. Such an approach navigates its way between being an agent of the state and of unearthing community concerns, to then help provide an undergirding upon which communities might prosper, or at least challenge authority and build better lives. The project was successful and won much prestige for the university, including two internal excellence awards – one for ‘Community outreach’ and the other as the award for ‘Excellence project of the year’ in 2008. The sponsors, Derby City Partnership, held it up as a flagship project.

However, behind some of the appearances, there were difficulties in persuading the University of Derby to engage in the project, and this, I suggest, heralded a reluctance to engage with local communities in convincing and sustained ways. In fact, I will suggest that the University from the start was ambivalent, even complacent, in supporting the project and giving it the resources required. All of these factors caused considerable difficulties for me, both in managing the project and in being responsive to the funders' – Derby City Partnership and the ERDF funding body – complex needs, which frequently changed. It was a difficult project to manage, not least in securing agreement on matched funding from the University. While at Support Into Work I carried out a piece of research for University for Industry (Ufi) on homelessness, which intrigued me, and led me to want to do more research. Following a meeting at the University of Derby with the Director of the Centre for Community Development and Regeneration, it was suggested I could consider studying for a doctorate in community development.

The Centre for Community Development and Regeneration had created good links between the University of Derby and the minority communities, establishing a foundation degree in the subject, recruiting experienced community workers including ethnic community members as students on the programme. I too, had created strong links with community groups by the time I joined the University of Derby in 2006. The embers of the passion that glowed within me were flamed when I found a kindred spirit in the shape of Gersh Subhra. Despite my experience on the ERDF project, his passion helped me believe in the possibility of the University of Derby being serious in implementing its new strategy when the post of Community Relations Officer was announced in 2008. My role as the ERDF Project Officer ceased at the end of the ERDF project; I applied for the job of Community Relations Officer, and I was offered the job. This was a new role linked with the University of Derby's expressed intent to become recognised as community engaged and regionally rooted. This

newly created role was a wide role of support, including working with communities local to the University campus, especially in relation to new developments planned by the University. The strong focus, however, was to support the University's community engagement strategy of 'being regionally rooted and community engaged' (Porrelli, 2009:122) and required the post holder to engage in tangible ways with the ethnic minority communities across the city. This work became focused upon reaching out into the deprived areas where such communities were located such as in Normanton, where the University of Derby identified it lacked many of the skills for this kind of outreach. While this might have been superficially conceived – on the part of particular leaders, in the University of Derby – the intention was to build stronger relationships with local and regional communities, as expressed in the 2008-2014 corporate plan of the University. From the outset, words and deeds tended not to match each other: one person acting largely alone was not sufficient to make words more of a reality on the ground. I began to wonder too if the project had been envisaged as short-term, a knee jerk reaction, perhaps, to defend local development proposals the University was facing with neighbouring communities.

About me

I want to introduce myself into the text at this early stage: the project coordinator, new to research. My narrative is evidenced in the construction of the overall narrative as much as my collaborators. I wanted to get close within the research, to express my own evolving truth embroiled as a learner. Writing in the first person seemed a more direct, attractive and an appropriate means of writing. I am a white, middle-class male who during this case study worked in a university, having previously spent several years supporting long-term unemployed people in the city of Derby to find work. My involvement with asylum seekers started in 2002 when it seemed, I was involuntarily sucked into their world witnessing their plight as I became an advocate for many. I believed then that I simply could not ignore what I

perceived to be the suffering and dehumanisation of such a diverse community of people living within a city in which I worked. This led to me to becoming well known and trusted by people in the refugee communities. We worked together over several years – I as an advocate but also in assisting community members obtain funding. During this time mutual trust and respect developed. I held a privileged position from which this project might develop. My work had also supported other marginalised communities (homeless and long-term unemployed people) in Derby and across Derbyshire thereby gaining a broader appreciation and understanding of the deprivation suffered by other marginalised groups in British society. My former training in scientific and technical photography, which led me to become a photographic scientist working in manufacturing, had taught me to see the world from within a positivist lens. This way of seeing became deeply challenging for me within this research journey. I nevertheless began to perceive how I was projecting my own story within the case study, of having lost my professional status, and how the project became part of my own desire to regain this identity. I spent a major part of my life working in world-class, international manufacturing organisations, and when head-hunted into a smaller software house in London, the company failure led me to become unemployed. This research occurs at a time when I was wrestling with how I seemed to have been rejected by society, incapable of re-establishing myself within the profession I had once enjoyed.

Outline of the study

The thesis describes through such engagement, the critical need for crossing boundaries, of living in border country if we are to help bring about change through understanding and action. The thesis represents my reflexive journey within this case study of crossing these boundaries; of the relations that developed with members of the marginalised community with whom I worked, and how this led to the community taking action. This thesis highlights the messiness and uncertainty of attempting to occupy different worlds: of attempting to take

on certain responsibilities to develop a community-university strategy in limited circumstances, of working outside the university, and of often working alone and mostly unsupported. The thesis identifies the notion that a case study is itself problematic in attempting to see the world as a set of binary relations. The community being studied occurs at a moment in time on a longer migration journey; a moment when the community is seeking asylum. Derby is a city that is itself multicultural and yet located in a time of stress and strain around the whole area of multiculturalism with rising xenophobia and racism; burdened by national pressures of abnegation towards asylum seekers (Burnett, 2011).

The thesis identifies how crossing borders and making things new, for the Congolese community, has to do with what I term to be the psychological role of art, of the sewing group, of debating and agreeing next steps, of creative festivals, of offering space for storytelling, and for giving voice and building agency. By this I mean, for the researcher, it has to do with finding new metaphors, such as the Tobungi tree and languages, in dialogue with very different research communities. I recognise as a psychological being, I am also forged in the nuances of such relationships, with anxieties about for example, border crossing, and how my own unconscious narcissistic desires might distort the interpretation I present in my writing. How I perceive myself subconsciously will influence the way I am predisposed to think about the nature of any relationship that develops. I might unconsciously, for example, think I am special, that I have a grandiose sense of self-importance and entitlement, and require admiration, that I might lack empathy, be envious of others, wishing to exploit others, seeing them as a 'resource' for my own use. It is therefore about beginning to make more sense, auto/biographically of the messiness of a project such as this, and of the struggle to create a doctorate in relation to it. In undertaking this journey, therefore, the thesis represents a struggle no less, for integrity and more satisfactory ways of

knowing as well as, in effect, to challenge the University about its role, responsibilities, and as to how it conceives its relationship with the local community.

I argue that the University of Derby and universities in general, have ignored their civic responsibilities. I identify that other conceptions of the modern university are seen as feasible, such as an ecological university. Investing in the knowledge ecology, provides a unique and complementary place for a university to reside while responding to and engaging with the global pressures of cognitive capitalism, a term that describes both the development of individualism and the marketisation of products that arise through capitalism. By stepping to the side of such pressures, and in returning to its roots, the university in such a role might position itself as a bigger global player. In investing in these many different ways of knowing, I argue, this must surely contribute to the wellbeing of all people's lives and values, as well as contribute meaningfully to creating and protecting new forms of 'unconventional' wisdom. By embracing other ways of knowing, community development practice can also be strengthened to support forced-migrants in their settlement in the United Kingdom. Through engaging with other, non-Eurocentric epistemologies, richer partnerships might develop in both knowledge creation and understanding. This, in turn can lead to communities taking their own action in their own life journeys, all within a co-constructed space that embraces subjugated and dominant epistemological frameworks of meaning.

The thesis argues that a university is particularly well placed to conceive of engagement with the communities it serves, as part of its own investment in protecting and managing the knowledge ecology and of operating on a global stage. The thesis identifies that for such an engagement to prosper, a university can profit when it accepts the complexity and sustained challenge associated with such an aspiration. By embracing a strategy that recognises not only the significant effort needed but also be determined to put in place appropriate organisational structures and networks to bring about change, it can realise benefits available

to the whole of the university in its endeavours. The thesis argues that for a university to engage in ways that embrace a philosophy of humility, a university might construct new types of knowledge, and thereby embrace more fully the role of building knowledge ecologies.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis comprises eight chapters, including this introductory chapter. Chapter two describes how the initiative started as a project carried out by me on behalf of a university, with a group of about 200 Congolese asylum seekers from the DRC, in central Africa. The project represented an expression of the aspiration of University of Derby to become ‘community engaged and regionally rooted’. This chapter is a report of how this project developed into a programme of activities, a piece of community development/action research that ran from 2008–2012.

Chapter three is a literature review in two parts. Part One – ‘Location and place’, identifies my role – of Community Relations Officer at the University of Derby – and the location of the research, namely in Derby city. It wrestles with the notion of what role a modern university might play in developing community-university partnerships of the kind that might benefit communities at large, and how this has historically been a vibrant part of civic responsibility. Part two of the literature review – ‘The context and experience of forced migration’, explores what it is to be an asylum seeker. It starts with the space occupied by asylum seekers within the larger United Kingdom socio-political and economic environment; contextualising the community being researched within a theory of social abjection (Tyler, 2013). In this way the literature review provides insights into how powerfully neoliberal governmentality regulates social life, identifying notions of power in relation to marginalised groups through the philosophies of community activists such as Freire (1970), Ledwith (2005) and Kirkwood (2012). The review turns to examine the asylum experience: the

imposed restricted and even hostile spaces within which forced-migrants are required to navigate their lives. The review then moves on to explore epistemological frameworks that might be relevant to the minority ethnic community being studied, such as Black Feminist Thought (Collins, 2009) and Afrocentricity (Asante, 1998). It concludes by examining potential resources of hope, through a critical approach to community development (Ledwith, 2005), through engaging with the work of Freire (1970, 1974), through feminism and by engaging in the emancipatory practice by the everyday activities including arts therapy.

Chapter four – ‘Methodology’ – describes how in effect I muddled through to narrative enquiry. I describe its evolution and the inclusion of photography as visual ethnography, and how a specialist supervisor helped me make sense of this work in relation to a doctoral study. How voice, power and personal rejection find a location wherein the study might be expressed; how the study moved from being a community outreach activity to an auto/biographic narrative case study. Early analysis is summarised, which led to early material being identified, providing new insights within the auto/biographic narrative imagination.

Chapter five – ‘Illuminating complex lives’, has two distinct phases. It presents the material gathered during the first developmental phase of the project and its learning to guide action. This chapter then moves to a doctoral phase of the work as an auto/biographical narrative and story. The second phase brings the ‘cast’ within the case study to life. It introduces actors in the University as well as in the community, highlighting the stories of three members of the community. Critical moments are then theorised in the case study. New insights are drawn from photography as visual ethnography. This chapter concludes with a synopsis of what became an attempt to chronicle the difficult process of forced migration captured in a series of stories. The project and the evaluation raise questions about the role of creative activity and narrative in managing painful transitions. The chapter draws to a close by viewing the

study as predicated upon an Africanist ethnography identified through texts forged in the crucible of real lives. It closes by developing the conceptual diagram, and identifies the roles of ‘traditional’ and ‘organic’ intellectual as central within the case study.

Chapter six – Another story: the narrative of doing a doctorate. The doctoral study turns to a reflexive interrogation of the research role. My striving to be a reflexive researcher, tells of my own striving to let go of my positivist roots and embrace what C. Wright Mills describes as the ‘sociological imagination’ (Wright Mills, 2000), as well as to understand my own motivations in wishing to develop it as a piece of research. I explore what I am seeking to get from the project, as part of my own research journey.

Chapter seven: ‘Stories about universities – tokenism and ideas of the ecological, civic university’ tells how the University of Derby set its strategic direction in 2008 of becoming community engaged. I describe my appointment as Community relations Officer, and how this role was seen in its early stages as community outreach, a move by the University towards being ‘community engaged’. Perhaps on the part of the University this outreach was more a desire to be seen to be doing the right thing, while on my part it was that of building a sustained relationship. The chapter describes how the notion of being ‘community engaged’ is redefined when the University revises its corporate plan to embrace a broader ‘stakeholder communications’ remit. The chapter explores what this meant to me, and promotes the notion for the modern university to be thought of as an ecological, civic university. The chapter closes by celebrating what was achieved within the case study.

Chapter Eight: ‘Back to the Future’, the final chapter, imagines that the personal experiences of the Congolese people in Derby, an asylum community, are emblematic of an immense and growing global struggle of dislocated individuals escaping their homelands to find sanctuary and enjoy better lives. The struggle of the whole thesis declares a commitment to making a

difference, both through the interrogation of the researcher's role – and what this means for the integrity of his or her truth claims – and of finding ways to help people identify and re-create new lives, especially in times of dislocation and stress. The chapter links the findings in the thesis to how global issues might benefit through a greater caring for the other, and in understanding our own deeper motivations, and how these might increase the possibility of hope, even if only as part a longer revolution. In looking to the future, such fragments of hope contrast with the individualised spirit of neo-liberalism pervading society today. The chapter summarises how the civic role of the university, through its ability to explore and learn, and to work with the other, can restore the process of democratic decision-making. The thesis argues for a university to build on the notion of a 'knowledge ecology', becoming once again grounded in its roots of knowledge creation and preservation, and of being community-engaged. The chapter proposes the setting up of an infra-structural organisation supporting refugees, imagined as a step towards working to identify other issues and debates of concern across the wider communities a university serves. The chapter concludes by acknowledging the challenge auto/biographic narrative research makes upon the researcher to think reflexively, to be open to imaginative possibilities, and to identify with authority the core claims of the study.

Chapter Two: Developing the project – a study founded in community development/action research

Babomaka sili na mosapi moko te. A lice cannot be killed with one finger. Being together is better.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes how the initiative started as a project, in effect, community development work carried out by me on behalf of a university, with a group of about 200 Congolese asylum seekers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in central Africa. The project represented an expression of the aspiration of University of Derby to become ‘community engaged and regionally rooted’ (University of Derby, 2009a). This chapter is a report of what became a programme of activities, a piece of community development/action research that ran from 2008–2012. It captures the underpinning values and theory of community development work; it illuminates aspects of gender and who responds within the community, as well as how the activities appear to be catalyst in a re-creation for some in the community of new beginnings, through valued activities – sewing classes, fashion shows and storytelling – all within an ethic of respect. This chapter concludes with my early attempts at analysis.

2.2 Getting started through community development

I started this work in 2008 as a community development practitioner – I was a participant, a doer. I believed also it was part of a research study, fulfilling my emerging desire to know in greater depth. The project progressed through what I describe as action research, by ways developed through working closely with the Congolese community. This in turn led to the creation and running of wide ranging community events, consultations and feedback and review meetings, evaluation reports, of reflection and early attempts at analysis.

2.3 Community development values and practice

The project aims are located at the base of the community development model 'Achieving Better Community Development' (ABCD) model (Barr and Hashagen, 2000). Such a base represents the first step of supporting a community explore itself: its needs and how it might agree and take positive action, how it might form a community organisation through participation and involvement. It is well understood that a successful Community Development (CD) practitioner needs to facilitate and enable such a process, and thereby build the confidence of the community. Community Development Exchange (CDX) identifies that the key purpose of community development 'is to build communities based on justice, equality and mutual respect' (Community Development Exchange, 2012). It is about challenging power structures and removing barriers that prevent people from participating in the issues that affect their lives 'enabling people to claim their human rights, meet their needs, and have greater control over the decision-making processes which affect their lives' (Scottish Community Development Centre, 2012).

Community development is based on the principle that within any community there is a wealth of knowledge and experience. Working with the poor and the powerless, requires long-term resilience as well as the ability to be optimistic (Communities and Local Government, 2006). Community development becomes radical when it starts with the lives of everyday people (Ledwith, 2005). Collective action, through participatory democracy, creates an emerging critical consciousness that challenges people's perceptions about their own lives and their own situations, which they now compare with the wider dominant ideas and politics (Craig, 1998). Wright Mills reminds us of the timeliness of such actions, to 'make a difference in the quality of human life in our time' (Wright Mills, 2000: 225) through such acts and through the sociological imagination. Ledwith (2005) highlights the vital need to link the personal experiences of people with the political agenda if lasting change is to be

achieved. Organisations such as the British Refugee Council, Refugee Action and Migrant Rights Centre harness this collective potential through the centrality of education to raise consciousness, thereby linking theory with action – through national campaigns that bring the personal sufferings of individuals in to the political agenda, by recognising that ‘the personal is political’ (Stanley and Wise, 1993:164). Precisely by problematising power in this way, as a form of liberating education, these organisations raise the consciousness of marginalised groups and become effective in taking action. One recent example making this critical connection through a national campaign, builds on personal stories of exploited domestic workers, is provided by The Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (2012).

Ledwith (2005) captures the principles purpose and process of community development through highlighting ‘five vital dimensions’ (*ibid.*:2) of good community practice to ‘redefine its radical agenda and to engage with injustice in the process of social change’ (*ibid.*) so that ‘Community development begins in the everyday lives of local people’ (*ibid.*). In this, Ledwith highlights the need to be committed to collective action for social and environmental justice. Ledwith argues that it begins in a process of empowerment through critical consciousness, and grows through participation in local issues. Such local issues need to be understood in relation to dominant ideas and the wider political context, and that collective action, based on this analysis, focuses on the root causes of discrimination rather than the symptoms (*ibid.*).

2.4 How the project started

The project started when I published a framework I shared with University staff, and other bodies across the city and East Midlands (for example, Government Office East Midlands, City Council, Derby City Partnership), and in particular visited key leaders of the minority communities (West Indian, Indian, Pakistani, Polish, Afghani, Iranian, Iraqi, Chinese, Somalian, Congolese and Cameroonian community leaders), sharing the aspiration of the

University of Derby to work together especially with the minority communities in Normanton, a ward of Derby. This led to the recommendation and agreement (Appendix A: Consultation feedback) by the ethnic minority community leaders that I should work with a forced-migrant community in the city, as they had identified such communities were in most need of assistance. One such community, the Congolese community expressed a strong interest in forming such a partnership. I believed through the enthusiasm expressed by members in the Congolese community, the project might meet the requirements of, as Marshall and Rossman (2006) express it, of being ‘pragmatic, interpretive and grounded in the lived experience of people’ (Marshall and Rossman, 2006:2). That in such circumstances it might evolve organically to be emergent, an approach that is ‘fundamentally interpretive’ (*ibid.*:3), growing out of the voice and desires of the community members themselves, of avoiding traditional approaches that Marshall and Rossman express as silencing ‘marginalised and oppressed groups in society by making them the passive objects of inquiry’ (*ibid.*:4). Rather this project could attempt to ‘describe the meaning of experience for those who frequently are socially marginalised or oppressed’ (*ibid.*:6).

2.5 How the project developed

The project grew out of two parallel activities: the starting of a series of Steering Group meetings that led to the formation of the Congolese Community Association (CCA), and in continuing to support the setting up of the Voice of Congolese Women (VOCW).

The activities included a series of community meetings, extensive workshops, public performances both within the community setting and at the University of Derby, a drop-in centre, annual feedback meetings, a large focus group event, the setting up of a therapy group, and many educationally led events. Community centres were found (Rosehill Lodge, Fairdean Court and especially in Pear Tree Library) where the community could meet regularly to run events. The programme was largely funded by the University of Derby,

supplemented by significant grants obtained through third-sector (Derbyshire Community Foundation) and national bodies (Faiths in Action). Key events are shown in Appendix B.

2.6 Key activities

2.6.1 An internship at the University

A key first step in starting the project was of encouraging a leader, Albertine Paka Di Phoba, of the Congolese community, to take an internship at the University, which she did. Based upon my own experience, I saw it was especially important for a member of the community to join the University, especially because almost all of the contact with the community would be in the community setting. Moreover, though I hoped this appointment might shift the balance towards a more equal engagement with the community; that it might enable the incumbent symbolically initially to become to be seen as an integral part of the University, and in time, for Albertine (also known as ‘Betty’) to grow her own voice within the University.

Within this growing role, I encouraged the maintenance of detailed records of each event (through for example, attendance and feedback forms, financial information and reviews), as well as in taking part in promoting events both to funders and in the media. Funded projects won by the community required this as a matter of good practice; such record keeping might also provide a footprint for managing projects in the west (Campbell and Groundwater-Smith, 2007).

2.6.2 Formation and growth of Voice of Congolese Women

Betty was Chair of Voice of Congolese Women (VOCW). The management group comprised several Congolese women, who collectively wished to reduce isolation in women and young people across Normanton. VOCW wanted to develop effective pathways of integration for their community living in Derby, and to develop initiatives in the DRC. I had supported the

group establish itself, and we had identified the crucial importance of winning funding as a key root to gaining credibility and taking action. When VOCW won its funding, in 2008, I acted as a consultant and project manager to support the group put on a series of classes in 2009, as well as secure resources and equipment. I ‘filled in the gaps’ by supporting with press coverage and photography, and in finding and negotiating venues, always aware that it was the community group that must take the lead, and that there was a leader emerging from within the community, who was building VOCW especially from within the community. The running of the first six events – the first Sewing Project resulting in the Fashion Show at the end of March, 2009 – was utterly exhausting, it seemed so much had to be done and nothing could be taken for granted. Transport needed to be provided for some members and practical issues of setting up and running the workshops needed to be attended to, as well as the provision of food.

Many events flourished following this initial series of workshops: a Fashion Show in March 2009, a community focus group event ‘Plan for the Future’, a second round of twelve sewing classes later in 2009, led to a ‘Congolese Exhibition and Awards Evening’. This included a video, ‘Coming together to be creative’ (Voice of Congolese Women, 2009a), and an animation – ‘A model for taking charge’ (Voice of Congolese Women, 2011). Further events were conceived and run – more sewing classes, and larger events – a ‘Community awards evening, 2011’ and finally an event ‘Our journeys: Young People’s Fashion Show, 2012’. Both of these events were held at the University of Derby. The Chair of VOCW grew in confidence, took over the running of the ‘New Hope’ drop-in centre, and in delivering the events described above.

2.6.3 Formation of a Steering Group

The second thread of this project became a series of meetings, established to gain greater understanding over what the community might need. These were described as ‘Steering

Group Meetings’, held weekly to maintain momentum, from November 2008 to March 2009, and then as needed until the end of 2009. These were open meetings, held in a convenient place for the community, with food and refreshments freely available. Other ethnic minority community members were invited – African communities (Somalia and Cameroon) but also from Afghanistan. An external ‘witness’ and adviser to the group was invited, the head of the Pakistani Community, Jangir Khan, who brought value and added credibility to the work. Minutes were produced for five of the meetings, and circulated across the Congolese community. I prepared documentation summarising the work, but recognised the real importance rested in the discussions, in the debates over what could be done, not only in English but in the native languages of those present. By the end of March, the group had identified what it wanted to achieve both in the short and longer term, and proposed a funding application through the Derbyshire Community Foundation. This application was approved in November 2009. The Steering Group presented its work to the Congolese church at which the pastor thanked the group and the University, praying for its continuance and success. I encouraged timely attendance of all who wished to attend, recognising this was not the ‘Congolese way’. They too had to rush off to collect children, however, and the community centre had to close. All travel costs were covered, recognising many lived on very limited means. The steering Group minutes capture the formation of the group, its deliberations and intended actions (Appendix C).

More venues became available as required, such as at St Augustine’s church hall for workshops, where there was storage for equipment and materials. As the project developed, a regular, fixed meeting place was negotiated and established with Derby Libraries, a large room in Pear Tree Library in Normanton. Community spaces were booked for larger public events and celebrations, always with an eye to inviting the community to attend the University campus, as a means of integrating University and community lives.

2.6.4 Community interviews

Through the Steering Group Meetings the community was able to identify what it needed to do, which included interviewing members of the community, understanding that such interviews must not compromise asylum status. The community discussed, assisted and agreed the design of the research to explore what might be achieved. The focus of the interviews would identify what skills, education and experiences people had brought with them from Africa and what they might wish to achieve here in the United Kingdom, based upon a change model developed by Smith, Foster and Smith (1995) and Cunningham (1994). I hoped these interviews might give me greater insights into community lives, identify individuals who might need support, while encouraging others to seek out and take positive steps in their lives. These are detailed in Appendix D, together with the interview schedule, research approval letter, and a Confirmation of Contribution to research form, Statement of informed consent, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Two examples of the community interviews are given.

2.6.5 'Plan for the Future' community focus groups

Following the success of the Sewing project and Fashion Show at the end of March 2009, feedback demonstrated an expectation within the community that this work should continue. Something new had started, and the momentum gathered needed to be harnessed. At the following Management Meeting of VO CG, it was agreed that it would be helpful to report back to the community our findings take their lead on what should be done next, through a community meeting comprising several focus groups. Following this proposal, I suggested a model based upon Ned Herrmann's Whole Brain Metaphor (Herrmann, 1996) to help assist in gathering a wide range of views. His model uses four quadrants, Analytic, Creative, Process and Social. The Management Meeting considered these and decided that everything the community did was based upon being social, and considered four broadly ranging areas

that needed addressing: Craft – being creative and active; Young People – our hope for the future; Project Management (around process) and the Future (to help develop a strategy for the future), all activities of which were contained within a ‘Social’ setting. The group approved the approach and it formed the basis for the event ‘Plan for the Future’. The event was held at St Augustine’s church on Saturday 9 May 2009. It was attended by over fifty members of the community. There were four workshops and plenum gatherings, pulling together material, and a general expression drawn from the Young People’s workshop that we need to ‘Have the courage to do new things. Together’. The findings provided guidance on the direction of this work (Appendix E).

2.6.6 Video on isolated women

The making of traditional garments during the sewing classes led to the Congolese Fashion Show in March 2009. This event raised a level of interest both in the wider community and at the University. The Fashion Show was not able to provide insights into the vulnerability and humiliation some of the people in the community were experiencing. Discussion with members of the Congolese community resulted in an agreement to produce a video whereby some of the women could describe their experiences of isolation. Classes were extended to include video production with the aim of finishing the video for it to be premiered at the Congolese Exhibition 2009. All members of the community were invited to participate in making the video, signing acceptance that these would be shown publically. Semi-structured questions were prepared, with support available in translation. These were drawn up with the help of community members. The questions formed a basis for participants to express their thoughts. The filming was done over a three-week period in a quiet location within the setting. Community members supported each other in promoting confidence in being interviewed ‘on camera’. Production included a voiceover in English and some minor revisions requested by the community. I experienced a high level of trust and optimism in the

group during the making of the video, which I viewed as a positive experience for the community. Some of the messages in the video demonstrated an authenticity that must be hard to match any other way; captured in the interviews themselves. The DVD includes this video '*Coming together to be creative*'. It also includes a second video that provides an overview of the Congolese Exhibition and Awards Evening 2009, together with an exhibition of pictures that illustrate aspects of the project as it had developed. The videos were directed by Hannah Davies from the University of Derby. Photographs were taken by Neal Morgan, then a student of the University of Derby, and by Matt Howcroft from the University of Derby. See Appendix F and *Voice of Congolese Women*, 2010.

The video of the Congolese Exhibition and Awards Evening includes the presence of the Congolese band, 'Les Elus', a small group of four musicians that provided support throughout the programme of activities, and included Coco, Marco, Emmanuel and Modeste. This group provided music for the evening together with guest singer Mimita. Coco translated for the audience in French, summarising the work that had been done, and announcing that the community had won funding to setting up a 'New Hope drop-in centre' in 2010.

2.6.7 New Hope drop-in centre

CCA was awarded funding to run a 'New Hope' community drop-in centre, which ran between January and July 2010. The drop-in centre had been funded to provide a wide range of support to members of the Congolese community on immigration matters, translation, housing, referrals to public health, training and preparation for work. The centre was located in the heart of Normanton and would run two days a week from 09.30am–3.30pm, January to July 2010. All documentation was retained in a locked filing cabinet and was the property of Congolese Community Association. This project supported over forty members of the

community, which is summarised in a report to the funders, together with details of the community review meetings held in July 2010 and March 2011 (Appendix G).

2.6.8 Integrating art therapy

Art therapy became an attractive thread linked with the sewing group. It was recognised that some members of the Congolese community might be suffering from trauma, a term used within the asylum context and explored later in the thesis. Art therapists and dance psychotherapists aim to enable clients both to discover an outlet for often complex and confusing emotions that cannot always be expressed verbally, and to foster within themselves self-awareness and growth. The therapy project developed through the leadership of a trainee art therapist – Ana Ludovico - from the University of Derby under the supervision of a clinical supervisor, within the British Association of Art Therapists (BAAT) Code of Ethics and supporting Principles of Professional Practice and Guidelines. This was initiated by first inviting Anna to come along and join in the classes. Following this introductory period, Anna made a brief presentation of her studies to the group, supported by me and the leader of the community. An invitation was then made by Anna for community members to her in a series of workshops. These would be confidential and take place at another location, twice a week from September 2010 until July 2011. They would focus on themes of isolation and integration, with other concepts such as ‘memory’, ‘self’, ‘identity’ and ‘narrative’. A record of the shared experiences of the group could be captured in a private album (photographs, other images and written comments). Fabrics were also provided for those attending the workshops to make up their garments, developing the thread of the sewing workshops, by suggesting participants produce ‘a garment of the self’ portraying their stories, memories and identities through fabric. Each participant had the freedom to decide what to do with the final product – whether to display it or keep it private (Ludovico, 2010).

2.6.9 Field notes to aid reflective and reflexive practice

I kept field notes throughout the case study capturing the reality of the moment: reflections, notable incidents, tasks, and the views of others; all the details that could evaporate in the thrust of ‘moving on’. Such a record was not intended for publication but to help me reflect on what was happening around me, guided by the concept of Plan, Act, Observe Reflect cycle (Hart, Maddison and Wolff, 2007:88), and the systemic action research cycles proposed by Burns (2007). The notes enabled a conversation with myself, to see another viewpoint. It helped me connect with the reality within the notes and not of my imaginations. It aided my reflexivity: to think more deeply in helping me understand myself as a character in a cultural interaction, especially as a white, privileged, middle-class male, living out the dominant Eurocentric, even imperial culture, and representing a university – a respected seat of learning and endorsement of knowledge. Thinking reflexively creates opportunity to embrace the sociological imagination, by considering biography as a meeting point between the historical and that intimate, between structuring processes and struggles for human agency (Wright Mills, 2000). Field notes were not to be a search for perfection but more a portal within which these fleeting moments might be captured (Appendix H). The need identified later in the project to work analytically and reflexively was further supported through the keeping of such a field diary, notes, and associated documentation.

2.7 First attempts at analysis

In the thesis I submitted for the first viva voce examination in January 2012, and in wanting to know how the community experienced life here in the United Kingdom, I was attracted to the work carried out by Community University Research Alliance (CURA) (Westhues, Ochocka, Jacobson, Simich, Maiter, Janzen and Fleras, 2008). Although CURA had been a national, longitudinal piece of research, it was committed to participatory action research with the aim creating a conceptual framework to guide practice, wishing to ‘involve active

participation of stakeholders... in all stages of research for the purpose of producing useful results to make positive changes' (Nelson *et al*, 1998: 12). CURA took a two-stage approach in its analysis of the data: firstly by examining each data set independently, and then by studying all the data together, to conceive a theory or model. In adopting such an approach within this first submission, I became too ambitious in the model that was developed, and although the examiners found it 'presents interesting trajectories' (Ledwith and Hart, 2012:4) I had made claims that were 'undertheorised and were not supported by evidence' (*ibid.*). What had been identified by the examiners, however, was the importance that narrative had played in the development of the model. This accepted, I started to recognise the importance of narrative, and how the animation, 'A model for taking charge' (Appendix I) perhaps encapsulated the attempts of members of the community to re-create hope in their lives based upon their oral traditions of storytelling. Re-creation, it seemed had arisen through the recreational activities described in this chapter – of re-connecting hearts and minds - through being together in the sewing classes and other events – through the production of fashion shows and through storytelling and what later followed, the telling of stories by some of the men and women in the Congolese community, of their asylum migration journey – Hearts of Hope (Appendix J and Voice of Congolese Women, 2012).

Part of my struggle to achieve a more theoretical understanding of this work led me to analyse the material using Grounded Theory, a quasi-scientific method, which I describe in Appendix K. Within Appendix K is also contained a description of a conceptual diagram that grew out of such thinking. I found this approach to be reductionist and an abstraction, and the conceptual diagram overly complicated. It took me away from my need to remain grounded in the reality of people's lives. The stage was set, as it were, for me to seek a more reflexive understanding of what was occurring, through my own development as an auto/biographic narrative researcher, which is developed in the thesis.

Chapter Three: Literature review

Ndaku olalaka te okoyeba esika mayi etangaka te. In a house you don't live in, you won't know where the water drips. Only by living there can you discover some of the problems.

3.1 Introduction

The literature review describes the location of the research – the University of Derby and of the city of Derby, a city in the East Midlands of the United Kingdom. It describes and explores the place of the modern university and their communities more broadly by taking a global view, especially in relation to engagement with communities and in the developing of community-university partnerships.

The chapter then examines the context and experience of forced migration. The chapter contextualises power through Imogen Tyler's work (Tyler, 2013), of placing refugees and asylum seekers within the general demonization of all those on the margins of British society. The spaces asylum seekers occupy is explored in multiple ways by focusing on the asylum experience, to ask what an asylum seeker is, why they leave home, how they are dispersed upon arrival in the United Kingdom, and what are their experiences. It reviews the impact of public discourses on asylum seekers, and how they are criminalised, which leads to the notion of how such asylum communities are conceived.

3.2 The location for this research - a case study within a complex demographic

This Case Study is situated in the city of Derby, one of three principle cities in the East Midlands in England, the others being Nottingham and Leicester. According to research carried out by Brett, Dodds and Howitt (2008), from which the following data has been taken, Derby is a growing city. When the research started in 2007, the city had a population of 242,736, representing a 9.5% increase on the 2001 Census (*ibid.*:36).

While the gender profile of the city is similar to the national profile, Derby has a relatively young population with 48% of residents estimated to be under the age of 35 compared to 45% across England and Wales. Most of the population is White British (78%). Asian residents form the largest ethnic grouping in Derby accounting for 10.5% of the city's population, of which it is estimated there are 12,350 Pakistanis and 9,696 Indians. This group also includes a diverse range of cultures from the Middle East, Far East and Indian sub-continent, the largest group being Iraqi Kurds. Black communities include Caribbean, African, dual heritage and other backgrounds. The proportion of Black and Black British residents in the city is estimated to have increased by 32.8% since the 2001 census, to represent 2.6% of Derby's resident population, with the most substantial increase occurring amongst the Black African community, which is now estimated to represent 0.96% of the city's population, or 2,334 people, compared to a Census proportion of 0.2% in 2001 (*ibid.*:49). The city is represented by about 182 nationalities, with the greatest number in Arboretum, Abbey, and Normanton, speaking 71 different languages, including 83 distinct dialects (*ibid.*:5). Of the 17 wards that comprise the city, the focus of this case study took place in the city's most ethnically diverse neighbourhoods: Arboretum, Normanton, Bleagraves and Abbey, in which non 'White British' populations represent 77%, 67%, 36% and 35% respectively.

Brett, Dodds and Howitt (2008) acknowledge that there is a substantial hidden population (*ibid.*:9), including families of both economic and forced-migrants who are not being counted. In relation to this case study, while 150 Congolese people were registered through the NHS as living in Derby, it was accepted for the above reasons that this number could be as high as 250. Brett, Dodds and Howitt (2008) note that 70% of asylum applications are refused, and acknowledge these people are most probably remaining in the country but without accommodation and benefits – in other words, they have become destitute. Within this rich demographic, in the way in which West (2014) and Burnett (2011) argues for Stoke,

there was within this period a growing concern in Derby city about the rise in racism, xenophobia and the popularity of the BNP. This is compounded by a deeper, prolonged neoliberalist shift politically by the government to the right. It is penetrating right to the heart of what is happening, through year on year progressive cut backs in public spending in the local community, occurring right across the country but also in Derby city. Taken together with the positioning of asylum seekers within society, relevant in this case study, society is turning to neoliberal times with a version of social Darwinism, in that the fittest will come through. I witnessed some success in containing the extent of racism and its associated hostility upon ethnic communities, through the inclusive and active networking of Derby Refugee Forum with the statutory bodies and leaders of all the ethnic minority groups across the city. There is no doubt in my mind, however, that the asylum seekers with whom I worked, experienced significant hostility towards them, which impacted negatively upon their lives and wellbeing.

3.3 Universities and their communities

A university is thought most fundamentally of as a library (Watson, Hollister, Stroud and Babcock, 2011), thus locating the first university as the Alexandrian library built in Ptolemy 1 in 306BC, in which the truth about what a university is, might be contained in two notions – a commitment to academic freedom but also its contribution to its contemporary community. Watson *et al* (2011) argue that ‘until the advent of the late twentieth century, of company or for-profit universities, all university institutions grew in some way from the communities that originally sponsored them... and that the familiar image of a university as somewhat separate from its community is curiously unfaithful to the historical record’ (*ibid.*: 3). According to Watson *et al* there are three ‘grand narratives’ that might be identified, namely first the liberal theory that higher education as self-realisation and social transformation, including latterly an element of social mobility and meritocracy (alternatively seen as a form of social selection

and exclusion), the professional formation theory. Secondly, universities provide expertise and vocational identity in some continuous (law, medicine and theology) and in some new (engineering, science and public administration) areas, although this is countered by acknowledging professionalism can lead to narrow and self-interested instrumentalism, and thirdly, that higher education is a research engine (*ibid.*). Allied to national ambitions for economic growth, and as a source of business services and national pride, Watson *et al* argue that this can lead a university to ignore its ethical responsibilities and adopt short-term priorities (*ibid.*). Watson (2007) presents another consistent theme of value and identity for the higher education tradition and legacy: that of civic and community engagement. Stephen Lay, in what has become known as the ‘Magna Charta Universitatum’ concludes that ‘the university should be valued as an intellectual resource of inherent social usefulness and admired as the model of a reasoned approach to life’ (Lay, 2004:111), with the recommendation that ‘expectations of “public service” should be added to the Charta’ (*ibid.*: 109); this has been encapsulated within The Talloires Declaration on the Civic Roles and Social Responsibilities of Higher Education (Talloires Network, 2014a).

3.3.1 Community-university partnership formation

There are major reasons why community-university partnerships are not easy to create. A key reason why community-university partnerships have been slow to develop is attributed by Todd, Ebata and Hughes (1998) to the complex organisational interaction that is needed between both parties, and that such collaborations are usually attributed to being collaborations between individuals rather than institutions (*ibid.*). Such collaborations might enable micro-change but it do not facilitate work at a more strategic level. Joint or partnership working is usually more about the achievement of a given task than it is about strategy. These collaborations, Todd, Ebata and Hughes (1998) argue, have been more about stand-alone projects than joined-up working. To do this requires a different level of organisation and

determination; it requires a vision, senior staff commitment, availability of resources, and infrastructure support (*ibid.*)

3.3.2 The University of Brighton CUPP programme

The Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP) at the University of Brighton, now a project of some eleven years, grew out of philanthropic funding (The University of Brighton, 2002). It supported me with the continued inspiration that community engagement within the role of a university has profound benefits for university, community and individuals, as well as providing credibility through the notion that the university might indeed envision ‘feasible utopias’ (Gibbs and Barnett, 2014) of which early in the twenty-first century, this is one. The CUPP programme has focused on the exchange of knowledge between research, teaching and practice, giving priority to those community-based projects that tackle social disadvantage. Hart, Maddison and Wolff (2007) admit that starting this journey had its challenges ‘Some academic partners found it difficult to stick to our brief of involving community partners, and some partners did not have the time or motivation to write about their work’ (*ibid.*:6). CUPP remained committed to developing a mutual working partnership between universities and communities, identifying ways in which study and research might link to current issues of local, national and global concern. Critically within this process was the need to engage senior academics and institutional leaders (*ibid.*:4 and 24). This included the appointment of a lead academic for CUPP to be responsible and to oversee and co-ordinate its work within the larger context of the university’s other interests, including outreach projects carried out by other academics. Internally, the CUPP initiative has revised the University’s Corporate Plan to include ‘engagement’ as one of its five values – ‘engagement with the cultural, social and economic life of our localities, region and nation’ (University of Brighton, 2007). Externally, in effect CUPP has responded to Lerner and Simon’s (1998) claim that beyond the work they had carried out in the USA, there was a

dearth of material that addresses the particularities of community-university partnership processes that draws directly on the perspectives of both university and its community partners.

The findings of the CUPP team identify criteria necessary for successful university-community partnership working: of having a ‘shared vision’ about the aims of university-community collaborations in general, and individual projects and activities in particular; ‘mutual benefit’ and learning; ‘good personal relationships’ and ‘openness’ to new ideas and ways of doing things; individual and organisational ‘flexibility’; senior staff leadership and commitment; ‘commitment and enthusiasm’ from universities and communities; and ‘organisational infrastructure and support’ (Hart, Maddison and Wolff, 2007:184-185).

Millican and Bourner (2014) bring a new focus within this developing landscape of engagement at the University of Brighton by embracing the term ‘Student Community Engagement’, seeing it as part of the ‘third leg’ or third stream of a university’s mission, comprising teaching, research and ‘service or engagement with organisations or groups outside of its immediate community of students and university employees’ (*ibid.*:2). This deepening response in representing a university’s social responsibility is now developing students’ understanding of questions of equality and social justice, and as a sense of social responsibility central within student-community engagement programmes.

3.3.3 United Kingdom investment in community-university partnerships

The evolution of the work of CUPP was broadened out. In February 2007, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE, 2006) established four year pilot comprising six collaborative centres across England and one co-ordinating centre as part of a four year pilot project. The aim was to bring about a culture change. This pilot became known as the ‘Beacons for Public Engagement’, with a central co-ordinating body, the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE). Its vision and mission were

to make ‘a vital, strategic and valued contribution to 21st-century society through its public engagement activity... with the mission to support universities to increase the quality and impact of their public engagement activity’ (National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement, 2014).

Its recent findings from consultation with senior leaders and funders across England confirm positive agreement that universities are developing their own niches in public engagement. The findings accept the critical need for having an institutional strategy, one that evolves over the longer term. The findings identified that some institutions still had a long way to go in breaking down a silo mentality, and of not having an overarching strategic purpose within which to embed engagement across their activities in research, teaching, knowledge exchange and social responsibility (*ibid.*). In the USA, the notion of the ‘new university’ may have been developed further than in Europe. In the Foreword of ‘Creating a new Kind of University’, readers are reminded that these partnerships should be ‘of the people, by the people and for the people’ Gettysburg Address (Percy, Zimper and Brukardt, 2006:x) although at a later point acknowledges that ‘the rhetoric of engagement far exceeds the reality of university engagement’ (*ibid.*:xv). The term ‘engaged university’ made popular by the Kellogg Commission in the late 90s became a new way ‘to describe a distinctive approach to their mission and practice’ (Percy, Zimper and Brukardt, 2006:xvii).

While engagement may be seen as a means ‘to orient higher education toward the future’ (ACU, 2001 cited by Percy, Zimper and Brukardt, 2006:11) and ‘Engagement fits well with the mission of higher education because it serves the needs of the market for skilled professionals and knowledge that can address global as well as local problems’ (*ibid.*). The rhetoric remains that a ‘new kind of university’ may be created through the ‘transformative power of community engagement’, and the writers acknowledge ‘Engagement is higher

education's larger purpose' (*ibid.*:257) but ask the question in the USA 'is higher education ready?'

3.3.4 International university-community engagement

In seeking global interest in creating regional networks of universities dedicated to civic engagement, The Talloires Network envisions universities around the world as a 'vibrant and dynamic force in their societies, incorporating civic engagement and community service into their research and teaching mission' (Talloires Network , 2014b). Its goals within higher education are to expand civic engagement programs through teaching, research, and public service; to foster partnerships between higher education institutions and communities, and to increase the relevance of higher education through the creation of regional networks of universities dedicated to civic engagement (*ibid.*). The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) took on the challenge of the 'the imperative of engagement' in relation to university-community engagement, in looking for:

Strenuous, thoughtful, argumentative interaction with the non-university world in at least four spheres: setting universities' aims, purposes and priorities; relating teaching and learning to the wider world; the back-and-forth dialogue between researchers and practitioners; and taking on wider responsibilities as neighbours and citizens. (ACU, 2001:i)

ACU seeks also a more inclusive place for universities within the new targets set by the United Nations beyond 2015, as part of its aim to end global poverty (United Nations, 2014(b)).

Conversely, 'University civic engagement has not had nearly the visibility and recognition that its substantial results warrant', argues Lawrence Bacow, President, Tufts University (Watson, *et al.*: 2011:xx) who identifies following an account of twenty universities across sixteen countries in relation to making civic and community engagement a strategic priority,

that ‘In universities around the world, something extraordinary is happening’ (*ibid.*). The findings identify that virtually all of these institutions have a ‘universal and explicit commitment to civic engagement and social responsibility’ (*ibid.*:208) that they are committing their human and intellectual resources to address the pressing needs of those societies within which the universities are located, and maintain staffed offices to that end, and are achieving substantial results. These findings illustrate the emergence of a new stage in the development of institutional mission – civic and community engagement as a new paradigm, moving beyond the ‘grand narratives’ that emphasises liberal education, and professional formation, and the university as a research engine: ‘It posits community engagement not as a separate kind of activity, but as a focus of the institution’s teaching and research, and as a strategy for achieving greater quality and impacts in the institution’s teaching and research’ (*ibid.*:208).

Some identify providing access to higher education to disadvantaged and marginalised groups both a priority but also a key part of their civic and social mission (The Charles Darwin University, Australia and The Open University UK), while others to empower women through education; for example, the vision for The Ahfad University for Women (Sudan) is: ‘to create proactive women change agents and leaders... who can participate in the development of their families and communities’ (*ibid.*:211).

This study of twenty universities across the world is that differences emerge between the ‘North’ and ‘South’ in several distinct ways. The first, also highlighted by Watson (2007) is of a dominant discourse in the ‘North’ of ‘higher education serving the community by “being there”’ (Watson, 2007:132-134) to develop the character and instincts of democratic citizenship, in some sort of exchange for the right to conduct teaching and research (Watson, 2007). It is suggested that this might arise through several sources: recognition that life and work in the twenty-first century requires breadth and depth of knowledge and skills; an

‘ethical turn’ perhaps in response to the ethical short-comings in business, professional and political life. This is seen through the commitment of students to volunteering. This, together with a diverse ethnicity and many bilingual students entering the university, is elevating other agendas such as the environment and international concerns above traditional political allegiances, encouraged by the international growth of students progressing from undergraduate to post-graduate education. The relationship with civil society is increasingly recognised as more important than its role as an instrument of state policy, and that this supports the building of ‘soft skills’. The authors cite universities of Winchester and Melbourne best illustrate these priorities in action (Watson, *et al*, 2011:241-242).

Representing universities in the north, Holland argues that the most prestigious universities see engagement as an important and relevant part of their agenda to gain competitive advantage (Holland, 2005). She argues that ‘the elite research university sector in the U.S. has only recently begun to recognize that... modes of networked, collaborative research such as engaged scholarship will be an essential element of academic excellence in the 21st Century university’ (Holland, 2005:5). Holland identifies such engagement as a ‘core element of academic excellence and prestige’ (*ibid*.:6). Holland presents the case that institutions can no longer remain self-contained, but will have to embrace ‘engaged strategies, both to prepare graduates who can thrive and innovate in the context of the new global knowledge economy while also contributing to the quality of life in the communities where they live’ (*ibid*.:7).

Watson *et al* (2011) identify that during the fieldwork the relationships between the North and South appeared substantially unidirectional (*ibid*.:243). Concerns developed ‘that social science can only have one, universal social theory, the one created in the global North’ (Connell, 2007:ix). Through the work of Arjun Appadurai it was possible to ‘able to probe what a distinctively “Southern” view of a university civic and engagement consists of’ but

more profoundly wished to add weight to Connell's drive for the 'new configurations of knowledge that result when Southern theory is everywhere respected, and differently formed theories speak together' (Connell, 2007:xiv). Appadurai's call for an understanding of 'globalisation from below' (Appadurai, 2000:17-18) – proposes another way of addressing the global everyday issues communities face. The findings helped create a different 'Mode 2' world of civic and community engagement that the 'Southern' model offers (*ibid.*:245-248). Watson *et al* (2011) were persuaded this 'represents a rich and fruitful addition to the available models, mixes of intellectual capital and narratives in the field' (*ibid.*:249). This approach engages above all in a sense of societal pull over institutional push, while operating in a very practical world of 'Mode 2' engagement. It is contained within a focus on collective development – social returns and cohesion – and an acceptance that religion and science should work in harmony.

In line with such thinking, the European Commission requested a three year stakeholder analysis research project on the 'cognitive alignment' between companies and their stakeholders, to understand what Corporate Social Responsibility comprises (CSR) (INSEAD, 2008). The research identified good alignment as a significant measure of CSR success. The research concluded that cognitive alignment matters a lot, with some critical external and internal factors being identified as significant in bringing about good cognitive alignment. Within the marketplace, the research promoted a shift for managers with profit and loss accountability to shift from thinking about 'do no harm' and 'what they can do to us' to appropriate ways to 'help society develop to the fullest possible extent, and in the best possible way' (*ibid.*:82). This is reinforced by the view of moving beyond the narrow focus of the legal, reputational or ethical logics that define its boundaries, and accept the rights and duties connected to the impact it has on the environments in which it operates' (*ibid.*). In terms of 'bridging the gap' the research points to two factors that can be used to improve

cognitive alignment: through linking CSR with business strategy, and its integration into business processes. While the research recognises the complexities of running large businesses, the result that the link between competitive strategy adopted by a corporation and its cognitive alignment is at its best when ‘it competes towards a competitive posture that prioritises differentiation, innovation and customisation of its products/ services’ (*ibid.*:83). The research findings pointed to increased social cohesion among stakeholders, with positive expected implications for both economic and social performance. In other words, the research was saying, it is not helpful in relation to cognitive alignment to compete on cost efficiency, large volumes and lower margins. The strongest and second point that emerged from the research was the ‘need to invest in deep internal change processes aimed at the adaption of operating and strategic processes towards integration of social responsible principles (*ibid.*).

In seeing those who manage CSR placed at the periphery of the organisation, INSEAD identify such a shift as being ‘the real litmus test’ to assess progress in a company’s efforts to become an effective corporate citizen (*ibid.*). While INSEAD use a different language and lens within a different sector, Holland (2005) identifies they are nevertheless highlighting the overriding importance of being engaged.

3.3.5 Future imagination – the ecological university

Barnett suggests that without imaginative thinking, ‘higher education is liable to be rudderless, and that such thinking is rather thin on the ground, subject to the buffeting of large global forces’ (Barnett, 2014: 9). He considers two identities within which higher education might have been lodged – of it being an ascent and now of it being more a mass education than originally conceived as an elite education. He identifies that the notion provided by Newman (2012) in his idea of a university of an ascent into a different world and of education opening a philosophical outlook has to be ditched. Higher education might be thought of as holding onto a unitary conception, or even an essence (Barnett, 2014:11). The

stronger force is that higher education might have subtly suggested higher education for the elite, and associated with hierarchy. Leading to the notion that higher education has been hollowed out, and amid the marketisation of higher education in which students are encouraged to be customers of their educational experience, that higher education comes to be precisely that which the students-as-customers desire (*ibid.*:11-12): Barnett goes on to quote student satisfaction rates as shaping institutions' internal policies and provision. He concludes by saying: 'Accordingly, any attempt to think about higher education in itself can be seen to be an exercise in dilettantism, being both inappropriate and having no purchase on the real world. Thinking about higher education is, at best, a problematic venture. It may even be emptying' (*ibid.*).

Barnett identifies the contemporary conceptual canvas offers two depictions of higher education: one that is 'largely an endorsement of changes underway in the light of shifts in the direction of global cognitive capitalism' (*ibid.*:15) and the other is 'a pessimistic critique of that position' (*ibid.*). He admits this is a gross simplification and that there are more optimistic voices, 'evoking conceptions of higher education that are at once critical and yet positive' (*ibid.*). He finds a cluster of ideas that identify social and public goods that flow from higher education: of wisdom (Maxwell, 2012); of socialist knowledge (Peters, Gietzin and Ondercin, 2012); of the theoretical university (Parker, 2005); of the idea of the world university (Standaert, 2012), and the idea of the student as global citizen (Stearns, 2009). He argues that they serve as a canvas for the theorisation of the very idea of a 'public', in which perhaps the most significant theorist is Simon Marginson (2007). Marginson argues, in contradistinction to goods in the market place, knowledge does not lose its value either in its free circulation or in being held by increasing numbers of people. It is a 'non-rivalrous' good. Indeed, the value of knowledge in those circumstances – that it is being distributed widely across society - may actually grow. Barnett (2014) draws two profound implications for this.

He acknowledges that ‘higher education is a global phenomenon (*ibid*:17) – that student mobility is global, and that universities are global in their reach and are subject to massive forces of global cognitive capitalism and internet communication. This is a world Barnett presents – under global neo-liberalism and cognitive capitalism – ‘that universities simply have to become forms of “the entrepreneurial university”, or “the virtual university” or “the corporate university” or the digital university” or the “virtual university”’ (*ibid.*). While he argues, ‘universities are caught amid swirling global currents’ (*ibid.*:18) there is still room to manoeuvre, and that universities, as found earlier in this literature review (Hart, Maddison and Wolff, 2007; Watson *et al*, 2011; Holland, 2005) that more public conceptions of higher education are being opened alongside the dominant economic conceptions. This leads Barnett to propose the idea of the ‘ecological university’ (Barnett, 2013).

Captured in this literature review, is the widening appreciation above and beyond global cognitive capitalism. From Watson *et al*, 2011 there is good evidence that universities are conceptualising the university to embrace education in a wider way, through ideas ‘of “general education”, “wisdom”, “citizenship”, “lifewide learning” and “service” are being heard and promoted and are being realised’ (*ibid.*:19). In Barnett’s thinking about higher education and his search for ‘feasible utopias’, he gains confidence in promoting the idea of the ‘ecological university’ (Barnett, 2014) which would be ‘a university that was not just aware of the many ecologies in which it has its being, and was not just wanting to sustain those ecologies, but was intent on enhancing their wellbeing’ (Barnett, 2014:19). Barnett sees this as a broadening out of the remit of the university, and of the university acting not only in its own interests, played out in concrete ways. He cites how through such thinking, for example students might themselves be encouraged to engage in their own ‘lifewide learning’ as a global citizen, and that such an emergent concept is also practical and relevant in the world of today. Within this thinking, the student can be supported in finding his or her own

possibilities in a networked world. ‘The student not merely teacher herself in profound ways but also comes into herself. Heidegger’s idea of “being-possible” (Heidegger 1998:183-185) is concretely realised in an ecological education.

3.4 The context and experience of forced-migration

The thesis now turns to explore the context and experience of forced migration, its stresses, and even the traumatic processes of asylum. The thesis reviews other ways of seeing the world, and of doing, through the eyes of Gramsci and Freire, through Ledwith and Shor, to seek emancipatory practice through the everyday – of seeking through art, therapy, through sewing classes, ways of ‘extraordinarily experiencing the ordinary’ (Shor, 1992:122) to thus provide resources of hope. The section concludes with a review of feminist approaches, central within auto/biographic narrative research, as well as acknowledging the ancient ethnography and traditions of the Congolese community.

3.4.1 Neoliberal abjectification of asylum seekers

Tyler (2013) argues that based on Foucault’s concept of state racism (Foucault, 2003) the 1981 Nationality Act marked a pivotal moment in the neoliberal redesign of British citizenship and that it has ‘operated as the template for a glut of subsequent national legislation’ (Tyler, 2013:48) as evidenced later in this chapter. The 1981 Nationality Act illustrates a means of classifying, distinguishing and dividing a population on the basis of appeals to essentialist categories of origin (Tyler, 2013:56-57), ‘the administrative prose of a State that defends itself in the name of a social heritage that has to be kept pure’ (Foucault, 2003:83), arguing that the structure and power of contemporary societies were determined by the invention of race ‘and associated notions of “native” entitlement’ (Tyler, 2013:56). The ‘war against race’ is, he suggests, what constitutes the nation-state and is at the source of conflict from which sovereignty generates legitimacy. This is a new form of racism in which a ‘disdain or hate of some races for others’ is harnessed as a technology of power ‘that

permits biopower to exercise itself' (Stoler, 1995:86). Foucault suggests that racism needs to be understood within neoliberal forms of class struggle from the perspective of 'race war', arguing that racism is a means of 'eliminating class enemies as though they were racial enemies' (Foucault, 2003:83). What Foucault attempts to delineate, by combining race and class together, is the common (Enlightenment) roots of colonialism, facism and capitalism (Tyler, 2013). Tyler argues that British citizenship is a legal, political and social field of intelligibility that 'abjectifies some people outside of the realm of citizenship altogether, constituting them as illegal but also, paradoxically, fixing, capturing and paralysing them within the borders of the state' (Tyler, 2013:48). Thus Tyler argues, the "immobilized", those designated as abject are transformed into commodities within "asylum markets" (*ibid.*). Drawing on such a theory of social abjection provides insight into how powerfully neoliberal governmentality regulates social life from 'within its most intimate interiors, exercising a control that extends throughout the depths of the consciousness and bodies of the population' (Hardt and Negri, 2000:24).

3.4.2 Bodies supporting asylum seekers and refugees

Despite the considerable opposition of asylum seekers, there is nevertheless organised support for asylum seekers. Globally down to grass roots, there remains widespread concern that simply not enough is being done, part of the basis upon which this research is predicated. Grasping how the different organisations work together is complex even for those familiar with the field. While many different providers deliver different types of support, refugee community organisations 'typically find it difficult to gain access to many of these infrastructure organisations' (British Refugee Council, 2007). The Basis Conference (2010) identified that the RCO sector is underserved by the existing mainstream infrastructure, and recommended significant investment. The conference called for a focus on governance, fundraising, project development and management, financial management and marketing

expertise (Basis Conference, 2010). There appear to be two worlds, one concerned with the ‘organisation of organisations’ that provide services, and the other world of the RCO. RCOs work at the grass-roots level supporting individuals and communities, while experiencing real difficulties in bridging these two worlds. Five critical conference issues were identified: current cuts in funding, lack of networking needed to create a unified voice, to centre closures and the isolation of the most vulnerable in society (women, children, elderly and the destitute with no recourse to public funds), and unemployment of refugee and asylum seeking volunteers because of their status, language barriers, education, and, in some cases, unemployment connected with health issues (Basis Conference, 2010).

3.4.3 The asylum experience

This section examines what it is like to be an asylum seeker. I embrace a global perspective, thinking about the asylum-migration nexus, and from the United Kingdom legal and political perspective. Links are made with narrative learning and the creation of ‘a potential space for transformative possibilities’ (O’Neill, 2010:108).

3.4.3.1 The migration-asylum nexus

The world’s tragedies and triumphs are often reported instantaneously, on electronic pages accessible globally. The news unfolds and is documented minute-by-minute in this world of constant movement. Hall (2002:25) observes that ‘both forced and free, at the centre and periphery of the global system, communities and societies are increasingly global in their nature’. This is part of the context for concern about social disintegration and conflict.

O’Neill, Webster and Woods (2003) describe new arrivals being caught up in global mobility and migration (both inward and outward). Castles, Crawley and Loughna (2003) describe this movement as ‘the migration-asylum nexus’ (*ibid.*:iii), and argue that it ‘constitutes a major analytical and policy challenge’ (*ibid.*), because ‘upheavals, economic difficulties and

conflicts often occur simultaneously providing migrants with multiple motivations for moving' (*ibid.*:4).

O'Neill, Webster and Woods (2003) conclude that even in the most rudimentary exploration of the literature, migration is on the increase, particularly in the context of globalization. So too is the emergence of transnational identities; these waves of forced and economic migration have created the rich cultural and ethnic diversity of Derby city. Forced migration is 'not the result of a string of unconnected emergencies, but an integral part of North-South relations' (Castles, Crawley and Loughna, 2003:9). There is general agreement that within the context of globalization, cross-border flows of people have increased from South and East to North, in part an expression of global inequalities (Castles, Crawley and Loughna, 2003; Castles and Miller, 2003).

These migration trends indicate that 'indicators of conflict are greater than indicators of development as explanatory factors for flows of asylum seekers to the EU' (Castles, Crawley and Miller, 2003:27). They argue that such 'push' factors are mitigated by migrants wishing to seek protection for themselves and their families. Having the means enables them to travel to democratic countries where there is the rule of law and a high level of peace and public order. Some argue (Silove, Steel and Watters, 2000) that asylum seekers arriving in developed countries can be seen as both political and economic migrants, raising the tensions associated with poverty and politics. They point out that asylum seekers and economic migrants arise out of the same societal transformations and crises linked to war, poverty, and nation-state formation. The question of whether people leave their homelands out of desperation or aspiration is irrelevant: 'They seek to escape from social, economic and/or political insecurity to a more secure future' (Khan, 2000:121). Developed countries have strong economies with established welfare and health systems offering reasonable living standards compared with those that migrants might normally be accustomed to in their own

countries. Indeed, conflict in the home country is often an expression of failure to bring about economic and social development, failure to introduce democratic institutions, safeguard human rights, and implement long-term policies designed to prevent conflict and bring about social, economic and political development. Global migration presents a larger framework within which asylum seekers find themselves caught up.

3.4.3.2 What is an asylum seeker?

This section describes the term ‘asylum’, which has a myriad of meanings, none of which favourably help place those who seek it. In the country of asylum, asylum seekers are subject to racial and other abuse, the subject of discussion at times of elections or economic depression. The avalanche of laws passed over the last decade or so has systematically separated asylum seekers from the mainstream of society. The very term ‘asylum seeker’ is fraught with political implications; in making a distinction between asylum seekers and refugees, governments unwittingly betray a clear bias against the former. The thesis identifies that such laws have reduced asylum-seekers’ rights, have criminalised them and have brought increased hardship both at the point of application and at the end of the process.

There is general agreement among various writers on the topic that ‘asylum seeking’ is a small and interconnected component of a much broader trans-national, multifaceted phenomenon (Craig, Dawson, Kilkey and Martin, 2004; Castles and Miller, 2003, and Jordan and Düvell, 2003). They argue that it has become impossible in the United Kingdom to remove the term ‘asylum seeker’, together with the domestic reaction to asylum, from a wider historical and global context. ‘Asylum’ comes from the Greek meaning ‘refuge’ but carries deep historical connotations within the British psyche. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines the term asylum as ‘a sanctuary for criminals’, ‘a benevolent institution offering shelter and support to some class of the afflicted, the unfortunate or destitute, especially (pop.) a “lunatic asylum” 1776’ (Onions, 1973: 123). These definitions implant a

natural, indelible bias in the understanding of the term today in the minds of many if not most citizens. It would be very hard for any citizen living in the United Kingdom not to be aware of current politicisation of the term ‘asylum seeker’, and of the prolonged negative connotations of this term noted by some writers (Lynn and Lea, 2003), as well as racism and other types of abuse levied against such people, as acknowledged by all of the many United Kingdom and International ‘refugee’ organisations supporting asylum seekers. This struggle for an appropriate identity, and a place to belong, remains today. The Refugee Action Annual Review provides a vision of ‘a society in which refugees are welcome, respected and safe, and in which they can realise their full potential’ (Randall and Pendlebury, 2012).

While asylum seekers may represent a small component part of the global migration story, they encapsulate and have projected upon them the global misery of humankind. In modern times, they attract anger and suspicion during times of elections and strife, invariably taking centre stage in political or economic debates. During these current times of economic depression, asylum seekers can become conflated with the economic migrants of the New Accession States (A8), and are collectively seen by many to be stealing work and opportunities from United Kingdom citizens and draining our island’s increasingly tightly-managed and limited resources. However, economic migrants are a clearly identifiable group. By contrast, there is much debate over the various definitions that attempt to classify forced, involuntary or exiled migrants using a variety of legal and political categories (Castles *et al*, 2003).

The 1951 Geneva Convention offers useful definitions of the terms ‘refugee’ and ‘asylum seekers’. A refugee is someone who:

owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail

himself of the protection of that country, or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (The 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees)

It goes on to say that: ‘An asylum seeker is someone who has lodged an application for protection on the basis of the Refugee Convention or Article 3 of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR)’ (European Convention of Human Rights, 2012) and adds that ‘No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment’ (*ibid.*: Article 3). To claim asylum, ‘an individual whose claim for refugee status has not yet been decided must travel to a country that is not their own in search of protection (asylum)’ (Castels, Crawley and Loughna, 2003). Citizens of the Democratic Republic of the Congo do not have automatic refugee status in the United Kingdom, as was for example, provided to the people fleeing Bosnia, about whom I write later.

The members of the Congolese community in Derby were almost without exception asylum seekers; each of them was obliged to demonstrate at an individual level that they had ‘a well founded fear of being persecuted’ (1951 UN Convention). Schuster makes it clear that while states are obligated by international law to protect those identified as refugees, they are under no such obligation for asylum seekers: ‘Asylum is a right of states, not of individuals, whose only right is to request and to enjoy asylum once it is granted’ (Schuster, 2003:233). This positions asylum seekers as flotsam on the tide of government policy and its drivers, not only in this country but across the tides of all nations.

The implementation of the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act marked a lasting change in the way asylum seekers were resettled and supported in the United Kingdom. The Act had two main outcomes. The first was to deter economic migration by separating the social rights of asylum seekers from those of other United Kingdom citizens and non-citizen residents, which

included restrictions on the right to work. The second was the establishment, for the first time, of the National Asylum Support Service (NASS), a nationally co-ordinated system for the settlement and welfare support of asylum seekers (Wren, 2007). It was argued that this legislation ‘created a new social category of “asylum seeker”, separating them both in policy and in popular discourse from recognised refugees’ (Sales, 2002:463). This resettlement was part of a United Kingdom dispersal policy, involving a programme of forcible relocation (on a no-choice basis) of people seeking asylum away from the South East of England and London to a number of dispersal sites across the United Kingdom, including Derby.

During the 1990s a series of Asylum and Immigration Acts were passed in the United Kingdom that served increasingly to restrict the rights and choices of asylum seekers and refugees that ultimately lowered their state benefits. These restrictions continued across the next decade. In January 2003, support was further eroded by Section 55 of the 2002 Asylum and Immigration Act, whereby asylum seekers who did not put in an application at the point of arrival would not receive support. Implementation of Sections 2 and 9 brought asylum seekers hardship and humiliation both on arrival and at the end of their claims. Upon arrival, Section 2 ‘criminalises’ those who arrived without a passport and without reasonable excuse under Section 9 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claims). Through the 2004 Act, families who had reached the end of the asylum process and exhausted all their appeal rights could have their financial support and accommodation removed if they ‘fail to take reasonable steps’ to leave the United Kingdom. This also meant they could have their children taken into the care of Social Services should the parents be rendered destitute. The New Asylum Model came as part of a five-year strategy, streamlining the process but limiting stay to five years. This was followed by the 2006 Immigration Asylum and Nationality Act, which in turn was followed in 2007 by the United Kingdom Borders Bill.

The study of how immigrants viewed the legislation and prevailing conditions here in the United Kingdom is the subject of Brown's thesis (Brown, 2005) and provided me with a backcloth for my own research and a renewed determination to engage with and support people in the community to bring about positive action. Like Brown, my research has been an attempt to 'deconstruct this [re]positioning created by what Lynn and Lea (2003) have called 'common knowledge' which can also be known as the 'dominant' or 'authoritative' discourse' (Brown, 2005:4).

3.4.3.3 The devastation experienced by asylum seekers

It is not possible within this thesis to capture the devastating experience that fleeing one's homeland causes. I take as an example the experiences of the Bosnian people following the ethnic cleansing that occurred during the collapse of the former-Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. Anger (1995) provides a scale for this tragedy. He states that more than 700,000 individuals suffered severe psychic trauma in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia alone. These findings maintain the likelihood of repercussions for the next two generations, including an increase in alcoholism, drug use, an increased suicide rate and, more generally, mental disorders. Anger identifies explicit factors that cause psychological stress: during the collapse of a country into civil war, refugees suffer economic deprivation, the break-up of the social order, the separation of families, and the disappearance of some family members. From the modification and devaluation of social roles, spring psychic and psychological violence, ethnic persecution, and loss of home, country, family members and friends. Anger then identifies the danger and abuses experienced by refugees in the course of flight, and, upon arrival the type of welcome at the collective centres, the living conditions and sense of inclusion they experience. All this is coupled with uncertainty about the future (Anger, 1995). Those in flight often believe the event to be a short-term situation, and that separation or loss of family members produces the most prolonged traumatic effect (Losi, 2006). Symbolic and

material losses take place, relating to country, land, home, culture, home and work — in other words, ‘the entire social fabric in which they were born and have managed to find their distinct place in the world’ (Arendt, 1982:276). Upon arrival in a new country, individuals experience ‘All these different levels of loss transform individuals in the world into individuals outside the world’ (Chauvenet, Despret and Lemaire, 1996:37). This, together with not being understood or accepted in a receiving community, according to Ferenczi (1968) can give rise to a condition Chauvenet, Despret and Lemaire (1996) describe as ‘psychic compassion’ (*ibid.*:41). Ferenczi identifies that that these migrants identify that they had ‘overestimated their own resources and lived under the mad illusion that such a thing could never happen, “not to me”’ (Ferenczi, 1968:140). This whole experience leads to disillusionment, a depressive condition, and abandonment of hope as a form of defence, all of which can be obstacles to mourning, turning individuals into prisoners, with the restriction of all types of rights and the impossibility of actively participating in social life (Losi, 2006). This has the effect of repeating the experiences that led to the refugees’ original flight — an experience shared by many immigrants.

3.4.3.4 Dispersal of asylum seekers to our cities

I illustrate here that the impact of placing asylum seekers in disadvantaged areas of the United Kingdom increases their social exclusion at least during the early period of their settlement, and typically increases tensions within the larger local community. Cantle (2008) argues that this is a form of social exclusion, mitigating as points of separation and increasing cultural ‘segmentalism’ through the formation of segregated micro-communities that in effect live parallel lives. Cantle argues that this leads to tensions in and between communities (Cantle, 2008). Cantle describes how geography may restrict communities not only physically but in other ways too, by not having contact in activities such as in cultural and leisure activities, in faith and education and in employment, and that many people ‘have no

knowledge of other cultures and often have to rely on myths and stereotypes to define that relationship' (Cantle, 2008: 79). Nationally, the asylum dispersal system is conducted on the basis of available housing stock, with asylum seekers housed in areas of disadvantage among communities already struggling with lack of resources, unemployment, and a lack of stake in society (O'Neill, Webster and Woods, 2003).

3.4.3.5 Asylum experienced here in our cities

Destitution following failed applications for asylum was identified in Destitution in Leeds (Lewis, 2007). Lewis warns of the increased concern 'at the increase in numbers of destitute asylum seekers whose cases have been refused, and who are deprived of support and access to key public services' (*ibid.*:3). Lewis argues that such an increase in numbers diverts from integration-focused activities, leaves staff demoralised by having to attend to 'the complex needs of destitute people is emotionally draining and diverts from integration-focused activities' (*ibid.*:5). Lewis defines destitution as 'lacking the means to meet basic needs of shelter, warmth, food, water and health' (*ibid.*:11). She further shows that people remain in this vulnerable position for protracted periods, during which time they experience differing degrees of destitution that ultimately have an acute impact on their wellbeing. This feeling of destitution can lead to self-harm and suicidal thoughts. Survival for refused asylum seekers is about silence and forgetting, while support 'in the community' conceals the seriousness of destitution, which renders people vulnerable: 'I'm nothing. I'm nobody. When I came here I thought I might be something, but now I'm nothing. I'm just like an animal' (Refused asylum seeker, cited in Lewis, 2007:46). Despite these experiences, most will not consider returning or being returned home. All eight of the asylum seekers who took part in Lewis's research said they could not return to their own country of origin. Some desperately missed their family and country, but stayed in the United Kingdom to safeguard their lives, fearing persecution or death should they be returned. Some spoke of how they had thought that the

United Kingdom was a fair democratic country that respected human rights, but that their experiences reversed this view: ‘I came to this country to be protected, but no one cares’ (Refused asylum seeker cited in Lewis, 2007:39). Brown, Education and Employment Advisor, identifies the biggest problem for refused asylum seekers is ‘not having any place in society, not having any future, just having an ongoing nightmare’ (Lewis, 2007:60). This report captures profoundly how difficult it is to live as a failed asylum seeker in destitution in the United Kingdom — a finding that is echoed in other reports across the country, including that of the Leicester Refugee and Asylum Seekers Voluntary Sector Forum (LVSF). The LVSF Executive Summary reports that 148 individual asylum seekers presented and reported that they were currently destitute, several of whom had been coping with destitution for more than five years, and that ‘Furthermore the level of destitution shows no sign of significantly declining and the numbers are being added to, despite changes in the asylum system’ (Malfait, 2009:2).

The report is hard hitting, and particularly picks up on ‘Returns and Inability to Work’, while also highlighting the long-term debilitating effect on health and well-being for both the individuals and the communities within which they live. The report finds no evidence to suggest that pushing asylum seekers and refugees into destitution encourages them to return home, and also identifies that, for some there are no practical ways to get back home even if they wanted to. LVCS applauds migrants for their continuing ingenuity and dignity, acknowledging the appalling conditions, many migrants ‘retain a sense of humour and integrity. They are survivors although, after having fled some horrible situations, they should not have to be tested in this way’ (Malfait, 2009:4).

Layer by layer the picture builds up of individual lives lived out in British cities, and of extended periods of humiliation and depravity that asylum seekers must endure.

3.5 Public discourses on asylum seekers

There can be little disagreement that over the last decade the media has played a profound part in the generation of negativity and panic towards refugees (Robinson, 2003). Discourses that further marginalise asylum seekers within United Kingdom society are well understood, misunderstood and debated incessantly. The House of Lords and House of Commons Conclusions and Recommendations, Treatment of Asylum Seekers, expresses concern about the ‘negative impact of hostile reporting and in particular the effects that it can have on individual asylum seekers and the potential it has to influence the decision making of officials and Government policy’ and also about this style of hostile reporting being linked to ‘physical attacks on asylum seekers’ (House of Lords, 2006-7: Paragraph 349).

These concerns are supported by refugee organisations such as the Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees (ICAR), which identify hostility as one of the biggest problems affecting the quality of life for refugees and asylum seekers in the United Kingdom (Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees, 2013). It is further argued by Kundnani (2001) that such negative media coverage has created a climate where racism against refugees can go unrecognised as racism and pass unchallenged. In a survey conducted by the Independent Asylum Commission, only 18% of the United Kingdom public viewed the term ‘asylum’ positively (Hobson, Cox, Sagovsky and Wainwright, 2008). In Deserving Dignity the Commission concluded that ‘the responsibility for the fair and humane treatment of people who seek sanctuary in the UK lies with the UK Border Agency, but also with politicians, the media, and every individual citizen’ (Hobson *et al*, 2008:1).

This is the melting pot within which refugees and asylum seekers are welcomed into the United Kingdom — notwithstanding the fact that the United Kingdom is a fully signed up member of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and should be positively disposed on humanitarian grounds to welcome and support seekers of sanctuary.

3.6 Narratives of Hope

Gramsci, through his concept of hegemony (Jones, S. 2006), confirms such forms of oppression whereby the dominant group in a culture might assert control over other social groups by engaging the state through its laws, the police and the armed forces, or in Tyler's language, in neoliberal governmentality. Such powerful bodies are not mutually exclusive but operate together. Through ideological persuasion, an attritional and invasive force that subtly reshapes our thinking is manifested, so that overall the illusion through the reinforcing of these dominant ideas is that they become accepted truths. They are coalesced and form a body of knowledge that becomes unchallenged and accepted as common sense, embedded within society and hard to dislodge as the dominant discourse. Hegemony, Ledwith argues, in such ways 'asserts control over knowledge and culture, affirming the ideas of the dominant culture and marginalising and silencing others' (Ledwith and Springett, 2010:160).

Ledwith identifies opportunity in that 'hegemony is only maintained through the collective will of the people' so the development of an alternative way of seeing the world, or counter-hegemony, 'plays an essential part in the process of change' (*ibid.*). Empowerment is a product of being critical, and so cannot be understood without insight into the way that power works in society: 'The self and society create each other' (Shor, 1992:15). Change for a just and sustainable future is based on questioning the status quo, becoming curious about the way that the form of democracy that exists in the West is creating privilege for some at the expense of greater inequalities for others.

If this research is to offer sustainable opportunities for change within the Congolese community, it must recognise this dominant ideology and have as its starting point the identification of what Gramsci calls 'false-consciousness' between different communities endeavouring to work together. Gramsci (Jones, S. 2006) did not propose that the process of becoming critical would be spontaneous but rather that it would take some time. He believed

in the intellectual potential of everyone in the community and that every social group produces individuals who possess ‘the capacity to be an organiser of society in general... because of the need to create the conditions most favourable to the expansion of their own class...’ (Forgacs, 1988:301). There would emerge, in his terms, ‘organic intellectuals’ (Ledwith and Springett, 2010:161), leaders who could take charge of the community, who had or could develop the requisite skills, and thereby develop and support their community in ways appropriate to match their cultural roots. In relation to this, I identified that I within the role I was playing, I might be thought of, in Gramsci’s terms, as a ‘traditional intellectual’ (Forgacs, 1988: 301), someone who has ‘a sympathetic allegiance to social justice that supersedes their commitment to their own class’ (Ledwith and Springett, 2010:161). This provides a vital, if temporary, role in setting the wheels in motion and is ‘the catalyst in the process of change by creating the context for questioning lived reality’ (*ibid.*:162).

3.6.1 Pedagogy of the oppressed

Paulo Freire’s pedagogy offers the opportunity for peaceful revolution through critical education (Freire, 1970, 1974; West, 1993, Shor and Freire, 1987, Ledwith, 2005). The pedagogy of Paulo Freire ‘has influenced community development so profoundly, precisely because it is founded on a practical engagement with community’ (Ledwith and Hart, 2013:5). As highlighted by Ledwith and Hart (2013), Freire’s influence extends not only in the south but also the north of the globe, and particularly relevant in this thesis within and across Africa. Evidence of its continuing impact can be seen in the report by The Grail Centre (Grail Centre, 2009) on the training for transformation courses still running in Zimbabwe. This acknowledgement still rings out, representing the essence of Freire’s pedagogy, so succinctly captured:

Paulo Freire [1921-1997] developed a radically different approach to adult education that he defined as ‘critical conscientization’ in the 1960s. He argued

that critical conscientization helps people **read their reality** and **write their history**' (*ibid.*:9; emphasis in original) all within the notion 'that people become **subjects** of their own destiny not **objects** in society. He challenged the orthodoxy that treated adult learners as empty vessels that needed to be filled with knowledge from the professionals. (*ibid.*)

Freire is 'one of the key proponents of empowerment' (*ibid.*), a central precept within the community development field. Freire strikes at the heart of community development practice that begins in personal empowerment, and 'in personal liberation' (Freire, 1970:26) through 'the' word [Freire's emphasis in original], within which he finds both reflection and action (*ibid.*:68). Through his work he identifies the notion that dialogue cannot exist in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people (*ibid.*:70), nor without faith, humility and hope, all of which creates dialogue within a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequence (*ibid.*:72). From whatever perspective I came from during my research, whether through feminist writings — for example through the work of hooks (1984, 1993) — or from community development and participatory practice through Ledwith (2005 and 2011), and others such as McLaren (1993), McLaren and Leonard (1993), Shor (1987) and West (1993), the effervescent love these writers have for Paulo Freire shines through. They applaud his optimism in tackling oppression, recognising him as 'the exemplary organic intellectual of our time' (West, 1993:xiii), whose transformative ideas West maintains are 'grounded in the painful yet empowering process of conscientization' (*ibid.*). Freire reminds us that 'Narratives of liberation are always tied to people's stories, and what stories we choose to tell, and the way in which we decide to tell them', and that 'Such a pedagogy recognises that identity is always personal and social. Our identities must continue to act as agents of change rather than be depoliticised at the level of everyday life, and in this postmodern world consideration must be given to the postcolonial politics of ethics and compassion' (McLaren and Leonard, 1993:xii). This is his

transformative theory, namely that people's life changes can come from the very stories they tell about their lives.

Opportunity to understand how Freire's practice might be interpreted here in the 'North' can be gained through the writing of Gerri and Colin Kirkwood (2011), in their recording the Gergie Dalry Adult Learning Project in Edinburgh, known as the ALP. The focus of the ALP differed from Freire's work in Brazil and Chile, in that the focus was on general education in the community setting, rather than teaching literacy. The work grew organically through several phases – an investigative phase, a bridging phase, and of coming to maturity some six years later. Themes arising from this extended study link theory and practice within such a living project that has remained an active agent in its own growth and direction. In a related publication Colin Kirkwood (Kirkwood, 2012) articulates ideas underlying his own practice, embracing the work of Freire cited above, on the work of John Macmurray (1961) and Martin Buber (1959) and from a wide field of related disciplines. Colin Kirkwood helped me appreciate the central importance of humility in developing relations through Buber's philosophy of I/Thou relations.

While these notions inspire this research, I also acknowledge writers such as Williams (2011) whose views capture the wider recognition of injustice, of a global North-South divide, arguing that the processes of democratisation take time, and might never be complete, acknowledging a counter-revolution now taking place in recent years, in which individualism and marketisation are burgeoning at the expense of global inequality and poverty.

3.6.2 Emancipatory practice through experiencing the everyday

Power is also central to participation as an emancipatory practice. Shor (1992) says that the very lives we lead mask our ability to see the world in a critical way. Our lives are mutually re-enforced at every level from social relationships to poverty-related life, identifying class,

‘race’ and gender as major social divisions. Being critical requires a collision, of the ‘extraordinarily experiencing the ordinary’ (Shor, 1992:122), a key to Freirean approaches taking everyday stories as the key to empowerment, the basis of theory and practice. Seeing the world through the eyes of others not only helps remove the mask but also affords the insight required to re-experience the ordinary.

Empowerment through agency (Goodson, Biesta, Tedder and Adair, 2010) might also arise through the act of creating a story rather than information, which lives only a moment: ‘A story is different. It does not expend itself. It preserves and concentrates its strength and is capable of releasing it even after a long time’ (Benjamin, 1992:89—90).

The importance of engagement underpins a recent campaign on ‘Tackling Poverty Together’ (Church Urban Fund, 2012) where there is recognition of emerging forms of church in deprived communities, of the vital need to go and be with and work with marginalised people, if they are to be empowered. ‘The Community Development Challenge’ (Communities and Local Government, 2006) says that although there is a widespread notion that communities, including disadvantaged communities, will spontaneously play a much larger role in local society and development if they are simply ‘allowed’ to do this, this is not actually possible. Berner and Phillips argue along the same lines (Berner and Phillips, 2005). Assumptions that a community should simply help itself, risk legitimizing inequality. The assumptions reinforce the view that the poor are poor because they have not helped themselves. Berner and Phillips equate poverty and wealth to being two sides of the same coin, in that ‘The wealthy cannot withdraw from the lives of the poor, and the poor cannot withdraw from the lives of the wealthy’, and that a ‘sustainable solution will require either partnership or confrontation’ (Berner and Phillips, 2005:27).

3.6.3 Prescient forms of hope – the Kübler-Ross grieving cycle

The Kübler-Ross grieving cycle identifies five stages in the grieving process associated with dying – denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. From the start of her writing, Kubler-Ross identifies that what ‘usually persists through all these stages is hope’ (Kübler-Ross, 1970:122). Kübler-Ross identifies the early stages of denial act as a buffer, the opportunity for individuals to collect themselves. She cites Yalom (2008) who so beautifully captures this through the maxim ‘Death and the Sun! Who can outstare them?’ (La Rochefoucauld, 2006:4) to make the point that there is a need to put this possibility away, and pursue life (Kübler-Ross, 1970: 35). The model was later extended to apply to forms of personal loss or rejection as well as within the organisational setting as a model describing organisational change. This conventional model is challenged, in that George Bonanno (2011) shows that it discounts our capacity for resilience. In this case study with a group of African forced migrants, I have also registered the African predisposition for narrative cognition, compared with the paradigmatic cognition preferred in the West. None-the-less I believe there is value in attempting to theorise elements of the journey, acknowledging that the model is not prescriptive but rather a generalised series of steps that individuals experience uniquely in their own life changing events.

3.6.4 Understanding trauma within this research

The importance of 'trauma' in the discussions on refugee health has left health professionals struggling to make sense of and react to groups of people now defined as 'traumatised' (Roche, 2005). She argues that there is little understanding of how trauma is understood, experienced and addressed by individuals, their advocates and the service provider's, and how this impacts upon the experiences of refugees in resettlement. Distinct understandings of 'trauma' have predominately been confined to particular events, for example rape or torture, which might also be used as part of a defence in a claim to be granted asylum. Within the

asylum literature (ICAR, 2013), a broader interpretation has been embraced. Examples of this broader frame of reference are cited within this thesis (Anger, 1995, Losi, 2006, Rothschild, 2000). Trauma was also identified by those interviewed within the Congolese community during this research. Brenda Roche (2005) in her findings argues that trauma moves across time and situation, from the past through to the present, located as much in the series of events experienced related to conflict, as those encountered in resettlement. In addition, she identifies that ‘there are rich ways in which the women reveal their suffering that do not always correspond neatly to a psychiatric definition of trauma’.

Roche provides ethical reassurance within the method of this thesis namely, that women's accounts of distress are more entrenched in and defined by the day-to-day events that shape the refugee experience including the practicalities of adaptation, the search for a sense of community, as well as dealing with 'what happened' in the contexts of conflict and forced migration'. Roche recommends new strategies associated with finding and creating community emerge here as a critical way in which these women 'work through' many of the residual stressors of conflict and forced migration and facilitate their adaptation to life in resettlement. These work to counteract the isolationist framework of psychiatry and actively resist the transformation into 'clinical cases'. Particular emphasis is placed upon the value of 'talk' as a means of achieving recovery. I found it helpful also that Babette Rothschild (2000), in contrast to the psychiatric condition often prescribed, presents trauma more broadly and as a psychophysical experience, ‘even when the event causes no direct bodily harm’ (*ibid.*:5).

In view of the community's vulnerability, a link with therapeutic arts at the University of Derby was established during the research programme. I became aware that some of the community members may be experiencing what might be symptoms of ‘trauma’ and I, as the researcher, was not qualified to deal with the consequences of this.

Chapter Four: Methodology

Koni moko epelisaka moto té. One stick cannot make a fire. To make a big fire we all need to bring our sticks and throw them on to the fire. The power comes by being together.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes a period of muddling through to arrive at narrative enquiry. Through auto/biographical narrative research, I discovered a method by which voice, power and personal rejection might be expressed, together with the generation of others' stories and my own. I considered how I might be an insider researcher (Taysum, 2007), distancing myself from the University, and questioned how I might better understand modes of knowledge to co-construct knowledge (Hart, Maddison and Wolff, 2007). I explored the world of the autoethnographer, as a location within which this research might reside, with increased realisation of a deeper auto/biographical and ethnographic experience within the project. Following my successful viva voce examination in October 2013, I started to believe I was in a better place to progress my studies. Following reports from my examiners, (Ledwith and Hart, 2013) and the appointment of a specialist supervisor, Linden West in June 2014, whose encouragement provided a space wherein the project might finally be lodged to yield a piece of meaningful doctoral research. The method that evolved over this sustained period, and which is described in this chapter, is of a period of immense struggle that finally became framed within the imagination of an auto/biographic narrative case study, and in the generation of others' stories and my own. The material gathered during the case study is introduced, together with a conceptual model within which the analysis might be conceived. I describe the ethical code by which I worked and the issues this raised with a 'vulnerable community'.

The whole case study as it now appears in the thesis aims to chronicle a community development approach attempting to provide resources and support for a displaced community, and then to interrogate the meaning and impact of what was done.

4.2 Border crossing to find new meaning

Following my failure at my viva voce examination in January 2012, I struggled to make a meaning of what was being done. I increasingly acknowledged the centrality of me the researcher, and my own agenda, within the project. I was aware also of an interest in and use of narrative, strengths promoted and encouraged by my examiners (Ledwith and Hart, 2012). I researched auto/biographic methods; I struggled to understand how my relationship with the community might be framed – and wrestled with the notion of being an analytic opportunistic autoethnographer, by which I mean working as a member of the community, and from within the community, in the ways described by Adler and Adler (1987) and Anderson (2006). I was, after all fulfilling many roles within the project (Barr and Hashagen, 2000), and within this stage of my learning, I began to appreciate how I might be operating in border country.

Taysum presents the argument that what is distinctive about the EdD is ‘the space where educational practitioners can take up the challenge of shaping the processes that structure what they can and cannot know and do’ (Taysum, 2007:292). Potentially, she argues, these agents might provide community members access to tools to enable them to become more politically active (*ibid.*), leading to a ‘democratic, proactive and autonomous relationship with the markets of globalisation and cultural processes that shape identities’ (*ibid.*). Thus the EdD presents a real opportunity for educational professionals to produce and transform knowledge, critically, reflectively and equitably (*ibid.*:294). This is complemented by Phelps and Graham (2010) who argue such research includes working with unpredictability, and based upon reflective interactions with participants rather than controlling variables, ‘and accepts that the systems within which the research occurs are complex and dynamic’

(*ibid.*:184). Such an insider-researcher position removes the researcher to explore what might be done elsewhere from the university environment in many important ways. The several roles identified here, merge with those identified by Barr and Hashagen (2000), required within community development, building on the purpose of critical community development advocated by Ledwith (2005:1). Lyotard (1984) argues that knowledge is now legitimated by its capacity to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the socio-economic system, rather than epistemological canons.

Further evidence of border crossing might be elicited through modes of knowledge production. Usher points out that ‘those knowledge producers... are more likely to be responsible to communities of practice within their workplace, and are no more exclusively located within the academy’ (Usher, 2002:146). This style of knowledge production alluded to by Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzmann, Scott and Trow (1994) was a new style of knowledge production which they called Mode 2, where ‘problems are not set within a disciplinary framework’ (Gibbons *et al*,1994:vii), and where the research is ‘carried out in non-hierarchical, heterogeneously organised forms which are essentially transient’ (*ibid.*) and not institutionalised primarily within the university structure. This contrasts with Mode 1 knowledge, which is purely curiosity driven research that characterises the knowledge produced by universities (Usher, 2002:147) which ‘connotes and confers prestige and legitimacy’ (Hart, Maddison and Wolff, 2007:5). Hart, Maddison and Wolff identify other modes of knowledge. They conceive of a Mode 5, in an attempt to embrace the notion of knowledge being co-produced by both researcher and community (*ibid.*:6). Taysum’s concept of an outside agent offering a space to politicise is relevant within these mutual modes of knowledge creation. It provides a fundamental basis, however, for my role as a *traditional intellectual* (Forgacs, 1988) through education in raising critical consciousness, from which co-created knowledge is produced, leading to action.

Through the supervisions I was receiving from Professor Linden West from June 2014, I came to realise it had indeed been a challenge to cast off the old my positivist armour, as it were, to become more confidently grounded within the constructivist viewpoint; of developing what C. Wright Mills describes as ‘the sociological imagination’ (Wright Mills, 2000). This had yielded gradually during this period of muddling through to become central within this research, namely that I accepted an auto/biographical imagination was at its heart (West and Carlson, 2006). By re-framing the study, the context of the research had deeper relevance. It became relevant to identify and render my account in a more honest and straightforward manner. With the supportive probing of my supervisor, the centrality of the auto/biographic narrative provided a relevance to speak and name the truth as it were in Freire’s terms, of what had happened throughout the case study, and to perceive more clearly my place within the institution of a university. Critically, this helped me to be able to derive purposeful research questions that could act as the springboard to make this study meaningful.

The case study became a reflexive focus for the doctorate with the research gaining prominence. I came to understand how important it was to write in the first person. Patricia Hill Collins argues, as a situated knower (Collins, 2009:22), running the risk, as she argues, this work might be discredited as being too subjective and hence less scholarly. Writing in the first person is part of bringing me, the researcher, into the text auto/biographically, as part of a truth seeking process (Merrill and West, 2009). Conversely, emergent within the thesis is the awareness that the positivist approach has very little if indeed anything to say when it comes to carrying out auto/biographic narrative research. Writing in the first person is at the heart of auto/biographical narrative research, and described by Dorman (2008) as crucial, in that it frees up the writer to become explicitly linked with the research. Writing in the first person allows for the researcher to illustrate explicitly how he/she shapes the research

process, as part of the matrix of what is known (Fine, 1992). Collins (2009) argues that writing in the first person increases awareness of other 'subjugated knowledge', validating epistemological tenets and achieving the credibility of new knowledge, ways of writing that are fundamental in communicating directly, or in Collins's terms of 'equipping people to resist oppression and to inspire them to do it' (Collins, 2009:3).

4.3 Feminist approaches

My relationship to feminist literature has four aspects in this research: a) my own position as a white, elderly middle-class man, located within a university, a position of knowledge and power; b) the critical importance of a feminist approach within community development working, and c) in underpinning the auto/biographic narrative case study developed in this thesis, and d) in an attempt to gain an appreciation of the perspective of an aspect of feminism, namely of black women in particular. While any attempt to define feminism may create the 'un-looked for effect of marginalising different groups of women whose concerns fall outside this definition of feminist unity' (Delmar, 1986), typically feminists call for changes in the social, economic, political or cultural order, to reduce and eventually overcome discrimination against women (Freedman, 2001).

In hooks's writing about black African women in the United States, she argues that black women have shared equally in the fight to resist racist oppression, through 'a special tie binding people together who struggle collectively for liberation' (hooks, 1984:68-69).

Furthermore, she claims that 'Black women and men have been united by such ties in ways that bourgeois white women cannot conceptualise' (*ibid.*). She argues that their target has been patriarchal white male rule: 'Bourgeois white women, especially radical feminists, were envious and angry at privileged white men for denying them an equal share in class privilege' (*ibid.*). Maya Angelou (1984) contrasts the traditional place of black women in social gatherings with that of white women, arguing that in social gatherings of black people, black

women have always been predominant — in the church, in lay gatherings, and in the nurturing of their children — whereas white men dictate where white women are to be kept, something Angelou argues black women have never been told. It is helpful that hooks identifies that ‘many black women refused participation in feminist movement because they felt an anti-male stance was not a sound basis for action’ (hooks, 1984:70). Rather, they valued the solidarity built through resistance struggle, embracing the fact that men were ‘comrades in arms’ (*ibid.*:81), unwilling to devalue such a bond, recognising nevertheless that there is sexist oppression and that it has always existed. Here again, the rationalised approach taken by black women, according to hooks (*ibid.*), results from the struggle together against racism, in that black women see male abuse as an expression of frustrated masculinity. Although racism may lay claim to being the greatest repressive evil, Freedman affirms that even after the abolition of slavery, one hundred years on, US society still perceives and represents black women as ‘fallen women, whores and prostitutes, and that this is not fully taken into account by white feminists’ (Freedman, 2001:78).

In turning to how men may assist in the struggle, hooks contests the separatist ideology of feminism. She argues that men, as the primary agents maintaining and supporting sexism, should share at least equally in resistance struggle. She welcomes men who assume equal responsibility in the feminist struggle: ‘performing whatever tasks are necessary, women should affirm their revolutionary work by acknowledging them [males] as comrades in struggle’ (hooks, 1984:80—81). Research, under the influence of feminism, has become increasingly presented and celebrated as a participatory enterprise (Merrill and West, 2009). It has led to biographical research in the study of adult and lifelong learning (Armstrong, 1998) and of working class women in higher education across Europe (West, 2007). Merrill, through her interest in women and class, uses biographies to illustrate the interrelationship

between private and public lives, as well as the linking of individual biographies to the collective (Merrill, 1999).

According to many African based organisations, African women writers represent a rallying cry heard all over Africa in these early years of the twenty first century. They identify a call for women to join fully in the contemporary social, economic, and political life of their countries. They recognise that resistance is more powerful when it is collective, and call for women throughout Africa and the diaspora to join together to improve the quality of lives for themselves and their sisters (African Women's Development Fund, 2013; Femnet, 2013; Tostan, 2013). Browdy de Hernandez, Dongala, Jolaosho and Serafin (2011) capture the transnational, intergenerational, cross-cultural efforts of African women to voice their needs and desires, their sorrows and their joys, to each other and to the wider world. They highlight education is a necessary precursor to writing, and the call to African women to educate themselves and each other is frequently made (Browdy de Hernandez *et al*, 2011). For poet Ann Kithaka:

Writing resistance is a process of discovery, emancipation, and reclaiming. It is about reclaiming my dignity, privacy, and freedom as an African woman and human being. It is about emancipating myself from historical, structural, and systematic abuse, oppression, and discrimination. And finally, it is about discovering my inner strength, my uniqueness, and my interdependence on other people. (Browdy de Hernandez *et al*, 2011:7).

4.3.1 Black feminist thought

The ontology of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2009) and indeed the Africanist idea (Asante, 1998) transcends from the ancient African oral tradition: it has survived through imperialism and the Enlightenment project precisely because it has remained a marginalised, subjugated ontology, deriving and validating its own knowledge creation based upon the reality of the lived experience. The gaze of the Enlightenment project, subsumed within

which is the dominant belief in positivistic science and objectivity, is increasingly challenged as the dominating global force (Connell, 2007), within which knowledge is created and validated, at the expense of other, diminished world views. In Bruner's terms the Eurocentric gaze is of paradigmatic cognition (Bruner, 1990) dominating through, as Ong claims, the power of literacy over orality and relativism (Ong, 2002). Other knowledge systems are as a result subjugated forms of knowing. The record of Black women's fight has remained a thread running through recent history.

Maria W. Stewart in heralding the spirit of Freire back in the 1830s, even as an uneducated person, provided through her intellectual capacity to 'see the world', a voice for Black women (Richardson, 1987). Stewart called for an end to Black women burying their minds, to challenge the negative images of Black womanhood, pointing out that race, gender and class oppression were the fundamental causes of Black women's poverty, and to forge self-definitions of self-reliance and independence; and that they had a special role as mothers to champion 'the utility of Black women's relationships with one another in providing a community for Black women's activism and self-determination' (Collins, 2009:4). From the times of Stewart, Sojourner Truth, and many other African American intellectual activists (James, 1990; Washington, 1987), and recent African writers such as Ann Kithaka (Browdy de Hernandez *et al*, 2007) evidence a continuous thread of activity linking past to present, that Black women's voices be heard (Browdy de Hernandez *et al*, 2007).

Collins (2009) identifies that Black women's experiences 'transnationally have been routinely distorted within or excluded from what counts as knowledge' (*ibid.*). Collins argues that Black feminist thought, while best viewed as subjugated knowledge contained and devalued within typically positivist methodological interpretations, has thus needed to find alternative ways to produce and validate knowledge. Central within Black women's critical

social theory, is that Black women's knowledge is made to appear subjugated by those controlling knowledge validating procedures.

Underpinning African-American epistemology is the need to seek wisdom through an experiential, material base calling upon the collective experiences and history of the community, using lived or first-hand experience in assessing knowledge claims (Belenky, Field, McVicker Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule, 1986), and in accomplishing wisdom, a vital source of survival for such a subordinated group 'for Black women cannot afford to be fools of any type, for our objectification as the Other denies us the protection that White skin, maleness, and wealth confer' (*ibid.*:276).

Aware that knowledge comes from experience, 'such women felt that the best way to understand another person's ideas was to develop empathy and share experiences' (*ibid.*:277). Collins highlights that some theorists argue that 'women are socialised in complex relational nexuses where contextual rules versus abstract principles govern behaviour' (*ibid.*) and are likely to 'experience two modes of knowing: one located within the body and the space it occupies and the other passing beyond it' (*ibid.*) It is through these multiple forms of mothering that 'women mediate these two modes, and use lived experiences of their daily lives to assess more abstract knowledge claims' (*ibid.*). Collins argues that such 'forms of knowledge allow for subjectivity between the knower and the known, rest in the women themselves (not in higher authorities), and are experienced directly in the world (not through abstractions)' (*ibid.*:278). While bell hooks (1989) asserts: 'Dialogue implies talk between two subjects, not the speech of subject and object. It is a humanising speech, one that challenges and resists domination' (hooks, 1989:131).

A fundamental epistemological assumption underlying the use of dialogue in assessing knowledge claims that within Black feminist thought, is that connectedness rather than

separation is an essential component of the knowledge validation process (Belenky *et al*, 1986:18), noting also that Afrocentricity is rooted in the search to be human, and this is achieved ‘always in the midst of others’ (Asante, 1998:201). Connectedness is rooted deep in the oral African tradition, that it is ‘the essence of the oral tradition’s influence over all African expression’ (*ibid.*). This contrasts with the notion by some feminist writers who contend that men are socialised to seek separation as a means by which men can understand ideas and experiences (Belenky *et al*, 1986). Connectedness is expressed within Black feminist thought in other ways, such as through the concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) or rather interlocking forms of oppression, rather than in additive models of oppression firmly rooted in the either/or dichotomous thinking of Eurocentric, masculinist thought. Crenshaw highlighted at that time that ‘Contemporary feminists and antiracist discourses have failed to consider intersectional identities such as women of colour’ (Crenshaw, 1991:1242–1243), identifying that their experiences tend not to be represented within the dimensions of a single form of discrimination, within feminism of racism, but through a multiple of dimensions. Crenshaw argues that by drawing on the collective strength of shared experience, identifying such oppressions cannot be reduced to one fundamental type but rather that they work together in producing injustice. Collins (2009) identifies that there is a matrix of domination operating within these intersecting oppressions: ‘Regardless of the particular intersections involved, structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains of power reappear across quite different forms of oppression’ (Collins, 2009:21). Connectedness requires ‘that ideas cannot be divorced from the individuals that create and share them’ (*ibid.*:281); and thus ‘personal expressions, emotions and empathy are central to the knowledge validating process’ (*ibid.*:281–282), which in effect means that within the oral tradition, while views expressed must be understood to be valid, this is not enough to become accepted knowledge across the group or community, as the group also appraises the way

knowledge claims are presented. Belenky *et al* (1986) identify that women have a preference for adopting this procedure for ascertaining truth, whereas men might seek separation through impersonal procedures. This feminist approach is founded in the African past and philosophy, which encourages expressiveness and an ethic of caring (Asante, 1998). Dialogue is critical to the success of this epistemological approach, the type of dialogue long extant in the Afrocentric call-and-response tradition whereby power dynamics are fluid, everyone has a voice, but everyone must listen and respond to other voices in order to be allowed to remain in the community (*ibid.*).

The concept of connectedness supports the notion that the world is a dynamic place in which it is not good enough just to survive. It becomes an opportunity for human agency to bring about change, for personal ownership accountability and empowerment, and through which collective action can effectively generate lasting social transformation of political and economic institutions. By placing Black women's experiences at the heart of such an analysis allows the world to be viewed through a both/and conceptual lens of the simultaneity of race, class, and gender oppression, within a humanist vision of community, presents new possibilities. Many Black feminist intellectuals have long thought about the world in this way because this is the way we experience the world (Collins, 2009).

Torkington (1996) in making a case for Black studies demonstrates that Black Feminist thought is but a part of a very much larger picture that opens up new ways of being 'because it has been and continues to be fashioned in the crucible of real life.... All the things that help shape and define the black experience help to shape and define the understanding of that experience. Hence Black Studies is open to new ways of thinking, to creative methods of analysis, to dynamic modes of teaching and learning (Torkington, 1996:26–27).

4.4 Turning to an Africanist ethnography

It is important to acknowledge within this methodology that African people lay claim to an ancient history. When western civilization was barbaric, the 'Negro' civilisation had established ancient Egypt (Diop, 1974). Diop sees that 'the Black world is the very initiator of the "western civilization"' (*ibid.*:xiv). He claims that by the Middle Ages, the European memory of a 'Negro Egypt' had been blurred by ignorance, even before the four centuries of slavery that ensued (*ibid.*:24). The established western view by then was that 'negro' was a synonym for a primitive, inferior being. Over several generations this view indoctrinated the minds of Europeans, invoking the civilising mission of the West in colonial times 'to raise the African to the level of other men' (*ibid.*:25). According to the Nouveau Dictionnaire Larouse (1905:516) 'Negro'... 'is the name given especially to the inhabitants of certain countries in Africa... who form a race of black men inferior in intelligence to the white or Caucasian race'.

Glimpses back into the pre-colonial, indigenous Africa do not come easy; the continent has become encumbered by what Mudimbe describes as the colonial library, which until recent times largely subsumed 'the foundations of discourse about Africa' (Mudimbe, 1988:xi). This was a time long before the phrase coined by Conrad (2007), 'heart of darkness', had become attributed within the 'colonial library' to the Congo, implying that the country was 'not civilized, not-human, not-rational, not moral, not-white, not-healthy and finally, not even historical' (Apter, 2007:1) arguing along with Desai (2001) that this in effect locates Africa's place 'on the margins of modernity' (Apter, 2007:1). Before that, were times of ritual, when 'powers are activated, ancestors invoked, reputations negotiated, and histories recalled' (Apter 2007:2) within a 'dynamic arena of discursive interaction' (*ibid.*:2). At that time meaning was made in the local, not the colonial languages. The struggle identified by Apter

(2007), remains one of presenting Africanist ethnography as being not ‘lower’ but an ‘equal’ form of knowledge to that attained in Europe (Griaule and Dieterlan, 1954:83).

4.5 The need for this research needs to be thought of as a case study

This project started with a vision of social transformation and aspirations for greater social justice and therefore is not value neutral. I describe the project as having started as a kind of action research. It has an orientation that helps the change process move forward as positively as is possible, and that Participative Action Research (PAR), as it is also described, engenders powerful learning, develops knowledge and understanding for the participants through combining research with reflection on practice (Somekh, 2006). Giddens (1984) identifies that action research can be seen as a methodology that uniquely enables and facilitates the process of knowledge transformation as the basis for powerful social action. Elliot (2004) identifies that reflection lies at the heart of the action research process, which includes both an ‘intellectual mode’ and the ‘emotional mode’ and that ‘it is this mode of theoretical reflection which lies at the heart of the action research process’ Elliott, 2004:21-3). Somekh (2006) identifies that because PAR involves participants in a social situation it is necessarily strongly influenced by their values and culture, broadening this to reflect on her own Eurocentric world view when visiting Brazil, in contrast with that of the ‘south’ by the approaches taken by Freire (1970, 1974), and the work of Fals-Borda and Mora-Osejo (2003) in analysing the divergence in academic culture between the ‘south’ and the ‘north’, prescient within this case study.

The literature offers several views on the case study. Stake (2003) identifies three types of case study – intrinsic, instrumental and collective. The intrinsic lens provides opportunity to gain a better understanding of the Congolese community. Stenhouse (1981) identifies four broad styles of case study: ethnographic, evaluative, educational and action research case studies. The action research case study approach embraces the notion of it being intrinsic, and

provides opportunity to address my research questions most naturally and faithfully, including the possibility of including a mix of methods, including auto/biographic narrative research.

The action research case study fits particularly well with the notion that Participative Action Research (PAR) developed by Freire (Ledwith and Springett, 2010). The key academic challenges of case study, namely in the planning; design; preparation; collection of data; analysis; and sharing of findings (Yin, 2014:2) echo the practitioner model used within community development practice of Plan, Act, Observe Reflect cycle (Hart, Maddison and Wolff, 2007: 88; Lewin, 1946, 1948). The action research case study supports other criteria relevant to this project. Yin (2014) highlights that case study research does not need to be constrained by defined methods, and that it is able to embrace different epistemological orientations, two important considerations in this study. While acknowledging the problematic of viewing this case study as a binary, it is none-the-less an attempt to work on the particular (Stake, 2003; Bassey, 1999, and Somekh, 2006) aware of the tension and expectations of extending my research findings to contribute to forced-migrant practice. The approach to this research had to be underpinned by a ‘step to action’, by starting the work immediately, and this could be used as an early step in theory building (Stake, 2003) while recognising that generalisation should not be emphasised in all research (Feagin, Orum and Sjoberg, 1991; Simons, 1980). Rather, how the work developed would be shaped collectively with the community, as Paulo Freire and Myles Horton so poignantly express it in their talking book: ‘We Make the Road by Walking’ (Bell, Gaventa and Peters, 1990:1).

At the start of the study I acknowledged I did not know what the community knew nor what it might perceive it needed to learn or do. Nor did I understand how my own knowledge, skills expertise could be utilised, nor what my needs were or how they could be met. Rather, I needed to work with the community in ways that could to encourage the community to make

its own decisions, and thus we could all learn and benefit in the process (Bell, Gavanta and Peters, 1990:130). From the start of the project, I believed I had earned their trust, and so found myself in a privileged position of being able to partner quickly, rather than as a new researcher having to establish personal credibility and win acceptance of sincerity of the project aims. The community could more comfortably and readily debate and jointly agree its commitment in this research, building on our established relations and joint capabilities, skills and knowledge. This moment in time that joined us, were concrete pieces of reality (Bell, Gavanta and Peters, 1990:87- 99). Ledwith (2005) adds ‘we know that relevance is the key to unlocking the energy to act, and relevance is located in people’s everyday reality’ (Ledwith 2005:53).

This approach acknowledges that through the everyday experience, that we can learn together (Bell, Gavanta and Peters, 1990:55). In the sense of the scale of this migrant journey, this research could only capture a glimpse into the lives of people on a longer migrant journey, and identified by Losi, as generational struggles of profound importance (Losi, 2006). Other characteristics of this research project were therefore that data (the material gathered) would be “‘strong in reality’ but difficult to organise in contrast to other research data that might be “‘weak in reality” but susceptible to ready organisation’ (Adelman, Kemmis and Jenkins, 1980:59–60). Yin (2014) further acknowledges that there can be little control over behavioural events as they are carried out in a ‘real-world context’. While observation is considered a valuable method for gathering data, within the topology offered by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011:297), in relation to this case study there seems little opportunity for it to be structured. By its nature of being action research, the approach is unstructured and the observational setting is natural and therefore always changing. On this basis I did not believe I had the appropriate resources to use observation as a method for gathering data.

4.6 Recognising the importance of an auto/biographic narrative

The evolution of the project into a piece of research is rooted in my acknowledging my own personal biography is a part of the research frame (Miller, 2005); that there is an inter-relationship in the constructions of my own life through autobiography, with the construction of others' lives through biography, leading to the use of the term, auto/biography (Stanley, 1992). Furthermore, by explicitly bringing me into the research frame, I acknowledge the complexity and uncertainty of these relations and the associated findings and narratives that result, and do not wish to pretend that my ways of making sense of others is, or should be, 'divorced from the people and experiences we are' (Merrill and West, 2009:5) but rather that I am intricately fused within the research in ways I might not be able to imagine. This wrestling out of what this might be, is captured and presented in this thesis and subsumed within auto/biographic narrative; it is a snapshot in time of an evolving learning journey. This research became an 'auto/biographical' and a dialogical process with reference to a marginalised, asylum seeking community at a time when I was wrestling with how I seem to have been rejected by society and quite incapable of re-establishing myself within the profession I had once enjoyed.

West and Carlson (2006) exemplify through the biographic narratives of families and stakeholders in their research that the Sure Start children's centres could have a deep impact, in contrast to a large-scale national evaluation that identified Sure Start appeared to have had only minimal impact on families. West and Carlson (2006), through auto/biographical research methods that were 'grounded in a commitment to working collaboratively with people, to understand experience, subjectivity, from their perspective' (*ibid.*:363). The findings were able to suggest that Sure Start Millmead (the centre selected for the research) 'nourished and challenged many parents, individually and collectively' (*ibid.*:374). West and Carlson (2006) identify anxieties on the one hand within the workers about meeting targets

and the nature of the short-term contracts, and within this their capacity to cope, and yet on the other hand, capture the ways in which parents frequently felt valued, listened to, encouraged and supported, rather than being blamed. Through individual narratives, West and Carlson also demonstrated a strengthening of the social fabric through the creation of some transactional space within which the dominant agendas could be challenged. They acknowledged the significance of such a change for these parents: 'Learning to becoming an activist is about being perceived, and about perceiving self, in a new light, rather than simply acquiring new skills' (*ibid.*:375), and that this process of risk taking – can evoke potentially crippling anxiety. Ranson and Routledge (2005), identify that such a naturalistic research approach within the research also helped overcome resistance and suspicion to public agencies. West and Carlson identify that 'there is much to learn from such a project, but progress remains fragile and the lessons, for public policy, are easily lost' (*ibid.*:359).

This broad field of study attracts criticism from both the positivist and constructivist research paradigms (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Erikson and Kovalainen, 2008). Weaknesses that may be germane to these collective genres are perceived to be lack generalisability, numerical analysis or direction and inconsistency of methodology, and questions of validity (Wall, 2006), and that it gets messy (Tenni, Smythe and Boucher, 2003; Muncey, 2005).

Bell (2010) maintains that while qualitative researchers collect facts and study the relationship of one set of facts to another, she questions how could information derived from a method such as storytelling be valid when so much relies on trust? Bell wonders whether the intimate information provided may raise ethical issues for the researcher, highlighting the vulnerability of both researcher and participant, in that 'the storyteller may decide they have revealed more of their feelings than they are prepared to share publicly' (Bell, 2010: 21).

Plummer (2001) captures especially the responsibility of the researcher when writing down stories about others. He describes the effect of this is to ‘solidify and consolidate in words a kind of life. And for this — in a way — the researcher becomes responsible’ (Plummer, 2001: 225). Hammersley (2000) expresses concerns about the potential for bias in what we hear and report, questioning the idea of research as a tool against simplistic notions of oppression, although at the same time acknowledging that understanding complexity is a worthwhile goal in its own right. Andrews (2007) raises issues of only hearing what we want to hear, or what fits in with our current needs and preoccupations, as well as our ideological predilections.

4.7 Other characteristics of this auto/biographic narrative case study

In addition to the above, the auto/biographic narrative case study method embraces other criteria. There is the need for sustained periods of engagement, rather than for example attempting one-off interviews, of working with a wide group within the study (using opportunistic and purposive sampling) and in the building of broad trusting relationships over time. And not least there must be consideration of the researcher’s assumptions towards the people with whom they are working – their own philosophical understanding underpinning the research. Such studies demand real and sustained investment, emotional as well as intellectual, and perhaps as identified in this case study, physical stamina throughout in organising and running events and in playing several roles.

Ethical awareness must be evergreen when working within such an intimate space, in a spectrum of ways, for example, including the constant need to evaluate the extent to which a researcher might intrude into the painful detail of lives at a time of extreme struggle (West and Carlson, 2006), and when accepting the responsibility the researcher has as storyteller in presenting co-constructed stories that once published will take on a life of their own, in perhaps unimagined and unwelcomed ways (Plummer, 2001).

4.8 Inclusion of photography as visual ethnography

I used photography extensively to promote the project. Initially, the community was anxious about being promoted in the media, and so I encouraged and included community members to engage with the Press Team at the University, building trust by writing material together. The community soon grasped the value of telling positive stories, and came to value press, radio and television coverage, even excited when positive feedback reached them from across the city through such endeavours. While the focus of the work had not been to capture the project visually as a professional photographer might (Shanklin, 1979:73), I nevertheless recognised the power of the visual image. I had worked with photographic images all my professional life, both as a photographer and as a scientist, and so this field of work aligned with established skills. It was significant also that I admired the work of Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908–2004) one of the foremost of reportage photographers of the twentieth century. He identifies with the world ‘buckling under the weight of profit-making’ (Cartier-Bresson, 1999:4) acknowledging ‘beyond all that – Friendship exists, Love exists’ (*ibid.*). His work, I believe, harmonises well with the values of this thesis, and with postmodern attitudes towards photography as ethnography (Pink, 2007), rather than being associated with images linked to colonialist anthropology. Within such postmodern thinking, Pink (2007) argues research ‘should account not only for the observable, recordable realities that might be translated into written notes and texts, but also for objects, visual images, the immaterial and the sensory nature of human experience and knowledge’ (*ibid.*:22). Photography and video formed part of telling our story, and grew in importance. As the workshops increasingly involved Muslim women, I became conscious of often being a lone man present in a woman's world. In discussion with the community, we worked increasingly to assist those who attended to take their own photographs, which they did, from which albums of images, illustrations and drawings were compiled. Some of these images formed the display material

at the ‘Community Awards Evening 2011’. This material provides a different kind of field diary, offering through analysis the opportunity for captured moments to be rediscovered.

4.9 Story making, animation and migration narratives

In analysing the data I shared my findings with community members, colleagues from Arts Therapy and other members of staff at the University. I carried out a two-stage analysis of analysing individual data sets (inductive analysis), and then reviewed all the data together (abductive analysis) with a view to creating a model from the data. This process took over six months and represented my first submission. The community identified with the approach and assisted me in producing a narrative from what would have become a simple Cartesian grid/quadrant diagram that I began by trying to capture the key stages of a forced-migrant journey upon arrival in the United Kingdom; instead the community helped me transform the chart into a narrative of hope, which led to an animation, we called it ‘A model for taking charge’ with voiceover by me in describing the process, and Betty Phoba describing how it felt at each of the stages we mapped (Appendix I; for the voice-over see *Voice of Congolese Women*, 2011).

An unplanned opportunity arose when VOCW was invited to participate in research organised by Sussex University, to identify how African proverbs were helpful in the migration process (Alli, 2012). This became a one-day meeting in Derby during which fifty Lingalan phrases were generated by the community members, including translation and transliteration of the proverbs into English. This notion led to the idea of the community telling its own story of migration. The idea received a cautious initial reception from newer members to the group. This served to remind me of the sensitivities and anxieties such exposure could bring for the community, and that story telling carries with it great responsibility (Plummer, 1983 and 2001) as well as vulnerability for the researcher (Bell, 2010). A small working group of existing members and some new young members of the

community was set up to explore this idea, to debate what the stories might represent, and approve them on behalf of the larger Congolese community. The idea of the series of stories became to capture a difficult journey in which there is hope – drawing on the grieving cycle of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (1970). These stories are drawn out of joint, shared experiences; they attempt to tell of a journey ‘as real and as objective as the physical world’ (Pring, 2004: 106), and their validity rests upon if they ‘offer a way to improve the lives of participants and readers’ (Ellis, 2004: 124).

It was agreed the publication should be called ‘Hearts of Hope’ (in contrast to Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, 2007) illustrated by a Lingalan proverb: *Butu atako ewuneli suka se tongo eko tana: No matter how long the night, morning always comes*. The publication (Appendix J) was commissioned and approved by representatives of the community and comprises eighteen stories (Voice of Congolese Women, 2012).

4.10 Ethical code by which I worked

Ethical approval for this case study was granted by the programme leader for the Doctor of Education (EdD), 30th November 2007, a record of which is on file at the University of Derby (Appendix L). Discussions during supervision provided opportunity review case study progress were in line with the University of Derby ethical guidelines. I relied upon the core moral aims and principles of community working, the aims of which are based on ‘building relationships of trust, confidence and esteem, of participation and involvement, and of creating opportunities and improving understanding’ (Subhra, 2004: 4). I identify additional considerations when working with a ‘vulnerable’ forced migrant community. In describing the community as ‘vulnerable’, I do not wish to imply a cultural deficit model in play. Rather, I wish to acknowledge the social and cultural capital present in communities of colour and poor communities (Moll & Greenberg, 1990; Gonzalaz, 2005, and Yosso, 2005). The cultural deficit model is increasingly being discredited by an emerging body of literature (Irizarry,

2009) who identifies such a model is increasingly acknowledged as failing to examine underpinning institutional and socio-political factors. The social abjection of forced-migrants by government is highlighted in this case study, through the writing of Imogen Tyler (2013).

4.10.1 Special considerations in working with a forced-migrant community

Standard notions of for example, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and the right to withdraw, may not be taken for granted, as Bertrand advises: ‘Keep in mind that most of the refugees have never met a researcher before and the experience might be imbued with different meanings given their understanding of the situation as they relate their life stories to an unknown person’ (Bertrand, 2000: 90). Participants from other countries may not have any regard for notions of confidentiality and anonymity as might a native person have, living in the United Kingdom. More time therefore needs to be given to help asylum seekers gain confidence that such terms offer protection here in the United Kingdom (Panos, 2003), appreciating that their use back home might have completely different connotations, instilling fear and resistance. Many of the asylum seekers upon their arrival within the UK are not confident or even speak English, and might have a limited education so additional care and attention should be acknowledged in communicating, and in the need for translation and interpretation.

The position of researcher is compromised throughout the asylum process. Hynes (2003) argues the pursuit by the authorities for evidence to legitimise a claim leads to a lack of trust. Writers on qualitative research methodology with asylum seeker populations, identify entry into the refugee community being studied as presenting special challenges too, promoting the need for a transparent process especially in the early stages to gain trust (Omidian, 2000; Powles, 2004; Hynes, 2003). Omidian comments on her experience of research with an Afghan community, in that even after taking care to establish her research purpose and credibility, she continued to be regarded as a spy or an agent of the Iranian government until

she proved her position within a university. Omidian highlights the problematic nature of obtaining signed consent, asserting that ‘Refugees, and others who have strong cultural notions of trust combined with a fear of governmental activities, can be put off by the request for a signature’ and later that ‘requesting a signature can be construed as an attempt by the government to trick them into disclosing something that could be used against them’ (Omidian, 2000: 56). Such issues of confidentiality and anonymity should be tailored in order to anticipate the needs of asylum seeker populations (Powles, 2004). Panos (2003) recommends that such requirements are talked around by the researcher until the community can make its own sense of the meaning, and embrace such notions. Ethical consideration must represent the underpinning fabric when researching any community. Where the risk of contributing to ‘psychological’ distress is significantly pronounced, Omidian (2000) identifies the need for increased responsibility and concern for asylum seeker populations.

Funding always covered community costs (for example, travel costs). It provided free refreshments, recognising the financial constraints of this forced-migrant community at large, rather than seeing this as a form of coercion. This I believed was a tangible way help value this ‘vulnerable’ community. Holloway and Jefferson (2000) and Robinson (2003) support the notion that these small tokens help to equalise and maintain these relations, although I do see equality as deeply problematic, as highlighted elsewhere.

Chapter Five: Illuminating complex lives – an evaluation

Batongaka ndako na mokolo moko te. You cannot build a house in a day. Anything worthwhile takes time to accomplish.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is in two parts. It builds on the distinction of a developmental phase of the project, in which key activities are described in chapter two, and from which material for analysis was gathered, upon which findings that informed this stage of the work are now shared. This project then moves on to a doctoral phase of the work as an auto/biographical narrative and story, bringing in photography as ethnography. The second part of this chapter, starts by bringing the ‘cast’ within the case study to life – some of the key players including those at the University of Derby who supported this work and by which the University in relation to this project might be defined. I describe some of the cast within this case study – of ‘Andrea’, an emergent leader within the community, and of ‘Annabel’ and ‘Edward’ who were two other significant members of the community especially in respect of this case study, of their lives and struggles. Community is a much recurring theme. I deconstruct the notion of ‘community’, elusive and fluctuating in its context throughout the project, using data gathered from the ‘Craft Action’ a series of workshops running from August 2010 through to November 2011. I theorise critical moments that I believe occurred during this case study – in the setting up of the sewing classes and the Steering Group – and illustrate how the Bindery might be understood. In the chapters that follow, the doctoral study turns to a reflexive interrogation of the research role, a narrative of doing a doctorate.

It might be an appropriate place at the very start of this chapter, to admit the complexity of the case study, and to acknowledge that there is only so much that can be understood. Not only in relation to the lives of the community and its members but also my impact circulating

within such dynamics by what I stood to gain. And also, in overcoming the difficulty of presenting ‘the community’ not as an amorphous group but as real people, overcoming the notion of their being a binary – of ‘them’ and ‘me’ – within the research. I want to illustrate viscerally within the writing that the people I am studying are real and that they do have a voice; and yet, within this of my own struggle to represent ‘their voice’ rather than my own – that of a white Eurocentric male, middle class and privileged, educated and employed by a powerful organisation – a university – working with, as became the case, predominantly women seeking a place of safety. I was nevertheless conscious of the omnipresent vulnerability and humiliation of the plight of these asylum seekers with whom I was working: their pain, their distress, the disgust projected upon them by the wider community in the city and the national press. Where bright passages of hope appear in the text, I have attempted to balance these with the darker realities of the lives of those with whom I tried to capture at a moment in time.

5.2 Introducing material for analysis

In an attempt to chronicle the case study, I drew on a wide range of material: documentary evidence including archival records, administrative records (attendance, feedback sheets, personal details and community questionnaires), minutes of meetings, reports and feedback from community reviews and focus group meetings, interview transcripts, field notes, an animation, a series of stories, and visual material including photographs and several videos. It includes an independent study carried out by Volunteering England in 2010 of the work of Voice of Congolese Women, press and promotional material (posters and circulars), and television and radio interviews. This material formed three of the six sources of evidence identified by Yin (2014) – documentation, archival records, interviews – and visual ethnography, but not direct observations, participant-observation nor physical artefacts

(*ibid.*). I assumed a variety of roles, one of which was to participate in the actions being studied (*ibid.*) rather than being a passive observer.

Within a large database (Appendix M), the following material was particularly useful in analysis: the Steering Group Meetings, (Appendix C); the community interviews (Appendix D); Plan for the Future meeting (Appendix E); Video on isolated women (Appendix F); a report summarising the work of the Drop-in Centre (Appendix G), Field notes (Appendix H); an Animation – A model for taking charge (Appendix I), and a series of stories, ‘Hearts of Hope’ (Appendix J) supported by photographic material, through a series of shortlisted images (Appendix N). The analysis embraced a broader understanding, illuminating aspects of the complex lives of those I was studying, as well as my own. It built on the findings in the literature review, the material introduced above, subsumed within an ethical framework of caring.

5.3 Early findings to guide the project

In my first analysis to deepen my own understanding and inform its direction, I was guided by the work of CURA (Westhues, Ochocka, Jacobson, Simich, Maiter, Janzen and Fleras, 2008). It was a way of gathering common themes within an action research setting, as well as supporting the creation of a theoretical model. The analysis is described and the material referenced is contained in the Work Based Project (Walker, 2011a) that has now been developed into this thesis. This analysis represented the start of a process of critical education, in attempting to name the word and understand the world (Freire, 1970), by identifying the forms of oppression experienced by Congolese who had arrived in the United Kingdom to seek asylum.

5.3.1 Establishing confidence and credibility

It was during the early days of this research that I believed confidence and credibility developed across the wider Congolese community. It seemed the community supported me in this work by letting me in. Such confidence was achieved through the parallel activities of Voice of Congolese Women and through the early, regular Steering Group meetings. These meetings identified the aims of the group and what early actions should be taken, negotiated dialogically within the group and shared with the wider Congolese community here in Derby. The group identified the feeling of entrapment, and the need for confidence in all it undertook, about its culture and in its beliefs, and acknowledged that this is ‘a unique project in that the community leadership is being encouraged to identify what it wants to do to support its community individually and collectively’. The group identified the need to behave democratically through the Steering Committee of the Congolese Community Association, to work together, and to act truly as an ‘umbrella’ body’ and became formally constituted. Interviews with community members were identified as a means to better to understand the community and its needs. At the end of 2009, funding had been obtained to take the case study forward through the Congolese Community Association. The two streams of activity – VCW and CCA – provided wide engagement and a rich discourse across the community. The community interviews formed the basis for action, together with regular feedback events with the wider community.

5.3.2 Recognition that the community should work together

The Steering Group identified the central need to ‘come together as a community—to solve our own problems’, to act in unison as a fundamental requirement to bringing about change. Others acknowledged how powerful the community might be if it could work together accepting there were conflicts. Some identified the benefit of education and the raising of the consciousness of the Congolese families. Those now taking action acknowledged how it

made them feel ‘I can forget when I feel I have a big responsibility to help others—once this is over I move back to being imprisoned again’. The formation of the Congolese Community Association became the first step on such a journey.

5.3.3 Experiences of forced migration and a call to action

The community interviews became an opportunity for candidates to reflect on past atrocities, loss of loved ones, separation from children, and acknowledgement of ‘not knowing’ where they found themselves in the long process of asylum. Some found it hard to think about the present, being imprisoned, at the mercy of what some saw as an unjust system. The lives of several interviewees – ‘James’, ‘Edward’, ‘Andrew’, ‘Jane’, ‘Richard’, ‘Brenda’, ‘David’, ‘Fred’, ‘Charles’ and ‘Mary’ (their pseudonyms) – are brought to life in the following paragraphs, and illustrate aspects of the plight of this community.

The men in particular expressed their concerns about being respected, of having a lack of opportunity, of the limited possibilities in their lives, of growing old even at the age of forty-five, and of never working because of discrimination. The men expressed anxiety over ‘going out’ and ‘being caught’ in circumstances that might lead to prosecution and unfair treatment based on racism. They expressed fears of isolation and loneliness. There was a fear of the violence they saw in the streets; some preferred to stay at home because of racism. Daily living as a failed asylum seeker for the men interviewed was identified as being difficult. This was compounded by having to survive often on the weekly food parcel given by Derby Refugee Forum. James believed that the Home Office would take its time in coming to a decision and so his mantra had become ‘if they [the Home Office] say be patient; be patient’. Of the failed asylum seekers interviewed, all expressed their fear of being removed at short notice by the authorities and then being returned home to the Congo. James tells me that while he might feel safe today, it only takes a newspaper report or a rumour on deportation to make him suffer from stress once again.

For some, especially those with qualifications, the frustration of being an asylum seeker, and therefore of not being able to work, had its own frustrations: ‘I become lazy... I am not allowed to work. I am very sorry about this system, my situation because since 2002 I am waiting (James). Individuals with indefinite leave to remain want ‘to be well educated; to have qualifications’ (Andrew), and from Jane ‘I bought a lot of things to help me gain knowledge and understanding here in the UK, including a computer. I continued [to do] voluntary work as I studied at University’. Jane continues:

I want to do a job relative to my degree—Foundation Degree or Social Care/ESOL. I can help my community: they have special problems; they are isolated and do not know what to do. This is most important for me: to be more active with Voice of Congolese Women... and to ‘recognise the importance of children—the big thing in the family—the woman has the children with them—the Mum cannot leave the child behind. The idea for the Congolese is very important... I think we can help isolated people integrate—I have lived here more than five years now—but don’t know how to do the Citizenship. I still need some help’.

Being given ‘Indefinite Leave to Remain’ brought new challenges, in that moving from dependency upon the government with limited opportunity to control one’s life, individuals have to organise their own accommodation, get work or go on benefits, and become self-sufficient: ‘My house has gone. My support has gone. No food. What can I do? (Richard). For a member of the community to be given ‘leave to remain’ meant making a huge practical and psychological shift in their life. Such an individual was required to take charge of their life once again: ‘From being housed and living on vouchers with not having to pay for gas or heating I now had to take charge’ (Richard). This change had the effect of splitting the community into those who ‘have leave to remain’ and ‘those who do not’, which in turn, it seemed to create more isolation within the group seeking leave to remain.

5.3.4 Fears arising living in the United Kingdom

The Congolese men in particular identified that the United Kingdom held fears for them arising out of racism, and feared for their own safety. They disliked their young people adopting European norms of behaviour. Again the men identified concerns over ‘violence—all the time on TV, drug addiction/growing cannabis, for example, very dangerous and leads to killing across communities—bullying at school’. Andrew continues by saying he had got a family, and could not let his children go out to play in the streets: ‘In my country you can leave your door open ... but not here’. He also fears that government:

doesn’t protect the family having freedom here—freedom becomes an exaggeration—too many divorces. Divorces—very concerned about my own security in this country—if split/divorced very big problem—government in Africa doesn’t encourage divorce—encourage staying together. Police respect female first, male second, and this isn’t fair. (Andrew)

Brenda highlighted her concerns over discrimination and violence, and feared people being killed with no reason, drug addiction making problems and the noise of the city. David feared ‘Getting older, racism, violence, too many gangs, drug addicts, robberies, and that he will be discriminated against, especially as he is getting older and ‘might be refused work as we have the recession’. Fred ‘Worries about his children to behave badly—to smoke under sixteen; they cannot respect elders—in my country [children] have to respect older people’ and later he said he ‘met some children—some new arrivals—start to behave badly—smoke, even though they are under 16—behave like English children... [and he] worries about that they will forget our African culture—and copy English culture’ (Fred). Charles stated that areas in life of concern to him are discrimination: ‘I didn’t expect to see violence in the UK—thought it was a paradise—but robbery/ too many cannabis fields—didn’t expect any of that’.

5.3.5 Lack of service provision

There is no mainstream provision provided by the city council in Derby, namely that there is no central point at which asylum seekers might seek help. Rather, asylum seekers and refugees depended upon the dedication and support given by Derby Refugee Forum, the churches across the city, and other charity organisations such as the Derby Law Centre, for guidance and practical help. The community interviews identified the desire of the Congolese people to support themselves in wide ranging ways and by taking action together. ‘Mary’ identified that the community needed advice and guidance, and through this case study ‘[we] have to start with the beginning—a start—very weak—step by step to achieve our goals. Yes’. An example of the lack of mainstream provision, or this lack of connectedness across the city became critical in a case of child abuse. This created huge anxiety, uncertainty and distress not only for the parent and child caught up in such grooming, but also within the community, an issue that persisted for several years. The interviews highlighted a need for dealing with isolation in both men and women, for greater support in working and supporting young people, and a great appetite from the community to learn about health, wellbeing and education. In identifying and naming those particular shortcomings, the community was able to address and begin to resolve them: the need for raised awareness through a series of workshops under the general title of ‘Health and Wellbeing’ (Appendix B).

5.3.6 Social disadvantage through language and education

Communities can be fragmented in so many ways, some obvious and some less so to society at large. The most obvious factor to affect ethnic minority community members was their inability to speak English. Members were invariably excluded from written and broadcast media, and therefore also from formal and informal communication systems, which made participation difficult. It seemed that by not speaking English the opportunity for children to become part of any school and nursery networks was restricted. For adults this made it

difficult to enter education and training. Without a good standard of English it was difficult to get a job, and easy to be seen as incompetent. The inability to listen, speak, read and write in English imposed restrictions in developing an occupation or continuing with a profession. I became aware through the community interviews that many of the community represented people from a poor and socially disadvantaged background. Some of the community had received very little education, and could only converse in their own local dialect, the language of which for the Congolese community is predominantly but not exclusively Lingala. In the DRC, all education has to be paid for, and schools teach the 'official' language of French. The unique journeys and struggles of the Congolese community represented a particular set of values, beliefs and goals that perhaps located their immediate future within this country. Most it appeared therefore existed within a 'knowledge culture', where they may struggle to find work, rather than a 'knowledge economy', where they could continue through additional education to utilise their professional knowledge and qualifications and find more skilled work (Morrice, 2011). This was evidenced predominantly by the Congolese community living here in Derby, where their work experience or work potential existed within the lowest earning groups (eg cleaning and caring).

5.3.7 Informal ways of keeping in touch

I was present at most of the many regular meetings: at the planning of events, at many of the sewing classes, as well assisting in the running of the New Hope drop-in centre, a meeting place for community members. I recognised I was becoming entangled within the community. I could not pretend to understand how deeply community members might be suffering at this time, and remained I am sure on the margins of such lives. I became aware of the real daily issues of such individuals. I was informed in ways that I might be facilitated to take action, for example in receiving the news that a member had failed his asylum

application came to me second-hand. I did not speak Lingala, very little French nor any of the other four indigenous languages, and so I had to rely on being given information the community wished to share. I could however, support individuals on a personal level through the drop-in centre and while relationships might be tenuous, and I might not be able to understand the nuanced relationships between members of the community, nor individual agendas. In the setting up of a hardship fund (a sum awarded through the University of Derby Excellence award scheme of £500.00) this assisted me in identifying some of the worries facing members of the community. The fund was able to contribute to funeral expenses, travel tickets, school fees, a birthday present, and Xmas presents for a family in need. The regular parties held annually at Christmas time offered perhaps the only chance for this community to celebrate, to share food and through the fund, avail themselves of small presents for their children. In this way my acceptance and membership offered me relevant ways to remain within the stream of the community activity, and to help orchestrate lighter moments that could brighten an otherwise gloomy and forlorn asylum landscape.

5.3.8 Discovering a narrative of hope

From material gathered throughout the research, I attempted to represent key findings in a chart as a working tool; something that could be shared with the community. I needed to gain reassurance and a better understanding over what actions might now be taken to support the community further. My training as a scientist led me to create a Cartesian grid (Appendix I) in the hope of describing the asylum journey. Through continued discussion with the community and art therapists – Jill Bunce, Jamie Bird and Nick Stein mentioned earlier – at the University of Derby, the chart evolved into a narrative, a story of hope. The community encouraged its development into an animation. In the voice-over I represented the stages of the process, and a community member (Betty Phoba) described how it felt at each point in the process (Voice of Congolese Women, 2011). The narrativity of this animation became the

start of a journey. Unwittingly, through this co-created a narrative, a way of storytelling had emerged, one that embraced a narrative of hope; an approach identified by my examiners and supervisor, to embrace an auto/biographic narrative research approach. The following photographs showcase empowered women coming together to sew and share food. The use of photographic images is explored later in Section 5.7 ‘Use of visual ethnography’.



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4

5.4 Second phase of the study, of an auto/biographical narrative and story

This phase shifts in its emphasis to being a doctoral study, of being reflexive, of taking the material from the developmental phase and extending it through an evaluation, of which a series of stories (Hearts of Hope, Voice of Congolese Women, 2012) captured the journey of both the men and the women in the Congolese community through this period of the case study. The section starts with the introduction of new material into the analysis.

5.4.1 Bringing new material into the analysis

At this point in the research analysis, I had been operating more as a practitioner reflecting on some of the data that had been gathered. Taking the research further, I recognised the need for me to ‘change gear’ to develop my research and become more reflexive, thereby gaining deeper insights into what actually was happening within the case study. In reviewing the material that had been gathered within the case study the photographic record stood apart: there was an extensive photographic record collected throughout the case study. This is detailed in Appendix M. Introducing visual ethnography as a method of analysis alongside auto/biographical narrative approach already embraced within the case study, offered a fresh means of gaining new insights into the lives of the Congolese migrants; a visual means to guide the imagination. This method offered another way of foregrounding the Congolese narrative tradition; of bringing the rich Africanist ethnography to the fore.

5.4.2 Developing a conceptual model

In recognising that the thesis is about a living relationship (Kirkwood, 2012), one in which I am inseparably intertwined (Merrill and West, 2009) as both participant and learner. The type of analysis selected must support ‘a conviction to remain close to direct, lived experience’ (Clarkson and Cavicchia, 2013: xi), including my need to be reflexive, building upon ‘critical friends’ to underpin my praxis (Freire, 1970 – 1996); Merrill and West, 2009; Ledwith, 2003; Kirkwood, 2012). Within this reflexivity I am persuaded by Liz Stanley (1992) that there is a

need for researchers within this genre to tell their own story, and recognise that this is reflected in some way through the stories and texts that are produced. I acknowledge this, rather than approach this thesis under the illusion that I could represent the neutral standpoint of an impartial observer. I accepted that the analytic lens chosen provided a single perspective, privileged with consequences for how meaning is made (Clarkson and Cavicchia, 2013) but nevertheless offered up the chance to represent the fluidity, complexity and messiness of working within a single community over an extended period of time.

The analysis centres on the notion of the 'co-creation of transformative spaces'. It proposes a conceptual approach, building upon a community development philosophy and praxis. It acknowledges that only by learning to embrace multiple epistemological approaches is possible to create places of conviviality. Through story making together, the past present and future can be embraced to offer community members the opportunity to question their lives, to gain hope and confidence, and to take charge of their lives, and that such a space was central in providing agency for action.

Appreciation that the texts of Black studies, 'fashioned in the crucible of life' (Torkington, 1996) opened up new ways of thinking, knowing that 'All the things that help shape and define the black experience help to shape and define the understanding of that experience' (Torkington, 1996: 26-27). The foundational importance of praxis, rooted in dialogue (Ledwith, 2005), only became possible because of the mutual trust that developed between the community and me, the community practitioner/researcher (Regnier, England, 2009). The participation developed through such trust and the dialogical relations, to name the world, in Freire's (1970) terms. The community was opening up, experiencing a process of reflection, decision making and taking action. Such praxis appeared to be the spring from which all energy arose, a liberating dialogic process. The community adopted a word to describe this process, 'Tobungi' (in Lingala, 'we are lost'). I described it as experiential learning; the

community always laughed when we used the term ‘Tobungi’ – it seemed to spell for them ‘adventure’ and they would laugh excitedly, and say ‘Tobungi’ – meaning, I always thought, ‘it’s exciting to get lost, or we are lost, let’s find new ways of doing things’ or ‘let’s find ourselves again’.

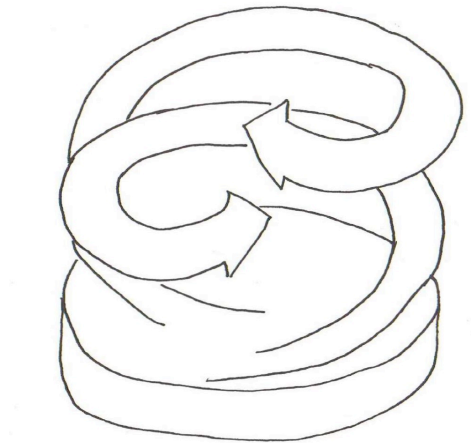


Figure 1: ‘Tobungi tree’ – conceptual model

The conceptual diagram brought together the two epistemologies circulating within this case study – that of the West and that of central Africa, namely the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It might be thought of as a metaphor, representing the base of a tree, embracing notions of one Africanist approach – of Ubuntu (Colff, 2003). The programme of work that arises is represented by the growth of the tree above the ground, much in the style represented by the Adult Learning project (Kirkwood, 2011: 16). The roots represent the foundational qualities of radical community development – the ethics of engagement, the role of education and notions of power and ‘empowerment’. Only by working together with community members had it been possible to co-create a space within which many things occur. This model is developed later, in section 5.13, ‘New ways of thinking’.

5.4.3 Some of the cast in this case study

This section brings three of those people in the community to life, using their pseudonyms, as a way of illuminating some of the challenges they faced. The lives of three people – Andrea, Annabel and Edward – are brought to life by extracts taken from the community interviews (Appendix D). The section describes the ‘community’ and ‘the university and its involvement’, together with early feedback.

5.4.3.1 ‘Andrea’

Andrea arrived in the United Kingdom in September 2002. She believed her husband had been murdered. Following a brief period of imprisonment, periods of interrogation, Andrea experienced sexual and other abuse. She decided to escape the Congo for her own safety, leaving four young children behind. Andrea failed in her application for asylum in the United Kingdom becoming destitute in 2005. She was given unconditional leave to remain in the United Kingdom in 2008 on humanitarian grounds. Her four children have since joined her here in Derby. Andrea explains during the community interviews in 2009, how it was being a failed asylum seeker:

Sometimes I feel very limited – don’t have the power to do what I want to do because of my status... This makes me humiliated – I always try to do my best. Since in this country, living with people in my house – different countries, cultures, conceptions – these get me down – it is a ‘no choice’ accommodation. I am not allowed to work – it affects my ability to support my children, although I do everything I can. It is hard to explain what I am doing here, and why I left the country, and why I cannot go back home, and why they [my children] cannot come here.

Andrea studied and volunteered and mastered English well enough to translate and support people in her community:

I have been running an organisation now for two years, breaking down some barriers, helping the community in an appropriate way. I didn’t waste my time. I can do no

more learning because of my status – but funding has stopped me. I am proud of myself because of what I did helped me more in my life – attending college and Support into Work, the training company where I learned these new skills and where I gave my time through voluntary work.

5.4.3.2 ‘Annabel’

‘Annabel’ was an asylum seeker who had fled her country at short notice. Her story captured those who were interviewed and wished to make a difference here in the United Kingdom. In these early days of the study Annabel tells me:

I had to escape my country – I came by myself. I have four children that I had to leave behind – two boys and two girls... When I lived in Africa, I was married. When my husband was killed I was away working in Goma... He was a member of the opposing political party (UDPS), and at this time was away at a meeting working with members – perhaps a secret meeting – they caught them. While there has never been any evidence, I knew at the time that my husband was dead... They then started an investigation and came to see me... I started by asking if they could help me find my husband... then as things progressed I was arrested... then they put me in detention... in military detention. One of the soldiers who spoke my Mother tongue, helped me to flee the prison, and this was my first step in fleeing the country, and so I fled detention, although I didn't know I would be doing this at this moment. At this point I didn't know that I was to leave the country but first made my way to a Catholic Church, and was there for three days with a Priest – then the trouble got a lot worse than it had been before. The Belgium Priest said that he wanted to help me... I agreed because I could also see the trouble was getting worse... We fled together, me and the Priest, by taking a jeep to nearby Uganda. We spent three days completing formalities to leave Uganda. Finally, I and three Priests left Uganda and flew to the UK. I went to the Congolese Association in London to seek Asylum, on 23 July 2002 and sought Asylum in Croydon. I then spent three weeks in a London hotel. I arrived in Derby August 16 2002.

5.4.3.3 'Edward'

When interviewed in 2009, Edward was a failed asylum seeker. He helped design the community interviews as a member of the Steering Group, and on his own initiative approached and researched five members of the community – one women and five men – providing both their narratives as well as his own, of two other failed asylum seekers, one who was awaiting his application for asylum, and two interviewees who had leave to remain. Those views revealed the communities concerns through his voice, and identified special worries over 'Recession, racism, age'. Edward identifies his hopes as having his 'Family reunited and be granted stay in the United Kingdom'. He identified that although he hoped to have a 'rosy future, a warm outlook on life, he feared 'violence, racism recession cannabis fields, drug addicts, too many gangs... and I feel vulnerable in our society because of [my] status'.

Edward was someone who bridged the community by working so closely for VOCW while also performing in a Congolese band and being associated with projects undertaken by other Congolese groups led by men. For the purpose of this thesis, Edward's story is one of a long pilgrimage where much pain and endurance continue to this day as most of his family still lives in the DRC. Extracts that follow capture something of Edward's long struggle in the United Kingdom before gaining leave to remain, and move on now to become a British citizen. On being homeless:

NASS sent me a letter to leave my accommodation [having failed his application for leave to remain in the UK] and [they] would no longer care about me. The obvious thing to do was to leave [my accommodation] otherwise [I risked being] arrested and deported as happened in many cases. I then shared a house with several people from different nations, and then the trouble started [over] such as: cleanliness, cooking, fighting, misunderstanding, noise, smoking, rent and so on ... there were three attached properties with twelve rooms approximately. While I was away, one of the tenants was arrested for stabbing the landlord. The police searched the house but

thankfully didn't find me. I heard the news so I was terrified but prayed and returned as I didn't have anywhere [else] to go. I spent two years in that property with two raids. It was an unbelievable time for me – I suffered too much: anxiety, insomnia, stress and trauma caused me mental health problems. I hated the police; it was hell on earth. I had stopped going to sign to the police station [and had] therefore become wanted; the situation was critical... [this placed] restrictions on my life: no more visits, walking, wandering and so on ... for two years. The church became my favourite place to find me.

And later some of his desperation during his long exile:

After all kinds of disappointment, it was already time to think about going back to my homeland. I went to Derby Refugee Forum for help, they provided me with food, clothes, in writing and sending letters and referred me to the British Red Cross for my health. Congratulations to Derby Refugee Forum. While my brother died in Belgium, I couldn't afford to go to his funeral due to lack of status, what a pity! It took me years to overcome [this] because I cherished him a lot more than other siblings. During my exile, I've lost three family members... my father, my older brother and my younger brother so it's not easy to bear such situation.

Edward finally received his leave to remain. And in this long journey in 2015, he now finds himself working full time, longing to be reunited with his family still living in the DRC.

Edward reminds us that 'for some, life remains very hard, here in the UK'.

'Edward' represented perhaps most of all the hope of the men in the work carried out by VOCW. His support through working with the children during the sewing events, his musical talent, his quiet supportive manner, his respectful presence, his regular attendance: all those qualities provided, it seemed to me, the many events with additional male approval, quietly encouraging the work carried out by VOCW.

5.4.3.4 The Congolese ‘community’

The term ‘community’ potentially conceals a fuller explanation of the players and constitution of the group at any moment in time; ‘Community’ falls short of describing the ever-changing dynamics of group membership, a process that throughout the case study was never complete but emerging. The dynamics of the group of people that initially got active in the case study, and perhaps represented the ‘community’ at the start of project, changed and some left. The group embraced new membership, not only from within the Congolese community but also from other ethnic minority communities. The ‘community’ group that got involved in the early meetings through which Voice of Congolese Women and the Congolese Community Association were formed comprised no more than about twenty Congolese people – the declared leaders and activists acting on behalf of the wider Congolese ‘community’. This group of people promoted the actions described in chapter two, acknowledging the need for interviews with a representative membership of the wider Congolese community, to guide the direction of the work. The dynamics changed, as Voice of Congolese Women became the dominant driver in this engagement, and the Congolese Community Association faded. More of the women in the community engaged in supporting the classes and the celebration events, and in directing and in leading to deliver some of the content of the workshops. The sewing classes grew to include other ethnic groups of people from Derby, young and old, male and female. The community composition of such classes is described using data from the ‘Craft Action’ series of workshops running from August 2010 through to November 2011. From a small, relatively tight-knit team that comprised the Management Team of Voice of Congolese Women or the Congolese Community Association, each with no more than ten members, the ‘community’ grew substantially. The Craft Action group had 184 attendees, of which 140 were female and 37 male; 7 did not declare their gender. Of this group, 114 were Christian, 38 Muslim, 9 of no faith and 23

unknown. In terms of ethnicity the group comprised 45% Black African, 17% Asian/Black African, and 18% British Black or Caribbean, with 205 'other'. There was a consistent distribution across the age range – under 18 at 16% and 71 and over, 14% (See Appendix M). The Congolese people, exemplified through the Craft Action project, actively sought to work with the 'the other' as a matter of importance both for their own psychological and symbolic lives (Dewey, 2011) but also to guide members in the quality and thinking of their own actions (West, 2015).

5.4.3.5 The 'University'

I identify below those who within the University of Derby supported this work, and therefore how this comprised 'the University' in relation to this research. I worked through my own efforts to establish relations with colleagues across the University. For example, in wishing to share this study and later to address an increased awareness that some members might be suffering from trauma, I approached Dr Nick Stein and (now) Dr Jamie Bird from Therapeutic Arts, who met with me on several occasions early within the case study to help me in my central desire to support the group without bringing about any further harm. I was later supported by Dr Jill Bunce, Programme Leader: Dance Movement Psychotherapy, from the College of Health and Social Care, at the University of Derby. Together we promoted a programme of art therapy workshops, with the assistance and leadership of Anna Ludovico a trainee therapist. Other student therapists joined the project and played significant roles – Maria Charalambous and Andria Papaicolaou – who both went on to establish and run art therapy workshops at for the British Red Cross, reaching out to refugees and asylum seekers living in Derby. Photographic and fashion students assisted in the celebrations; Richard Hannaford, a graphic designer, provided sustained support to help in the production of the animation and created many of the posters used to communicate the study. This small, fragmented group represented the University of Derby. We were, in effect, allowed to be

disconnected from corporate body of the University; one that none-the-less enjoyed the fruits of its success.

5.5 Critical moments in establishing the sewing group

Significant or critical moments within the formation and running of the sewing group were first about defining an ethical ground upon which the work might be developed. This was premised upon minimising harm to the community through the actions of the case study, while developing mutual trust. These first steps required an appreciation of what it might be like to be an asylum seeker. I had my own experience to draw on, illuminated further by the material gathered in the literature review; and so I recognised that spinning even the most fragile fabric upon which to inspire hope for an asylum seeker was hard to imagine. The need for mutual trust builds on the work of Paul Gilbert (2009) and through the notions illuminated by Colin Kirkwood both in his community work (Kirkwood and Kirkwood, 2011) and in embracing Buber's I/thou philosophy within the 'Persons in Relations Perspective' he develops (Kirkwood, 2012); one that I saw as central in this case study. Such a body of ideas drew me to work together with the community by believing we might be equals, and that there was mutual respect, even love. Those theoretical insights it seemed to me, allowed productive relations to be fostered.

Building upon such an ethical philosophy, the second critical step was to expand on what was being done together, in small gradual steps. During the early days we would share the stories members had about their lives – and although this was a central and simple act in itself, I believed it located community members perhaps for the first time in those circumstances, as subjects in their own destiny not objects in society (Grail Centre, 2009). The women's group had dreamed of setting up sewing classes. Following such 'story making', we took action to achieve the goals that had been set, still talking and sharing stories. In effect, this practical engagement with the community provided narratives of liberation, although these did not all

prove successful, as in the work of the Steering Group, as I explain later. Those acts of storytelling and listening became the opportunity to have agency (Goodson *et al*, 2010) and through such activities, the community could start to explore its own destiny, and with the help of the project, take action. The power of those stories lives on in ways that information cannot (Benjamin, 1992), and as such those stories manifested themselves into activities that could provide alternative ways of seeing the world (Ledwith, 2005), offering an alternative narrative from the common knowledge about asylum seekers, and thus challenged their status quo (*ibid.*). It might be possible to envisage through the work of Maggie O'Neill, that through the therapeutic nature of the sewing classes, within which art and craft featured and through storytelling, there became the notion of transformational possibilities (O'Neill, 2008).

The third step was the critical moment in which the women in the community shared narratives with each other. This became a time when I could no longer engage in such story sharing, and yet as I describe below, somehow remained connected, in this border country I was occupying.

5.5.1 The Bindery

This new community centre was named to acknowledge its original use – a place where pages were bound into books at Pear Tree library. The 'Bindery' was on the first floor of the library, in the heart of Normanton. It was airy; a spacious 30x40 feet room with vaulted ceilings. It had white walls and ten six foot tall Victorian windows that allowed light to spill in through the trees and from Pear Tree high street. It had a separate room for storage, a toilet and small wash area. The large room provided a private, welcoming space that the community helped to create and could take a pride in. This spacious, well laid out, room was warm in the winter, and secluded: no-one could view the room from the outside; nor enter it unless they came through the library. Worktops, sewing machines and sewing accessories

were always set up for use, together with a choice of fabrics provided free of charge by funders.

Classes were always informal, generally running from late morning until late afternoon. People arrived when they were able with their young children or babies; prams were left on the ground floor. Time seemed to slow down at these workshops; it lost its colonial significance. There was always an opportunity to greet the children as they arrived and others as they entered the room. It seemed to me that storytelling by the women, and listening to each other was important, perhaps a central aspect of coming together, of being absorbed in the process of being, through making things together, through relaxation in each other's company, and principally of sharing in the telling of their life stories, of binding hearts and minds. For some of the women gathered together in these classes, including Muslim women, it seemed likely that this was the first opportunity in a very long time that they could be women together, to relax, to become who they were. Perhaps through constructing such stories about themselves – their hopes and fears within this nurturing environment – it became a place where trust, love, safety and friendships that developed across boundaries of faith and ethnicity and between women. These workshops appeared to have become a 'safe haven' and a place of liberation for those women. The personal loss and anxieties of those present, perhaps, became diffused, and even suspended for a moment in time within this gathering. It seemed that within those moments such storytelling provided the genesis for new beginnings for some of those present. The classes grew as new people joined from other ethnic groups. As the programme evolved, some of the women (and men) who had been supporting and attending the events gradually gained their leave to remain and left the group to begin a new journey to find accommodation, education and training, and work.

On one of my regular visits, bringing materials for the class, I glanced through the small window in the door to see what was going on before entering. Perhaps there were twenty

women deeply absorbed in making, in showing, in sharing, and there seemed a gentle laughter suffused by the soft and welcoming light from outside, with the children absorbed within their midst. This appeared more ritual than process. I saw in this moment the intimacy of the group. It was as if in Sobonfu Somé's words 'People come together because there is a strong moment that binds them. And that moment must be held, so that in the midst of crisis it can be one's principal ally' (Somé, 1997:123). In the West perhaps it is also true that the process has become the means that justifies the end, and that in Cheikh Hamidou Kane's terms 'they [in the West] are so fascinated by the returns they get from the implement that they have lost sight of the infinite immensity of the workyard' (Kane, 1963: 76). In other words, I saw the meetings represent ritual, rather than process, in which, in Kane's belief reveals a seeking out of the truth that is beyond the partial truth that science can reveal in its daily refinement of the process, as opposed to the unfolding nature of the truth central within Kane's belief and religion. This was a place rather for working out life's problems, through storytelling and sharing; the garments that were produced, and the learning that occurred around their making, seemed a natural outcome of the workshops, but not the real purpose of their existence. Rather, action arose out of those moments through the storytelling that bound the community together, in which all experienced and shared the realities of each other's lives. It seemed that at the heart of this, storytelling and listening provided the agency to do things. I was reminded of what Betty Phoba had said about these workshops: 'We came together as a community. We made clothes. We made friends. We laughed together. We cried together. We planned for the future. Toujours Ensemble!' (Voice of Congolese Women, 2010). I realised I was connected with the group in ways I could not have previously imagined – in the work that had been done to bring this group together. To paraphrase Ira Shor, I was 'extraordinarily experiencing the ordinary' (Shor, 1992:122). It was sometime later that Betty, the Chair of Voice of Congolese Women, reminded me of her significance in

the naming of the room, telling me that just as the room had once been used as a bindery, where pages were pressed and bound together to make books, it had now become a place where we could bind our hands and our hearts.

Within such gatherings, bell hooks asserts that such dialogue is between equals and is as such ‘a humanising speech, one that challenges and resists domination’ (hooks, 1989:131). Collins identifies that the forms of knowledge rest in the women themselves (not in higher authorities) and are experienced directly in the world through these very types of interactions, rather than through abstractions (Collins, 2009:278). This group of women were surely making a new meaning of the world from which they could conceive and take action. It was a time of ‘Reconnecting hearts and minds’ (Appendix J: A103) and through ‘Coming together to be creative. To join our hands and our hearts; and to take action by having a voice’ (Voice of Congolese Women, 2009b). This appeared to be a critical third moment in the case study.

5.6 Critical moments with the Steering Group

Upon the Congolese community agreeing to become part of this study, a small group within the community, the community ‘activists’ agreed in November 2008 to form a Steering Group to be run at Rosehill Lodge, in Normanton. It was agreed to have an open invitation to all the activists from the Congolese community to meet to debate what might be done together. Unlike the sewing group, which comprised mainly of women, this group was largely made up of men. These men represented different community groups within the Congolese community. Kelly Kitenge joined this group, the accepted leader of the Congolese community. The bringing together of such a group was at the heart of starting the project with the people in the community (Ledwith, 2005) within the ABCD (Barr and Hashagen, 2000) model of community development.

The Steering Group held regular meetings from November 2008 to March 2009, and then as the funding application proceeded through to December 2009. Key players within the Steering group identified that a single organisation should be formed to represent the whole community – the Congolese Community Association. It was agreed that this was an opportunity to build a community organisation, by then winning further funding, establishing credibility, and putting in place policies and procedures as a first step. The Steering Group offered an opportunity to reach out to the people in the community and represent the whole community. The Steering Group remained together for over a year, up until funding was awarded in December 2009.

At the point of being awarded funding the Chair and the Secretary of CCA, both men, expressed the views that I was no longer required in the project and that they wished to run the project themselves. It was their wish to reallocate the budget and carry out the project in ways that no longer met the needs of the funders. This was challenged particularly by the women in the group, led by the Chair of Voice of Congolese Women, identifying that the project was conceived for the benefit of the whole community. The community had this opportunity now to work together, argued the Chair, the first step in a growing partnership, and moreover, that my support was still needed within the project. Both men resigned. They retained some control over the project by promoting a Congolese man from a different city. He supported the project but was also able to inform them of the progress within the project. The ‘New Hope’ drop-in centre, as it was named, was taken over by Voice of Congolese Women, as agreed with the funders. I continued to support the work, although I had welcomed the opportunity for the community to take charge.

Ledwith (2005) identifies this action by the chair and secretary as ‘a characteristic that the oppressed turn against each other’ (Ledwith, 2005:100), especially in their early formation, ‘in acts of *horizontal violence*’ [emphasis in original] (*ibid.*). Freire describes that ‘Almost

always, during the initial stage of the struggle, the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors, or 'sub'-oppressors' (Freire, 1970: 27). By this time at the end of 2009, I too had worked more closely with the women, and so from the view of the men, perhaps in crossing these borders, or at least of working in such border country, I might have presented oppressive aspects of my colonialist being, rather than of being genuinely dialogical. I saw some strength in this view, as it was I who had wished to support the group following a larger consultation. In such an approach, I might also have created in the minds of the community, and especially with the men, 'illusions of power' (Ledwith, 2005:101) rather than transformative opportunities, which 'is destructive rather than liberating' (*ibid.*). Shor (1992) identifies that the notion of a 'transformative intellectual' might overcome limitations of Gramsci's 'traditional intellectual', by introducing Freirean aspects of the border intellectual, namely of being able to engage in anti-colonial discourse, and of offering the basis for pedagogies of difference (Giroux, 1993).

5.7 Use of visual ethnography

In analysing the photographic material (listed in Appendix M), it is especially compelling to view the early images (Appendix N: Images 5-7) of the Congolese women coming together during the early workshops – the joy they expressed from being together, the excitement in the revealing of new fabrics, the involvement in the process of being and working together – when we recently met together, reflecting excitedly on the many photographs and of what the images had to say. They exclaimed in excitement, there was 'no agenda... these images speak'. What they were saying was that the corruption so pervasive within and throughout the DRC, was not present in these images: joy and a love of sharing those established crafts together. Perhaps, once again, the community members could recover something that they loved so much about their lives back in the Congo – their ability to be together, to be able to work together, perhaps even 'do business' together, to be able to barter and trade as in their

homeland, for their own betterment and for that of their families. Garments worn in fashion shows in the Congo might often be described as 'kitendi' and were referred by them as being high fashion or the 'religion of kitendi' where only internationally recognised labels would have been worn. Clothing made in the workshops and presented at the fashion shows within this study were a far more modest affair. The garments represented individuality, or personal 'conceptions' of how each individual might represent themselves, depicted through the choice of fabric, pattern, and the way in which it was cut and finished. The concentration of women in this work represents both their personal and collective identities. The women in this style of fashion demonstrate their personality, their womanhood and their modesty, representing a Congolese way of thinking. The clothing within this context might be thought of as a wrapper within which there remains more secrets to be discovered. In a different setting, were this to have been a celebration, then things might be very different, and clothing could be designed to free the body and to allow it to dance. The fashion show as conceived was also an opportunity to raise their own voice, to reveal their Congolese identity, sharing their heritage, food, clothes and music, together with song and speech. It would appear that the process for the women was about the creation or re-creation of their self-esteem, respect, and to make their husbands proud, and as a symbol of their ability to be the providers for their family, their children and their husbands. Those activities offered the opportunity to present multiple selves, to break away from the imposed stereotypes of asylum. This clean and colourful clothing also appeared to gain the wearer wider respect and respectability. Within the sewing group workshops, there was evident pride in selecting material, in the choice of patterns, and in the measuring up and cutting out of the material (Appendix N: Items 8-10). Unlike western ways of working, time and time again I was absorbed by how the women worked lovingly with fabric using their eyes to judge dimensions and then move to cutting the material to shape the cloth: all without a tape measure and without taking a single

measurement. There was a connectedness between the group, the fabric and the body. To be absorbed in the process was crucial, a vital part of this engagement, yet the product was personal, individual and symbolic. The winning of funding for the community appeared to liberate the community, and through the purchase of materials, this acted as a catalyst upon which trading together could commence, and the women in the community could once again re-engage 'in doing business', winning back their self-esteem. The wide ranging dress patterns and fabrics offered the opportunity for individuality. This individuality was evident selecting patterns and fabrics in the workshops, on the cat walk, and in the preparation of food (Appendix N: Images 11-14). It appeared in this analysis that the funding to purchase fabric, equipment and other sewing accessories provided the foundation upon which the community could re-experience and recreate new lives. From this point, I began to think of both process and product – the 'kitendi', the making of the traditional Congolese dress, the regular classes – as of central cultural significance, representing a springboard upon which the women in particular could develop confidence, overcome depression, demonstrate their value, and have a voice, while escaping their stereotypical 'asylum' identities by taking on multiple selves of their own choosing. It was an opportunity to join a group where 'we have so many activities' (Voice of Congolese Women, 2009a: Germaine Ngoy). 'When I came, there were a lot of women not confident about themselves. They were shy, they couldn't speak to other people... but now you can see them smiling, talking to people. They are now confident about themselves' (*ibid.*: Interviewee 2), and so the community saw this as a way to help 'women not only to reduce isolation but giving women a voice' (*ibid.*: Betty Phoba). For some the events were particularly helpful:

Actually I have been a bit struggling with depression. I have been stuck in the house; sometime I will say 'no' today I will go out but I don't have any motivation to go out but with this project, is a big motivation for me to go out to get out of the house. There is something behind me pushing me to go out. (*ibid.*: Germaine Ngoy)

It was the children too in the community that benefitted:

I am a Mum of two kids. The first one is four year's old. When he comes here, he finds so many other kids. They play together; they sing. So when you go back home, he is very happy, he will be telling the story of what he has been doing here. (*ibid.*)

It appeared that a more authentic identity had been forged for the Congolese community in this foreign land. For these women now to be able to move on in such ways perhaps helped them become a little more comfortable with their old identity, too, knowing it was now becoming a thing of the past, more confident in a future of which they might be able to exercise some control.

5.8 A changing agenda

The sewing classes blossomed from the moment of their conception at the introductory event held in January 2009. Once a permanent centre had been located, equipment, fabrics and accessories had been purchased from funds won by Voice of Congolese Women, classes ran throughout the duration of the case study with only occasional breaks. We started with six classes, which then grew to twelve and then finally over the period 2010-2012, 72 were run, always concluded by public celebrations. In examining the photographs, especially those during the first year of the case study, they demonstrated the central nature of the therapy it offered members of the community. This was so well articulated in the video on isolated women (Voice of Congolese Women, 2009a) prepared with the help of those attending the classes. Those interviewed expressed the importance of the classes, as described by an interviewee, who talked about suffering from depression, stuck in the house with no motivation to go out, but 'with this project, [there] is a big motivation for me to go out to get out of the house. There is something behind me pushing me to get out' (*ibid.*: Germaine Ngoy).

I wrestled with the notion that perhaps the classes were not progressing with the structure and pace I might have anticipated. This was also challenged by volunteer professional educators who wished to engage with the project. My colonialist behaviour, scientific and manufacturing background preoccupied me with time and timeliness, and the value of process, especially in the production of quality assured products. I had a background of striving for perfection almost at any cost, on the basis that time was money and productivity drove profit. The concept of African time occurring in cycles, all co-existing together (Nanni, 2012), gave greater importance to the process itself rather than in the making of the product, which for the group I perceived became a natural result of being together and sharing. The failure of 'Imperialist' thinking was captured within this observation: that through capitalism and the scientific method, and the colonisation of time (*ibid.*) the making of products, of failing to value subjugated knowledge, takes precedence.

This confluence between colonialist and Africanist epistemologies is perhaps represented in microcosm at such celebrations. The rigid programme of activities constructed by me essentially within my own colonialist frame of reference; the recognition and awards provided by the colonial masters, university academics and dignitaries, organised by me, conferring recognition on the achievements of minority community members. The multiple selves represented by community members – leaders, orators, musicians, singers, models of all ages, male and female, demonstrating their individuality through traditional 'kitenge' but also western dress, the pride in the preparation of traditional food, its presentation, and serving – all played a part in representing the subjugated voice, however subsumed and contained within the dominance of colonial power. The collusion between the Eurocentric world view and the subjugated Africanist ethnography I saw as a profound success without being aware of why, entrenched early in the case study by my Eurocentric lens as I was. Perhaps without even realising it, the beauty, skill, and power of the Africanist ethnography

triumphed regardless of these subconscious Eurocentric defences and domination. This was different too, from the struggles of black African academics to present black thought within the academy by conforming to the requirements of the dominant positivist epistemology, of a dominant Mode 1 type of knowledge. Unlike black academics wishing to enter the academy, and unlike the African community responding to Eurocentric ideologies, my own experience working across Derby with many minority communities is that all without exception have a deep seated respect for the university as a seat of learning. In this case study therefore, the relevance of imperialist pressures bearing down upon the community might have been viewed be as less appropriate when the partner is a university, which it would seem is an appropriate place through which knowledge and learning is conferred in the form of awards. So rather than a patronising and demeaning presence in presenting at such events, the university brought credit and esteem to the proceedings. It was the place where a valuable education and where life improving opportunities arose. The fashion shows we held got some acclaim across the city, as did the case study nationally and internationally but all within the colonialist framework, with power managed and contained. On all of those occasions, however, it was the subjugated voice that breathed vigorously on life's stage but I could not see that in these terms at that time.

The different epistemologies together created knowledge. The Congolese community had different life experiences, expressed within this thesis, but at least we could work together. The central importance of mutuality within the relationships of this case study is echoed in the work of Colin Kirkwood (2012) premised upon humility and a desire to achieve I/Thou relationships expressed by Buber (1958), and I began to acknowledge their significance within this work. In viewing the photographs as a means of recalling the many events, the community could be seen as negotiating their way, much as the point Freire makes in his discussion with Myles Horton (Bell, Gavanta and Peters, 1990), that by acknowledging,

mastering and engaging with the dominant language, while at the same time honouring your own language and ways of knowing and doing, this community negotiated its own passage, or in Freire's terms, were seeking their own redemption. At this point during this process I envisaged the spiral contained within Lewin's change model of 'planning, acting, observing and reflecting' (1946, 1948), provided additional opportunity to the community in their negotiation of these two epistemologies. How much to conform to the dominant imperialist culture and how much could it introduce its own ways of learning and celebrating its traditions?

Gradually, during these events, the community appeared to be moving on in its thinking, to feel able, even confident, in expressing its concerns about its young people, wishing for them a future. The community became less enveloped in its own personal affairs, and had by the later stages of the case study established in some small measure its own identity across the city. Through this way of imagining their world, such a co-constructed space might be thought of as offering a protected space wherein such lives could be rethought, and agendas moved on; a place where the abjectified, criminalised and even traumatised people chronicled within this thesis could seek sanctuary. Where such a community might draw breath, regain its posture, and provide through their own actions, alternative narratives that supported their wider integration into society, and so move on in their lives.

5.9 We are Mobutu's children

Self-effacing and philosophical, it seemed to me that the community members had created their own, modern-day Congolese proverb to remark on their own 'African' behaviour. They made the comment as a sense of fun or as a mild rebuke of themselves, acknowledging their own short-comings. Perhaps it captured behaviour essential for survival back in Africa, too late to change now: 'We are what we are' was one sense within which I interpreted this 'proverb' when I heard it being used. It represented values and beliefs that had been built on a

corruptly driven society. It seems obvious that when you are poor, there is even more pressure not to be seen to be taken advantage of, to be made to look a fool. Why should you do anything that does not benefit you when you have nothing yourself? Things we may take for granted in the United Kingdom, like being invited to a party, and responding with thanks, might be viewed entirely differently through African eyes. Those who are throwing the party have money, community members might think. How can I have some of this money? Will they pay me to attend the party? My transport, can I bring my children in a taxi? If I am asked to prepare food how can I profit? If I am to entertain, I will have my fees and will need to hire equipment, perhaps from a friend, and travel by taxi. This thinking became attritional during the organising of Congolese events but had to be managed. It had implications, too, especially for any leader in the community who was immediately thought of as having wealth, and with it power over members of the community, just as would have been the case in Africa. For my part, I developed a way of protecting community leaders working with me by explicitly approving all expenditure, challenging how money could be spent, in line with funding agreements, examining receipts, with the response always that funders, including the University of Derby, would recover any money not evidenced appropriately. This was a culture shock for many community members but it set a standard by which the work became known. It meant that through such measures, the significant funding the community won was never challenged or ‘clawed back’ by the funders. These behaviours would form an ethical footprint, one that needed to be encultured into community practices, if the community was to succeed in its projects (Campbell and Groundwater-Smith, 2007).

5.10 Ways of theorising hope – through animation, through stories and through religion

The underlying expression of hope arose through co-construction of a model describing the migration journey of the Congolese community here in Derby – ‘A model for taking charge’ (Appendix I, and Voice of Congolese Women, 2011). This provided the possibility to think

about how hope might be theorised, taking the series of stories that had been conceived as following the stages of grieving exemplified by Elizabeth Kübler-Ross (1970). This publication, 'Hearts of Hope' (Voice of Congolese Women, 2012) chronicles the journey of the Congolese community through the early years of settlement here in Derby following their arrival in the United Kingdom. The title is apposite, as throughout the stages of the grieving cycle described by Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, one thing that Elizabeth identifies that what 'usually persists through all these stages is hope' (Kübler-Ross, 1970:122). The stories pattern such a sequence. The stories are based upon those experiences that the community valued and that were shared between us, rather than seeking out a set of that strictly adhered to the Kübler-Ross grieving cycle, acknowledging also that the cycle itself is a simplification of a process that is unique to each individual. Nonetheless, these stories illuminated a journey of hope, and offer alternative narratives or 'counter hegemonic texts' (O'Neill, 2008:2) that could be shared with the wider community. These stories are centred within my own life story and those of community members, recognising the auto/biographical dynamics within this case study.

The stories illuminate such alternative narratives, experienced and shared by the community in its own construction of its own identity, its own voice here in the United Kingdom. Stories that in one way or another challenge social justice or bring to light the injustice of global issues between North and South – and in effect, connect the personal with the political in powerful ways through the everyday lives of this community, captured in the following paragraphs. More than this, though, such stories capture the possibility of struggle and of hope.

5.10.1 Early stages - denial and isolation

I described earlier in the thesis the criminalisation of asylum seekers, how divisive asylum legislation would ensure the abjection of asylum seekers to be capitalised upon through the

newly conceived processes of asylum determination, detention and deportation by the state. I described other forms of suffering and marginalisation experienced by asylum seekers – including taking up marginalised spaces within already crowded multiply-deprived areas of our cities. The first of these stories illuminate some of this suffering.

The sense of overwhelming loss and bewilderment the predicament the Congolese community experienced during the asylum years, of individuals having fled their country to seek refuge (*Story 1. You better leave now*), of loss of status and imagining themselves as imprisoned within the United Kingdom without charge. The strongest desire was the longing to be re-connected with their homeland (*Poem. Reconnecting hearts and minds*) following sometimes a premature departure absorbed many in the community (*Story 2. Requiem: my husband is dead: I long for my children in Africa*). It was as if through their actions of sending material back to Africa, they created a gossamer thread spun from the very air we breathe, that connected them to their homes. It was as if they were saying: ‘We may be here, but we will do what we can.’ There was also an implied lament: ‘We have not forgotten you. Please, don’t forget us’ (*Story 3. Where’s here? It’s a long way back there*). We debated this on several occasions, and agreed the key focus had to be on settlement here in the United Kingdom. Nor was it necessarily safe to befriend other Congolese arrivals or to share your story (*Story 4. Living with poverty is one thing – living in our minds another*). I learned on several occasions that some in the community identified others also in the community had been implicated with the death or torture of family members while in the Congo, people who had been on the other side of the political or military divide. Information and affiliations needed to be managed carefully. These tensions needed to be understood, and might have presented a serious problem for members of the community, had they been ignored. Information circulating within and across the community had to be ‘managed’ by individuals to protect their pasts, making the narrative of the community increasingly complex, and

making it almost impossible to untangle. Abjection sits within the law at many junctures for asylum seekers, one being the high gate of proof required in the United Kingdom to establish asylum. Compelling evidence is hard to bring with you when you have to leave the country in a hurry. Failure in the asylum application leads to prompt loss of accommodation and the removal of all benefits. The Congolese community was deeply committed to supporting its own people in distress, and in the case of Jon, who arrived back in Derby destitute, would be taken in by one of the families (*Story 5. Dropping into an abyss*).

5.10.2 Anger, bargaining and depression

The humiliation suffered by the asylum process is further illustrated in the following four stories. The impact of moving an asylum seeker to another city has profound ramifications often ignored within the asylum process and in '*Story 6. Surviving death*', Norbert is found unconscious, with his friends knowing of his fear of hospitals. In this 'foreign' city he has no friends. We were successful in persuading the Home Office to return Norbert to Derby. Not being allowed to work, without any means of supporting your family leads to a member of the community to break the law simply to survive, ending up in jail (*Story 7. Released from jail*). In '*Story 8. Life on the edge*' the story of a traumatised woman, 'Angela' a failed asylum seeker who was house-bound, and who appeared not to be in her own body and yet at the time we met, was unable access medical attention nor access to therapy. In '*Story 9. The silence of rape*' her abjectification by society seemed complete when all that could be offered was compassion. 'Layla' shares with another person – a white English male - someone who could listen, empathise and attempt to guide her to seek justice. Perhaps Layla could not have imagined this experience mattered to anyone, seeing herself as a 'nobody' within our society. Furthermore, however, my understanding of Layla's experience of corruption within the DRC, mitigated here by her abjection as a failed asylum seeker and with the racism evidenced within this thesis in Derby, she could only remain silent. The profound personal

experience of a woman seek refuge in our country, confounded by the politics of governmentality and sovereignty, denied humanity.

A critical moment arose when the community began to see the programme as a bridge ‘for all the voiceless people in Derby’. In ‘*Story 10. A bridge – to give us a voice, while we grow our own*’ it seemed members were identifying with the project and speaking the word, became unguarded to say what they really felt, much in the style of Paulo Freire’s teachings. An appeal against an application on humanitarian grounds is overturned and Mada is allowed support to stay in the United Kingdom (*Story 11. On a journey – at last*). During the life of the project the aim always was to support the Congolese people in taking their own actions. One manifestation of this was to support the growth of two organisations: through raising funds, by writing constitutions and putting policies and procedures in place, and through establishing Congolese community centres. This effort is captured in ‘*Story 12. Voice of Congolese Women*’ and in ‘*Story 13. Congolese Community Association*’. These stories describe how a centre was set up for community members to meet regularly, and where material and resources could be stored (*Story 14. Finding our own space: becoming active again*).

In ‘*Story 15. Seeking the blessing of the church*’, for this religious community it was important to receive God’s blessing from the pastor and be assured of God’s guidance in the future direction of the project. This centrality is illustrated as follows through a letter from a child in Africa to her mum here in the United Kingdom: ‘Let God Bless you, protect you and accord you his bounty during all your life in this world of men’. And for Andrea, a failed asylum seeker, during the community interviews: ‘I am not worried about the future because God is everything for me. Life was difficult for Jesus; my faith is helping me to understand things’. And for James during a difficult period as an asylum seeker: ‘Very terrible. But I am still waiting I am a Christian. I know that God will do something for me. I am still waiting. I

know one day... God knows'. Through such devotion, religion seemed to offer a protective and 'sacred canopy' (Berger, 1967) – and perhaps a constructive way to address traumatic events (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 1995). Religion, for many of these community members appeared to reduce the negative impact of the asylum process through their belief in a higher-order schema within which 'events have meaning that is no longer personal and impermanent but universal and enduring' (*ibid.*:73). Kübler-Ross identifies with terminally ill patients, that most bargains are made with God and are usually kept a secret, revealed only 'between the lines or in a chaplain's private office' (Kübler-Ross, 1970:74). There is academic support that religion offers a central role through which individuals might benefit (Harvey, Orbuch, Chwalisz and Garwood, 1991).

5.10.3 Acceptance and hope

Religion played its part in the final stages of acceptance and hope. It became easier to see now that seeds of hope were planted early in the developmental stages of this project, through the arrival early in the first sewing classes of a teacher (*Story 16. Enter a white angel and a Caribbean choir: glue that binds us together*). The story tells of the initial suspicion of this white teacher by the Congolese women, and her motives. These suspicions relax, as over 25 Caribbean women also joined the classes. The latent desire for hope Kübler-Ross identifies within the grieving cycle (Kübler-Ross, 1970:122) can only have been flamed in the hearts of the Congolese women as they engaged with this established Caribbean community living in Derby. These women had arrived earlier from the West Indies, following their husbands, as part of the 'Windrush' project in the 1950s. They not only brought to the sewing classes Christian fellowship and joy but also deep insights into the migration process. They fulfilled their own strong maternal needs by supporting the newly arrived asylum seekers.

There was always great sadness across the Congolese community when news arose of a failed asylum application but also great joy in receiving good news of a community member's

success. The first family to be re-united created a stir in the community with many messages of congratulations, and no doubt continued grieving for those who still had loved ones in Africa or elsewhere (*Story 17. Re-united: the impossible dream*). Had a cultural deficit model been subconsciously in play in my thinking when working with this group of people, then any doubts as to their considerable skills evaporated, as I observed the conversation of the group that gathered to discuss Lingalan proverbs (*Story 18. An African gathering – laughter, linguistic knots, a family playing together*). This experience supported the writing of Imogen Tyler (2013) of not just failing underpinning institutional and socio-political factors at play here but rather a policy of deliberate social abjection of forced-migrants by government. The preference the group showed for narrative cognition (Bruner, 1990) support the notion and appropriateness in writing *Hearts of Hope*. Such stories provide an alternative way of seeing the world; of offering ‘an essential part in the process of change to challenge the dominant discourse and provide alternative narratives’ (Ledwith and Springett, 2010:160).

5.11 Celebrating the Congolese narrative tradition

There is little doubt, looking at all the material gathered and represented by the database, of the strong Africist ethnography, evidenced through the Congolese narrative tradition. The whole case study might be thought of as an exercise in story making. I was a journeyman with the community. The community were story makers: ordinary people who through their own narrativity, became storytellers, witnesses and causalities. This became closer to ethno-mimesis (art plus ethnography) as critical theory in practice. The notion of ‘relational aesthetics’ became key in ‘how’ I engaged in the lived experiences of people. These locations became ‘places of conviviality’ – of a story making together, of embracing the past, present and future, offering the community hope and confidence to take charge of their lives.

Evidence of this narrative runs deep: the idea of a sewing group by VOCW; the classes that emphasised the need for process rather than just product; the opportunity for other individual

and collective identities to emerge through celebration; the dialogic nature of the communications and the way decisions got made. All these can be seen in the communications within the management meetings of VOCW and the CCA Steering Group. Support for and involvement in the community interviews as a means of gathering greater understanding, took me away from my positivist roots into a narrative of hope. The Cartesian graph with which I started to depict the journey carried out by asylum seekers in the United Kingdom led me into a narrativity of hope (Appendix I). At the time, I did not appreciate the significance of this, but its identification became the very encouragement that story telling had value within this case study. The first Fashion Show, 2009, the Congolese Exhibition and Awards Ceremony, 2009, the presentation at Ashbourne Arts Festival, 2010, the Community Awards Evening, 2011, and The Young Persons Fashion Show, 2012, were all opportunities to express the Congolese narrative tradition. Television and radio as well as press and publicity, and national awards raised the profile of the community within and across the city but also nationally and internationally. The spaces we created were many things but perhaps such spaces provided a transitional opportunity enabling people to shift their thinking in alliance with others and learn new ways of thinking and doing. This links with the notion of empowerment through agency within the theatre of craft, the area Maggie O'Neill identifies, and the agency arising from narrative of which Goodson, Biesta, Tedder and Adair (2010) evidence. The reality of a story or event does not just live in that moment but in the minds of those who created it, for a long time (Benjamin, 1992).

These became the new myths and legends the community needed to re-create its new identity, telling stories about its future that demonstrate the realities of such possibilities. This is confirmed through Freirean praxis that such practical engagement with the community helps the community read their reality and write their history (Grail Centre, 2009). These are narratives of liberation, tied to people's lives. They are evidenced in the production by the

community of its own narratives of hope: the workshops, the fashion shows and celebrations, the reviews and debates, and the series of stories, Hearts of Hope (Voice of Congolese Women, 2012).

5.12 Texts forged in the crucible of real lives

I realised that this Congolese community was living inside the gaze of the Eurocentric view, which made them objects and created narratives for them, and for which this case study offered alternative ways of seeing the world (Ledwith, 2005). While my own approach had started through colonialist eyes, my aim became that of providing through a critical engagement within the dominant discourse, alternatives ways for the community to find its own voice. I became increasingly aware of the community's relentless ability to engage with the Africanist traditions. In the creation of events, for example, I was always astonished how everyone came together, despite all the tensions men often introduced into community life; the competitive striving for leadership, the manner in which men often engaged in a project or idea and then backed away to plan their own. For the women who had been leading and supporting the project, they remained connected and committed. It became clear to me that in whatever way I thought I was communicating with members of the community, there were always 'other conversations' going on. Usually these conversations were spoken over the phone as a means of consolidating their experiences, of working together in harmony, of a 'connectedness' that meant when an event occurred, everybody came. This was evidenced at the first fashion show in March 2009, which had in excess of two-hundred people attending the evening, mainly Congolese and West Indian people, spilling out into the street of the Guru Ravidas Community Centre in Normanton until well beyond midnight.

Evidence of the dialogic approach was found during the Steering Group Meetings: considerable time was spent by engaging newcomers, sharing ideas not only in English but in the African languages. The whole community was encouraged to become involved; everyone

was expected to engage and participate. There was an informality I struggled with as a Westerner, and yet a structure of inclusivity existed from which meaning became knowledge, which then led to action. An example of this inclusive approach was to direct the group to seek the blessing of the church, and thus to share the intentions of the case study with the Congolese community. This is a type of approach long extant in the Afrocentric call-and-response tradition whereby power dynamics are fluid; where everyone has a voice, but where everyone must listen and respond to other voices in order to be allowed to remain in the community. A practical example of an opportunity for the leadership to reach out, engage and provide pastoral care for the whole Congolese community widespread across Derby city, came through the building of a community database. Evidence of a dialogic approach can be found through the annual feedback meetings held in May 2009 and July 2010, and perhaps most poignantly in the design and execution of the 'Plan for the Future' focus group event held in May 2009, and described earlier (Appendix E).

There was an excitement at the 'Plan for the Future' meeting; a seriousness across the group to share experiences; a moment to make new meaning, as if the group was affirming new knowledge upon which action could follow. Collins (2009) argues new knowledge comes from experience, through the development of empathy and shared experiences. Underpinning African-American epistemology is the need to seek wisdom through an experiential, material base calling upon the collective experiences and history of the community, using lived or first-hand experience in assessing knowledge claims (Belenky, Field, McVicker Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule, 1986). In accomplishing wisdom, a vital source of survival for such a subordinated group, the group needs to remain in control of how they are presented, 'for Black women cannot afford to be fools of any type, for our objectification as the Other denies us the protection that White skin, maleness, and wealth confer' (Collins, 2009: 276). The assessment and validating of new knowledge rests with the women themselves, and not

through higher authority. It arises through empathetic and subjective understanding of other people's experiences directly in the world, rather than through abstractions. Such a process uses the lived experiences of daily lives to assess more abstract knowledge claims, and that dialogue implies talk between two subjects, not the speech of subject and object, 'a humanising speech, one that challenges and resists domination' (hooks, 1989: 131).

5.13 New ways of thinking

The conceptual diagram (Figure 1) is helpful as a metaphor in illustrating this new awareness, which I have named the 'Tobungi tree'. The tree metaphor has three parts: root, trunk and branches.

The roots of the 'Tobungi' tree comprise three central themes. Firstly, the approach taken of recognising the centrality of an ever changing ethical landscape, of accepting its consequences and making appropriate adjustments, of the values of the researcher, and the manner of engagement. Secondly, it centres upon the critical nature of the engagement in the creation of new knowledge upon which action might be predicated. Thirdly, it provides the context for the second theme, creating awareness of how power works within society, and in what ways it might be contested, so as to create alternative stories about the world that challenge dominant ideology.

Underpinning the conceptual diagram is the notion of a shared curiosity, articulated by Freire (1996). This curiosity is the sap of the tree, its vital life energy. This energy is generated by attempts to embrace the other and their epistemologies (Giroux, 1993). The diagram of the Tobungi tree is illuminated by Africanist concepts. Of Sorbonfu Somé's wonderful notion 'that people come together because there is a strong moment that binds them. And that moment must be held, so that in the midst of crisis it can be one's principle ally' (1997:123) and building on it Kane's critique that the west is so fascinated by the returns they get from

the implement that they have lost sight of the immensity of the workyard' (Kane, 1963:76) – and that the sewing group, of course made clothes but it did so, so much more within that co-constructed space, especially through narrative. And that this combination, in Asante's terms, that by combining dominant and subjugated knowledge we have the opportunity to create significant knowledge (and nearer home through the writing of June Boyce-Tillman, in creating unconventional wisdom). Action arose from these narratives.

The trunk from which the base grows, a co-constructed space, combines the themes of the roots to provide a context within which both the subjugated and dominant epistemologies might prosper together. The 'Tobungi' tree prospers through this fusion. The fruits of the tree might be categorised into three types of growth: of health and wellbeing, of an emerging critical consciousness, and of identity formation and action. This metaphor is developed further in Chapter Eight – Back to the Future.

Through these concepts a co-constructed space was nurtured and grew; it enveloped my dominant and the community's subjugated epistemologies; it supported the emergent narrativity of the community. The partnership within such space explored and validated community input; it became a springboard upon which the group could conceive, challenge the national discourse of abjection within which they had been subsumed, and take action for their own liberation.

The idea aligns itself with the significance of the Boabab tree and of values captured in the South African conceptual model of Ubuntu (Colff, 2003) again, through the metaphor of the tree and its roots. It also draws on the metaphor used by the Adult Learning Project (ALP) in Edinburgh (Kirkwood and Kirkwood, 2011: 16), to illustrate the project's growth. The roots are underpinned by 'I-Thou', of 'I-It' relations (Buber, 1958), 'recognising that our sense of

self as a person emerges from our context, which includes the quality of our relational encounters' (Sill, Lapworth and Desomind, 2012).

Evidence of the moment when such seeds of hope began to germinate, is captured in an interview on BBC Radio Derby during the Breakfast Show on Sunday morning, 30 March 2009, immediately after the Fashion Show the previous evening. Betty Phoba, Mado Nyota, Wivine Maniata and I were interviewed. Wivine was asked to describe what it had been like, she explained:

Yes, I am very happy to be part of this group... I made that material you see there – that shirt and that dress. It is wonderful. I am happy because everything was [going] very well. I feel confident. Starting [with] the workshop and the evening of the Fashion Show last night. It was fabulous. (BBC Radio Derby, Breakfast Show, 2009)

And in explaining her life now in Derby compared to that in the Congo, Wivine continued:

The difference is that in the Congo we just have Congolese people. Here you know, we meet many different people in the community – Indian, Jamaican, from the Caribbean, English people were there, the Chinese, also the Kurdish people – I was very excited to meet all the community. You know, it was for me the first time to see people getting on well together – and it was getting new friends because, like me, I can say today I can see some people in the street I did not know before; it is very exciting. (*ibid.*)

The radio presenter picked up on the garments we had brought into the studio – ‘it is a real shame we are doing radio this morning because we have dashes of red, of yellow, of purple and of blue and plenty more besides... Aren't they fabulous? He identifies ‘there is a real passion about the place, isn't there?’ To which Betty Phoba replied:

I can say I am very proud of all the teachers and learners who came along to support the project especially the University of Derby for their huge support and especially the strong publicity and the public relations. And we couldn't reach people from Derby – across the city – but with the help of the University of Derby, we had a lot of

people from different backgrounds, and I am still excited by the way we are working with them. (*Ibid.*)

This passion for craft, and the joy of the Congolese community through communicating such an event raised their profile across Derby, and perhaps further afield. The notion of the co-constructed space has become central within this thesis. The creative space for drama, dance, music and story making forged a new community identity, expressing new underpinning values and beliefs.

5.14 Community growth and challenge

In supporting the community I gradually accepted the notion that I was a traditional intellectual in Gramsci's terms, having a wide range of organisational or ideological/cultural roles in society. My role developed through being an insider (Taysum, 2007), linked with education in critical consciousness and the co-creation of knowledge that leads to action for change. I recognised that this provided relevance but also potential pitfalls to the role.

Gramsci predicted the emergence of organic intellectuals from every community (Forgacs, 1988). Throughout the case study, Betty (formerly Albertine Paka Di Phoba) increasingly fulfilled this in the sense defined by Fogacs (1988) through her ability to 'create the conditions most favourable to the expansion of their own class' (*ibid.*:301). Betty undertook extensive training in community development work. The African Friendship Association assisted her throughout the growth of Voice of Congolese Women in very supportive ways. Betty also mastered English, and soon began translating for community members. Betty joined the University of Derby on an internship. She was Congolese, was committed to social justice and provided leadership within the University whereby as Ledwith (2005) describes it, such organic intellectuals can 'bridge the divide between theory and practice... and begin the process of liberation by creating the context for questioning the legitimacy of everyday

experience' (Ledwith, 2005:124) to challenge the concept of power, and take action against it.

The critical consciousness and questioning within this crucial relationship, as I saw it, increasingly directed the course of the case study and materially benefitted it in ways I simply could not have achieved alone. It was a relationship whereby in Freire's terms, the subject of the case study was never allowed to become the object (Grail Centre, 2009:9) Rather this became a reciprocal relationship throughout and in which I was perhaps teacher but also certainly pupil (Gramsci, 1971:150).

Chapter Six: Another story – the narrative of doing a doctorate

Baliyaka dongo-dongo na soni te. Do not be ashamed when eating okra. Do your best when things aren't easy; eating okra can be messy and get on your clothing.

6.1 Introduction

I describe my personal struggle following my failure at the viva voce examination in January, 2012, and how I muddled through to re-create through an immense effort, a piece of work that could be considered worthy of a doctorate. With the help and encouragement of my examiners, especially under new supervision, I identify the difficulty of escaping my own positivist epistemologies and of a deepening research philosophy. Through my immersion with members of the Congolese community, I confront notions of being a do-goodie, rather explicitly understanding I am a part of the case study. My awareness increases of boundary crossing and border living, and I acknowledge the place for narrative in capturing the moment, on my journey towards becoming an auto/biographic narrative researcher.

The chapter describes my struggle to use what I see and experience to illuminate my research. This includes becoming more critical in my assumptions in relation to empowerment, through my immersion with others, and to become more open in what I see. In these ways I looked rather to develop my imagination, including identifying my own redemptive needs within the research.

6.2 My struggle to overcome failure

I completed the taught part of the Doctor of Education programme in 2008. By the time I took up my role as Community Relations Officer for the University of Derby in 2008, I had agreed a draft Learning Contract for what was then termed the 'Independent Study' phase of the doctorate, and had negotiated half a day of each working week to concentrate on these

studies. My doctoral research, as I saw it, had dovetailed into the community outreach I was starting. I wanted to document all aspects of this outreach work: I diligently started to keep a field diary that contained detailed records of all I did, and I encouraged community members to do the same. Records of meetings, decisions taken, use and evidence of money spent was recorded from the outset as part of building a sustained record of the project. My examiners Professor Margaret Ledwith and Professor Angie Hart, while acknowledging my passion for this study had not witnessed such a poorly presented thesis or student (Ledwith and Hart, 2012, 2013). They agreed, together with the Chair of the examination, Professor Dennis Hayes, to offer supportive feedback, requiring a second viva voce examination and revised thesis.

A new academic supervisor, Dr Val Poultney, Doctor of Education Programme Leader, was appointed in 2012. Val Poultney supported me during an initial period of overwhelming failure, helping me to consider how to restructure the thesis. Dennis Hayes at the University, following up on the examiners' recommendations, encouraged me to think about auto/biographical approaches and study the work of Barbara Merrill and Linden West. No specialist supervisor was appointed during that year of revision, even though this had been identified as being necessary. The first re-write took on the appearance of auto/biography or even autoethnography with the researcher's own experience coming more to the fore, and how the researcher's self was implicated in the development of the project. Following the successful viva voce examination in October 2013, I embarked on further revisions in June 2014, attempting a third rewrite of the thesis. I was successful in an Academic Appeal to have the first viva voce examination made null and void, which then allowed for further revision. This time I was under the supervision of Professor Linden West. The whole project was then conceived of as a case study, with strong auto/biographical and narrative elements. The case study developed as having three interrelated dimensions – my own learning journey, the

engagement by me on behalf of the University of Derby with a forced-migrant community, and of the actual and potential role of a University in work of this kind. The notion of a case study gradually took shape after many years of struggle.

The thesis then became about meeting points, of crossing borders: those of forced migration, involving a particular group of people from the DRC, Africa; and of a university, seeking to build or strengthen its relations with local and regional communities. Retaining an inner confidence throughout this process was sustained by the belief that this study might indeed have supported the dispossessed in our local community, and I could not let their stories be diminished by any failure on my part or that of the University. In short, this case study as it is conceived, captures this constantly changing complexity – of always being in border country and yet of always representing a university that was seeking engagement with its local community.

6.3 Escaping positivist ontologies

Escaping the ontological and epistemological tenets I had absorbed as a photographic scientist to take on a reflexive role within this case study has been no easy task. My positivist, objectivist or realist ontological world view (Guba and Lincoln, 1989) provided the greatest barrier to imagining within this research, because as a scientist, I was always relying on standardised ways of gathering data to carry out quantitative analysis to form opinions based upon fact. Although I did not appreciate it during the development phase of the work, visualising other possibilities started early on in the project with members of the Congolese community, in the co-construction of space within which recreational activities together with storytelling helped to create narratives of hope.

In relation to considering traditional norms of validity and reliability within these methods, my journey has taken me from this perspective to a location whereby I appreciate the

language of for example 'verstehen', in the work of Max Weber (1930, 1994). This is through reflexivity, of getting an insight, an understanding, of illuminating the complexity of other human beings through biographic approaches. It is within this context that the 'sociological imagination' (Wright Mills, 2000) might describe fresh narratives of the particular and the general not demeaned by the stereotypes of gender, ethnicity nor race. I realised that it is through words, through photographs, through art, through creativity; through all these activities that we shared, and that by embracing a reflexive approach – I might generate new insights into human experiences, including my own (Merrill and West, 2009: 177), insights that need to be considered 'right' by those who share a similar world (Reason and Rowan, 1981). I recognised I needed to identify new tools for thinking differently.

My intention was always to work collaboratively; co-creating activities that could benefit the community. So, rather than a method of collecting data, this approach is about creating and representing knowledge (about society, culture and individuals) and is based more upon my own experiences and the material gathered throughout the case study. Within this methodology, I do not claim to produce an objective or truthful account of reality, but rather aim to offer versions of my experiences of reality 'that are as loyal as is possible to the context, negotiations and intersubjectivities through which the knowledge was produced' (Pink, 2007: 22). Engaging with issues of representation that question the right of the researcher to represent other people, recognising the impossibility of 'knowing other minds' (Fernandez, 1995: 25) and acknowledging that the sense we make of informants' words and actions is 'an expression of our own consciousness' (Cohen and Rapport, 1995: 12). While a reflexive approach within the analysis recognises the centrality of this subjectivity of the researcher to the production and representation of knowledge, Ruby (2000) and Banks (2001) argue that reflexivity goes beyond the researcher's concern with questions of 'bias' or how ethnographers observe 'reality' of a society they actually 'distort' through their participation in

it. Pink (2007) identifies that it is tokenistic to think that reflexivity is a mechanism that neutralises an ethnographers' subjectivity but that subjectivity should be engaged with as a central aspect of ethnographic knowledge, interpretation and representation (Pink, 2007: 23).

6.4 A deepening research philosophy

Early on in this project, I recognised the importance of compassion through the work of Paul Gilbert, who sets out the standard psychological model, maintaining that it is 'kindness, gentleness, warmth and compassion that can sustain us and help us bear the setbacks, tragedies and suffering that life will rain on us' (Gilbert, 2009: 44). Gilbert identifies our need to belong to a group, the importance of human contact and touch, and how much love matters, compared with being unloved and thought of as 'undesirable, unhelpful, untalented and unable' (*ibid.*:178), which creates major threats to our wellbeing. Gilbert moves on to define compassion as: 'behaviour that aims to nurture, look after, teach, guide, mentor, soothe, protect, offer feelings of acceptance and belonging—in order to benefit another person' (*ibid.*:193).

I was also attracted to the work of Sapolsky (1993) in relation to the importance of touch, and to Gerhardt (2004) of the vital need to be loved. These three qualities resonated deeply for me as fundamental in the approach needed to support and serve this community. This philosophy led me to envisage a leadership style that I thought of as compassionate leadership, thereby 'Planning and engaging in behaviour that acts to relieve distress and moves us (and others) forward to our (or their) life goals — to flourish' (Gilbert, 2009:209).

Added to this was the work of Christians and Traber (1997:301) in exposing the poverty of the Enlightenment model, of value-free inquiry, utilitarianism and utilitarian politics, promoting a philosophy rooted in care, shared governance, neighbourliness, love, kindness and moral good, believing that participants should have a coequal say in the design,

execution, delivery of the research but also in how to assess and communicate what has been achieved; a created space where there exists mutual understanding and the honouring of moral commitments. This 'sacred, existential epistemology places us in a non-competitive, non-hierarchical relationship to the earth, to nature, and to the larger world' (Bateson, 1972:335).

I recognised that this philosophy aligned both with the ethics of research and with the politics of the oppressed. Denzin and Lincoln call for 'collaborative, trusting, non-oppressive relationships between researchers and those studied' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003:52). Jackson argues that all people must have some 'some say in the world into which they are thrown, that they in some measure choose their own lives and feel that they have a right to be here, to be free to make a difference' (Jackson, 1998:3).

My philosophy developed through this research, and it was reassuring to learn that it linked conceptually with the theory and practice of Freire, whose strong emphasis is on values of respect, dignity, trust, and mutual reciprocity. It is Bettelheim (1986) who through his experience surviving the Holocaust, identifies the vital need we all have to be cared for, and how the lack of concern by the world for those in the extermination camps led to a greater loss of life, telling that one of the last messages from the Warsaw ghetto said: 'The world is silent; the world knows and stays silent. God's vicar in the Vatican is silent; there is silence in London and Washington. The American Jews are silent. The silence is incomprehensible and horrifying' (*ibid.*:xvii). He advises that if we are to avoid living in the shadow of events such as this that 'Only if we truly love life – our own – and that of others – will we be able to preserve it and look forward with confidence to the future'.

6.5 The centrality of ethics

Central within the evolving case study came new activities and responsibilities that invariably had ethical consequences, requiring much thought. Ethical conduct became for me a crucial element of the research, and I had to rely almost exclusively on my own developing professionalism, sensitivity and passionate desire to take care not to create any harm to those with whom I was working. I was working first-hand with a forced-migrant community, some of whom were destitute and others were waiting to hear the outcome of their claims. One example I describe earlier relates to trauma within the community, and how this was supported by therapists from the University who helped develop an appropriate method for such work that could provide anonymity and confidentiality to those who attended such classes. It is comforting that no ethical concerns have been raised during the course of this case study in relation to any individual within the Congolese community. This cannot be said of the ethical role played by the University of Derby towards me, as an employee and as a research student, nor in the care and ethical support required to protect those with whom I worked, which was then and remains now a profound worry.

6.6 Engaging with everyday concerns

I have learned that community development is always about personal engagement. It is challenging, exhausting, and requires sustained effort and commitment. I struggled to identify which kind of research could support a forced-migrant community into taking action. I found myself in border country on many occasions, entering new territories and occupying many roles, not unlike the journeys Freire and Horton describe. In doing so, I became grounded in the lives of these ordinary people who were doing extraordinary things. I was not always successful in being able to carry out work we had planned for budgetary reasons. This perceived failure on my part strengthened our relations. It reminded me that in this forced-migration journey, such people become accustomed to failure. Christianity united the

community, so to reach the community the case study was presented at church, receiving the pastor's blessing. This event underpinned the importance the community attached to this work; it became authentic. Evidence that the work mattered, could be found in that community members embarking on their journeys continued to support the project beyond obtaining their right to live in the United Kingdom. The community assisted in practical ways to record activities. We started a database designed to list every member of the Congolese community, and in doing so obtained individual details that could support a programme of pastoral care. We created attendance sheets and feedback forms. The community kept detailed records, providing information to funders, and wrote their own evaluations. I made field notes, built a large database comprising documents and visual material for analysis. I studied practitioner texts, engaging with these 'theoretical friends' with whom I could have a conversation, so to speak.

This theoretical relationship became a means of deepening my scholarship, making the vital connection between practise and theory, in ways that could deepen my praxis and develop my imagination. The field notes informed me of the world I had visited during this research and had remained for some time. It seemed I had travelled to a different continent through this research, becoming inseparable for long periods from the community I was studying, In other respects I was leading my life, holding down a job, running other projects, supporting a family, and making daily decisions about living. The conversations I had with myself through such material helped me travel to a more reflexive world. It helped me bridge practice and theory. My professional practice had started to become shaped by the everyday reality of people's lives. In doing this, I too had regained a sense of self-worth.

6.7 My deepening immersion with asylum seekers

My darkest moments during this research were invariably when I sat with failed asylum seekers who appeared so completely desolate and impoverished. In working with several

members of the community who had failed their asylum application, during their most difficult times – ‘Andrea’, ‘Annabel’ ‘Richard’ and ‘Emma’ I saw through such rawness their despair and humiliation, acknowledging their belittlement in becoming a ‘nothing’ or a ‘nobody’ during these ‘lost years’. These vulnerable people had very little if nothing of their own, only the clothes they wore. They had nowhere to live that they could call their own. They had to live it seemed always in the now, in the moment. They were not able to decide anything for themselves but were dependent entirely on the goodwill of others. I knew of no easy way to solve their problems, and so at first I sat with them and listened. It seemed to me, we were helpless together, in a real and a surreal sense. I struggled with my own impotence. It was comforting to be reminded through the work of Bettelheim (1960) and Gilbert (2009) that just ‘to be there’, to provide love and care could make a difference. I became calmer in these situations, and developed a resilience and confidence to take action for the better, however small, and however slow it might have been in its execution.

This approach contrasted with how asylum seekers might think negatively of themselves, as undesirable and unwanted, objectified by the state. It seemed I was increasingly pulled into the community and its affairs from 2002 and began to live within their lives, so to speak, in ways that became all-consuming. I met with them and listened, responding by taking action, immersing myself in their lives and their issues. At the same time, I recognised the need to remain detached to some degree while writing records and keeping a research diary. I was mindful that the confidential knowledge I was given had to be protected. I experienced in these dark times, individuals struggling to maintain hope. As the months rolled into years, gradually people in the community, member by member, obtained their leave to remain amid much rejoicing. Such significant events called for celebrations and the women with whom I had close contact always kept me informed.

During the community interviews, I discovered the value of sharing an illustrated copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), (Amnesty International UK, 2008). The community seized the opportunity to express through the thirty articles within the UDHR, their concerns, rather than their direct experiences, of both Africa and of living here in the United Kingdom. In talking about the crucial importance of the Declaration of Human Rights, Paulo Freire was sure it provided a justification that people had a ‘right to fight’ (Bell, Gaventa and Peters, 1990:85) and as in this case study, express their views. The realisation of such an instrument also provided the possibility to express opinions through abstraction, rather than having to divulge personal experiences that in turn might have compromised asylum claims.

6.8 No do-goodie but a part of the case study

I became aware that I might be thought of as a ‘do-goodie’ although perhaps I thought of myself more as a kind of migrant. It was certainly pleasurable to think I might make a difference to the lives of other people. It was actually helping me turn my own life around. I was finding my own redemption through this engagement; it became a new life force for me. I could relate to those with whom I was working. We developed rapport, and the love I received seemed to offer psychological wellbeing; it repaired and nurtured my ruptured soul. I did not imagine I had any special privileged knowledge – rather, I was aware of my colonial bearing, and of my middle-class, male presence when working with groups of women, with incredulity at times on my part that this could be so. I increasingly became aware of my Eurocentric views as the research developed. It would have been easy for my critics to reign in on me that ‘what did I know?’ in carrying out such work. The truth was that I did not pretend to ‘know’ anything in particular. Rather, why not go on this journey with the community together? I did not need nor desire ‘off-the-shelf solutions’ – I had assembled a

lot of skills and knowledge during my long career. I believed these would find their place in this new setting, and that these skills could enrich such work.

Gradually I began to perceive my own positivist gaze upon this work; and something stirred within, in recognising that I was changing. I look back and realise now I had been defensive in seeking a positivist rational and justification for constructivist thinking. I recognise now I was ‘espousing’ new values but not practising them (Argyris and Schön, 1978). Intellectually I seemed to have intuitively adapted to other ways of knowing; psychologically, this was another matter, and the need to justify this new stance was something I needed to work at; my old lenses needed replacing. I struggled to make this move ontologically, and this remained until this most recent draft of the thesis. I found it hard to shed or at least park my old clothing, and celebrate with greater confidence how I might perceive the world through auto/biographic narrative. I recognised that this new territory offered potential for significant new knowledge where traditional quantitative methodologies have little to say (Asante, 1998, Bochner, 2002; Jones, 2006; Merrill and West, 2009), although of course, this is not to deny the vital role the scientific method plays in our lives today.

6.9 The need for humility

My second attempt at a conceptual model became too complicated when I attempted to merge my own journey with those of the migrant community I was studying (Appendix K) with my own thoughts about the case study as comprising three stages: preparation, engagement and detachment as offering helpful milestones. Reflexively, it seems now that I was trying to colonise time (Nanni, 2012), which was not mine to manage. African time might be thought of as circular, where events coincide (*ibid.*). I had my own, linear Western time. Rather, through the lens of the community, these stages might have been thought of as concurrent – co-existing as it were within their thinking rather than being artificially delineated, as in mine. This was part of the process to be enjoyed within the Africanist traditions, not an

outcome as a result of a process that had to be got through, as exemplified in the West. The community, it seemed, was evaluating and making meaning of the case study as it evolved. The Congolese community wished to express its own identity, and therefore how the project might develop. Volunteering England noted this as a concern, that while the community acknowledged it benefitted from external interventions, there was an anxiety of becoming too dependent upon such support (Regnier, 2010). I was aware that within Black feminist thought, knowledge comes from direct experience of the world, and its authority rests in the women themselves. This is gained through dialogue between two subjects; humanising but resisting domination. Within this circulating milieu, I learned that humility had a great strength. I was not part of the daily conversations, but through such humility came to understand that the community had a need to remain in control of their lives. It was important for them not to become the object of a study. Their desire to remain in control contrasted with their experiences of a colonialist past in the Congo, and an abjectifying presence here in the United Kingdom.

6.10 The place for narrative in capturing the moment

What really ‘captures the moment’ is storytelling in this twenty-first century, a century in which the immediacy of global communication is all pervasive. Its awakening for the world came most poignantly through the Arab Spring starting in December 2010. From that moment in time, things changed for ever in the way narrative could be delivered. The moment became now and the way of telling it became in the first person, by the teller, as it unfolded. The storytellers are both witnesses and casualties using readily available technology, often their phones in the absence of video cameras. People tell their stories before the media teams have arrived on the scene. In other words, the story is told by ordinary people who tell it as they see it, sharing often the visceral reality of their lives. Such

narrative empowerment (Goodson *et al*, 2010) has become prescient within life today, especially through social media.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), on its website, captures another daily atrocity in its headlines: ‘more than 3,000 Congolese flee Uganda to escape clashes’ (United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 2012) and comments: ‘People you see every day. But you don’t really see them. Imagine if this were you?’ It builds on this thought, guiding its readers through a multiple-choice computer game, giving them the chance to experience something of the reality of what it might be like to be in War and Conflict. The game takes you through the stages of escape: ‘What is it like to be running from persecution? To enter a border country — to question if I can stay here?’ And then on to new beginnings: ‘A new life — to cope with loss and challenge?’ (*ibid.*). While you engage in this ‘game’ it feels real enough. It takes you there. It is visceral. It is so for me, having heard many of these stories first-hand from my forced-migrant colleagues and friends in Derby.

Increasingly the community directed me towards their preferred ways of seeing the world, through narrative cognition, for example, in the creation of an animation, video work, and in writing of the series of stories ‘Hearts of Hope’. These ways of seeing and doing helped me realise that all along the Africanist tradition had driven the community to action. Such tradition led to the organising of sewing classes, meetings to support the rich oral tradition of the community, and celebrations in which food, dance and display could proclaim their cultural heritage (Mudimbe, 1988).

6.11 Sensitivity to the importance of embracing other epistemologies

The Africanist ethnography opened up the notion of supporting the subjugated voice, of embracing other epistemological frameworks of knowing, alongside the dominant Eurocentric epistemology. This was most pronounced when the community met to review

their national proverbs, with community members speaking in their preferred tongue, Lingala. This encounter illustrated a deep love that the Congolese people had for proverbs that shaped and directed their lives. Through their sophisticated use of language, I saw the deep significance and power of language, including elaborate forms of African oratory. By using song and dance, such critical agency was acknowledged to have been an agent for transforming their society, long before colonial rule (Asante, 1998).

6.12 The power of a co-constructed space

The need for a community space may be less obvious to an established community than that of a forced-migrant community, members of whom are ‘stuck’ in provided accommodation or without a home at all. A meeting point becomes an essential springboard upon which new lives can be imagined, offering opportunity to be together, to worship, to grieve, to plan and to do. Without such temporal and physical space I learned that life became restricted in the most profound and yet simplest of ways. Without money, trading and shopping is reduced, and so is socialisation across the wider community. Travel, especially for asylum seekers, is limited within the United Kingdom. These reduced circumstances undermine the support a community might be able to provide to its elders and sick, weakening the opportunity for networking, for maintaining friendships, volunteering, for building adequate support networks and therefore social capital. The ability for community members to build social capital at this time was limited. Providing workshops allowed access to adult conversations, for members to speak their own language or languages, to practice English and more widely, to prepare and share food, to learn new practical skills of sewing and dress making. Most importantly, the Congolese community could share their experiences as newly-arrived forced migrants from the DRC with each other, and make new friends across the various community groups that joined the classes.

In these small but significant ways, people were able to rebuild the social fabric of their lives. Such meetings provided both a 'transitional' and 'transactional' space from which further activities could be planned. This helped the community move from dependency upon each other towards a greater openness, experiencing and creating forms of endeavour to discover new ways of thinking about the world and their place in it.

6.13 Increasing awareness of boundary crossing and border living

My research journey became one of boundary crossing within the lines and circles of different ontologies and epistemologies. Combined with my deepening appreciation of the ancient ethnographic history and orality of the African people I was studying, I began to embrace new ways of knowing. I realised I was boundary crossing so many territories; that I was living between the lines and the circles of dominant and subjugated epistemologies (Asante, 1998). I recognised there was an element I still had not embraced within the research, namely, me the researcher, the one who was so involved in the story telling but also had a story to tell.

6.14 Learning our place in the world

It is at this point in my auto/biographic narrative research understanding that I began to appreciate how storytelling illuminates for the tellers, their unique thoughts and lived-experiences. Narrative research recognises that people actively 'learn' their world, and their place in it, and to research meaningfully 'the relationship must always be embedded in real people and in a real context' (Thompson, 1980:30). One must expect infinite variety as 'Life stories, like snowflakes, are never the same design (Borenstein, 1978:30). The birth place for this research approach was the Chicago School of Sociology. There the notion of symbolic interactionism developed to underpin the belief that only particulars and people have real empirical substance, and that human beings are at the heart of research exemplified in *The Making of the English Working Class* (Thompson, 1980). Thompson claimed that class was

made through human relationships, that his ontology of ‘making’ was based on a theory of being. This research moved from a positivist position to constructivist, about how social order is created, and in many ways the 1960s was a time of re-birth through for example, feminism. Wright Mills argued that we: ‘Know that the human meaning of public issues must be revealed by relating them to personal troubles and to the problems of individual life’ (Wright Mills, 2000: 226).

Stanley and Wise state ‘a feminist social science should begin with the recognition that the ‘personal’, direct experience, underlies all behaviours and action’ (Stanley and Wise, 1993:164), agreeing with Wright Mills, that ‘the personal is the political’. In such an approach the researcher becomes entwined within the research process, and therefore ‘the biographical method rests on subjective and intersubjectively gained knowledge and understandings of the life experiences of individuals including one’s own life’ (Denzin 1989:28). Similarly, Stanley ‘draws attention in her use of the term auto/biography (with a slash) — to the inter-relationship between the constructions of our own lives through autobiography and the construction of others’ lives through biography’ (Merrill and West, 2009:5). More than this, Merrill and West explicitly argue the case for bringing the researcher, and processes of relationship, ‘into the research frame — rather than pretending, as many researchers do, that our interests and ways of making sense of others is, or should be, divorced from the people and experiences we are’ (Merrill and West, 2009:5).

6.15 My journey towards becoming an auto/biographic researcher

My research journey towards being an auto/biographical researcher must contain this frisson, this moment, this reality, and be ‘pragmatic, interpretive and grounded in the lived experience of people’ (Marshall and Roassman, 2006: 2). My journey must also identify that I too have needs and how in identifying these within the research, this contributes to a more authentic narrative.

A community must be the teller of its own stories. Academics have noted a turn to biographical methods, life-history and narrative-based research since the 1980s (Miller, 1999, 2005; Chamberlayne, Bornat and Wengraf, 2000; Roberts, 2002; Miller, Humphrey and Zdravomyslova, 2003; Merrill and West, 2009), in an attempt to characterise people's lives by looking at how people actually make sense of their lives (Horrocks, Kelly, Roberts and Robinson, 2003:xvi). Craib (2003) acknowledges that people's emotional life is 'complex and contradictory and too disruptive to be grasped in a coherent way, thus we tell ourselves stories to ease our anxieties' (Horrocks *et al*, 2003:xv). Roberts states that 'the intent of biographical research in its various guises is to collect and interpret the lives of others as part of human understanding (Roberts, 2002:15), while Benjamin identifies storytelling as 'having a primary role in the household of humanity' (Benjamin, 1992:89—90).

O'Neill (2008) grapples with the notion of the transforming role of biographical (life story) research, embracing what she describes as ethno-mimesis (combination of art and ethnography) as 'critical theory in practice/praxis' (O'Neill, 2008:2). She argues that it can 'better interpret social issues such as (i) migration both forced and free, (ii) the experiences of new arrivals, and (iii) to facilitate the production of new knowledge and counter hegemonic texts' (*ibid.*). She identifies that with such an approach, knowledge is collaboratively made, not found, which in turn loosens the knowledge/power axis involved in knowledge production and expertness (*ibid.*: 3). In a later publication (O'Neill 2010), she identifies biographical research as an involvement in the production of meaning that offers resistance to the dominant power/knowledge axis of the representation of marginalised groups such as asylum seekers. This is achieved through a 'combination of biography/narrative (ethnography) and art (mimesis)' such that biographical research becomes 'a potential space for transformative possibilities' (O'Neill, 2010:108). This approach differs from others in that

it involves the ‘creation’ of knowledge within a methodological practice, and the process occurs in the space between ethnography and art (O’Neill, 2008:3).

Narrative biographical research is not simply the transcription of talk to aid analysis through a story or biography; it also includes the performative. Given (2006) writes about this transformative role ‘based on an understanding of the narrative construction of identity as an enplaced, embodied, antipoetic process explored through the application of a biographical narrative interview methodology’ (Given 2006:56).

Benjamin stresses the need to ‘counter the petrification of the imagination by revolutionising our image worlds’ (Benjamin, 1992:89—90) through the role of images and the role of words. In *The Storyteller* he explains that a fragment of a story of a life can tell us so much more than 100 pages of information about a life:

The value of information does not survive the moment in which it was new. It lives only at that moment; it has to surrender to it completely and explain itself to it without losing any time. A story is different. It does not expend itself. It preserves and concentrates its strength and is capable of releasing it even after a long time.
(Benjamin, 1992:89—90)

O’Neill identifies in the work of Benjamin relevance for discussion and research on the transformative role of art. By combining sensory/sensuous experiences of storytelling with the sensory/sensuous immediacy of visual representations (a thinking in images), O’Neill conceives of ‘an overlapping space that is dialogic; it is also an intra psychic space’ (O’Neill, 2008:11). The methodological contribution of combining ethnography and art/mimesis relates to a ‘potential space’, a ‘dialogic space’, a ‘reflective space’ for dialogue, narratives and images to emerge around the themes of transnational identities, exile, home and belonging. This, O’Neill (2008) argues in turn, feeds into cultural politics that may help processes of social justice through politics of recognition.

Jones (2006) complements this by identifying traditional interviews could rather be the locus not for gathering information but for producing performance texts and performance ethnographies. Rather he sees that by ‘Collaborating across disciplines “finding co-producers for our presentations... pushing the limits of dissemination”... involving research participants in the production and dissemination of their own stories’ (Jones, 2006:74) is for Jones a way of overcoming practical obstacles of knowledge transfer. Jones maintains the central principles of these ‘relational aesthetics’ (Bourriard, 1998), are: ‘intersubjectivity, being-together, the encounter and the collective elaboration of meaning, based in models of sociability, meetings, events, collaborations, games, festivals and places of conviviality’ (Jones, 2006:74). In summary, Jones, (2006) provides me, through this notion of ‘relational aesthetics’, with the ‘how’ by which I may engage ‘in the lived experience of people’ (Marshall and Rossman, 2006:2). Such a participative style of engagement offered exploratory ways to work with the Congolese community, who represent to me worlds that are largely unknown or are, at best, unfamiliar territories, and in so doing, create ‘places of conviviality’ (Jones, 2006:74) in which we are embracing the sensory, emotional, and kinaesthetic aspects of lived experience (Jones, 2006). The richness of such an approach must offer the opportunity at least to enter ‘the household of humanity’ (Benjamin, 1992:89—90), whereby ‘story making’ together embraces the past, the present and the future to offer the community hope and the confidence to take charge and re-create their lives.

6.16 The problematic of ‘empowerment’

Central within Freire’s work was the notion of problematising power as a form of liberating education, of ‘empowerment’, of helping people ‘to read their reality and write their history as subjects of their own destiny not objects in society’ (Grail Centre, 2009:9). Earlier I describe the partnership that developed within the case study, built upon what I strived to develop, which was of their always being mutual trust and respect.

Through dialogic engagement we started to identify how we might engage critically to bring about change within the community. This provided opportunity to challenge the dominant ideology, especially in relation to the asylum process. In the literature review, I describe the multifaceted ways in which asylum seekers were marginalised, and thus lost any sense of who they were within the complex asylum process. This case study engages with community members, to move beyond constructing stories 'of' them, to taking action with them 'in' their lives, and thus to seek a collaborative partnership engaged in by all participants (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). The co-created space opened up multiple ways for being, questioning and acting – and for 'transformative possibilities' (O'Neill, 2010:108), such as community events, celebrations, and co-constructed stories, seeking to provide agency and thereby empower the community through 'loosening the knowledge/power axis involved in knowledge production and expertness' (*ibid.*).

In these ways the community could articulate past and present experiences that would not have been possible, or would have taken longer, without this intervention. This new found freedom became the foundation from which the community could illuminate their experiences in ways that were most natural. This freedom was necessary to give isolated individuals the confidence to debate across the community and to identify needs and plan for what would meet those needs. Most importantly, it illuminated the ethical role of the practitioner researcher by embracing the values of humility, modesty and self-abnegation that are fundamental when working with displaced and vulnerable people, building on the work of West (Merrill and West, 2009) Kirkwood (2012) and especially of Buber (1958) in recognising the fundamental power of establishing I/Thou relations. Such an approach provided the very opportunity for the community to find ways of directing itself towards taking action it believed was necessary, and as expressed within the community's own epistemological traditions of knowledge creation. It highlighted within this methodology the

need to move away from university epistemologies and canons of knowledge making, rather to embrace through dialogic engagement other forms of knowledge production created through the lived experience and power of subjugated knowledge.

6.17 How I benefitted personally

The narratives captured in the case study are an expression to some degree of my own subconscious desires. I quickly found that I had reason to respect this Congolese community, and in turn my own confidence and wellbeing increased. I had always strived to gain professional standing, having been working class and brought up on a council estate. I had been made redundant on two occasions over several years, part of my struggle to regain my former status and earnings. It was these factors that I believe placed me closer to this forced-migrant community. I wanted to help them as I seemed incapable of helping myself. I was drawn closer into their lives. I believed I was trusted, respected and thought needed by them; perhaps I served a useful purpose. It was important to me that we were equal, although I recognised the deeply problematical nature of this. Perhaps my lost gloss of ‘professionalism’ gave me humility, offering the possibility for other riches to emerge. I sensed we were on a journey together. It did not seem to matter that I was white, late middle-aged and male: the community showed me its love; titled me the ‘honorary Congolese’; and I was taken by them into another world.

It was humbling to know such a community. I needed to reflect on why I had felt so lost in my world. I was born to parents who it seemed were grateful to be alive following the Second World War. My father was a grocer and sportsman who organised the Ambleside Sports and judged at local hound trails. He had a farming background and loved every inch of the Lakeland fells. It seemed he knew all the Lakeland people – and the genealogy of all its hound dogs. My mother suffered from agoraphobia. She became increasingly reclusive as I reached my teenage years. I don’t think she ever came to terms with losing her lover in the

Second World War and of finding herself pregnant out of wedlock, having to deal with the associated stigma of the time. They went on to marry and were I believe incredibly happy. Mum had other issues, too, as a child through the loss of her father, killed in a quarry explosion, and of her mother who had also lost her father, drowned at sea. It always seemed to me that because of the entrapment my mother endured and similarly my grandmother, when she became a widow in reduced circumstances, that I had thrust upon me, by projective identification, a need to become successful.

Perhaps within this case study, the sense of purpose it provided made it possible for me to re-discover my place in the world. It gave me a new sense of identity. I accept these are my interpretations of these experiences, buffeted and built through the reactions of others involved throughout this research. This surely though is at the heart of what it is to be human (Levy and Orlans, 1998).

Chapter Seven: Stories about universities – tokenism and ideas of the ecological, civic university

Mbula ebangaka mokonzi te. Rain does not fear authority

7.1 Introduction

This chapter tells how the University of Derby set its strategic direction in 2008 of becoming community engaged. I describe my appointment as Community relations Officer at that time, and how this role was seen in its early stages as community outreach, a move towards being ‘community engaged’, perhaps more a desire to be seen to be doing the right thing, on the part of the University, and of building a sustained relationship on my part. The chapter describes how such an aspiration might be seen as tokenistic, in contrast with stories about other universities in their stated desire of becoming community engaged. The chapter promotes the notion of the ecological civic university, of ways of knowing and of doing, and celebrates what was achieved.

7.2 The need for the University of Derby to become ‘Community engaged’

The context of my employment, and what persuaded me to take the role of Community Relations Officer in 2008, was underpinned by the new strategic direction this University was taking. John Coyne, then the Vice Chancellor of the University of Derby, during an interview in 2008 stated that when considering the Strategic review of the University, ‘we asked ourselves the question: what kind of a university are we trying to be?’ (Porrelli, 2009:122). He identified that this discussion led to a reinvigoration of the university’s mission and in the strategic plan, and how we describe ourselves as ‘Regionally rooted and Community engaged’ (*ibid.*), and by community engaged he meant ‘wherever there are interests that are of importance to the communities within which we sit we should be part of the debates, we should be active participants (*ibid.*).

In the University Annual Review, 2009, in her opening remarks, Dianne Jeffrey, Chair of the Governing Council and Pro Chancellor of the University of Derby acknowledges that its future lies in doing three key things, in ‘being regionally rooted and community engaged; being employer focused; and providing education for application’ (University of Derby, 2009b). Dianne further acknowledges that by delivering on these three objectives the University will build on its strength as a regional institution by supporting the community from where so many of its staff and students reside (*ibid.*).

7.3 My role as Community Relations Officer

My focus from the start, therefore, was on working with the community as part of an emerging strategy for the University of Derby to become meaningfully ‘community engaged’ – offering this as a model that the University might adopt. From the start, I was allowed complete freedom as an independent actor, given a large amount of trust and required to report progress verbally on a weekly basis. The role utilised my practitioner skills. My professional career had been built on stepping out and developing new projects with the minimum of intervention, and so at the time, I simply got started. Through the course of the study I began to realise there was a lack of appropriate support and reporting structures for the project: I was not linked with an academic lead or a senior manager charged with implementing this strategy to become ‘community engaged’, and moreover found it difficult to establish purposeful links within the faculties. It became obvious that this was too much for one person acting on his own especially in a role situated within a marketing led, public relations function. I came to realise that I was finding my way, in isolation, even with reference to an ethical framework (at the time it merely required the head of doctoral studies – my supervisor – to approve the ethical framing of the work). Without deeper and sustained commitment by the University, I realised my position could only fail at some point.

Moreover, for whatever reason, the Centre for Community Development and Regeneration had its foundation degree withdrawn in 2012, and the director himself resigned his position in that year. This degree provided access to the University by community development practitioners, who had substantial experience. It acted as an opportunity to bridge such experience with academic tools of analysis and thereby helped these practitioners improve their praxis. For the minority ethnic community members relevant in this study especially, this was an attractive resource through which to engage with a university in higher education. Some community members progressed on to take higher degrees in social science, or to become professionally qualified. Some studied at master's level in International Studies for which they were eminently suited, because of their experience abroad and knowledge, often speaking several languages. The withdrawal of the Foundation degree inevitably sent out messages to marginalised communities as well as to the third sector that the University's values were changing. For some, all that had happened was interpreted as a politically motivated essentially public relations exercise by those at the top of the organisation, to be seen to be doing the 'right thing' rather than investing seriously in a community-development programme over a sustained period.

For some in the University, this disadvantaged my work because it could so obviously be seen to be a form of expedience in which one form of activity could be substituted for another, more economically advantageous route to reaching out to the communities, and one that garnered publicity locally, nationally and internationally. From my own position, nothing could have been further from the truth. Such provision provided the University with roots deeply located within the local communities. Roots that the Foundation degree programme, rather than being cut off, might have prospered from the imagination identified within the notion of an ecological, civic university developed in this chapter. The success of this case study, conversely won internal, local and national recognition. This is celebrated later in the

chapter, but the point here is that such success breathed the very life and hope into the work that kept it alive.

A change of management established a new strategic direction. Between 2013 and 2014 the University chose ‘to significantly refocus this area of work to a much broader stakeholder engagement remit’ (University of Derby, 2014:6). In effect this meant pursuing a market-driven approach by reducing the community relations focus to a light touch, and of ‘fostering a different type of relationship which is much more about an influencing agenda’ (*ibid.*). A completely different set of skills were identified to support this new role, for which it had been decided I did not have a match. Within these five years, the University of Derby had revised its corporate plan.

The structures I had been carefully creating since 2008 to develop good relations with many ethnic communities in and across Derby were systematically dismantled by the University. I was, for example required to withdraw my support from the West Indian Community, supporting the annual West Indian Carnival, and resign as an independent board member of EMCCAN, an Arts Council sponsored regional body supporting carnivals nationally. While as Community Relations Officer my remit had been to ‘work with deprived community groups – identifying those with needs and embedding himself in those communities to aid their development’ (University of Derby, 2014), in the light of the new Corporate Plan, there became:

a need to significantly reduce this area of work to a much broader stakeholder engagement remit... in essence, we are now talking about a different target audience – one which is much more broader than was previously the case – and fostering a different type of relationship which is much more about an influencing agenda. (*ibid.*)

This turnabout required a new role that profoundly compromised what I had been doing and the credibility of my relationships with the communities. In the new plan I was required to

provide a marketing focus to support ‘stakeholder communications’ (*ibid.*) essentially with the large manufacturing organisations in the region, while continuing in effect, to offer a ‘placatory’ level of support to smaller community projects ‘in a much less in-depth but more broad-brush way than the development approach that is at the heart of the current Community Relations Officer role’ (*ibid.*). This, together with the gradual demise of what I stood for, increased in pressure upon me over the last two years of my employment at the University. Gradually throughout this time I found it harder and harder to represent a university that had changed direction. There was hurt associated with this and I had a stress reaction and needed to take extended periods off work. I felt undermined that my academic work was not considered, as yet, of sufficient doctoral quality. This contributed to my thinking about myself as something of an exile: bringing echoes of the situation, if far more low key, of the community I worked with. At roughly the same time Albertine Paka de Phoba, the Congolese member of the community on a University internship of five years standing, and with whom I had worked throughout this case study, left. I accepted voluntary redundancy on 1 June, 2014 leaving the University immediately. Within a month access to my emails and computer folders were withheld.

7.4 A neglected sense of civic responsibility

In the literature review, I outlined a debate that has been going on for some time, about what a university is, for instance as interrogated by Ronald Barnett in his writing or David Watson. The debate seems evergreen, and recently David Watson, in visiting Canterbury Christ Church University (Watson, 2014) during a public lecture highlighted that he had visited the web sites of a fair number of British Universities. He said that it was interesting in that context that the prominence given to the international dimensions of their work and the rhetoric of world-classness seemed to be most prevalent, and what seemed to be neglected

was any sense of civic and local responsibilities, and this may be for all sorts of possible reasons, but it must give reason for pause for thought.

In the context of the University of Derby certain things happened. The first thing was a kind of commitment to a civic responsibility, and to the processes of community development and yet these, it might be argued were tokenistic. If we examine the University of Brighton, there was a much more serious and prolonged attempt to engage with the substantial civic, moral and ethical issues mirrored in Derby. This was driven by a serious strategic commitment of over ten years up to 2013, and a renewed steadfast commitment over the next ten years, to provide a new focus to community-university partnership working; a programme underpinned by organisational leadership from the top.

In contrast with the University of Brighton, the tokenism of University of Derby is most poignantly expressed by it being made the province of one isolated individual, me. I was placed within a Corporate Relations team within a Marketing function, without an infrastructure of support that could draw on the wider resources of the University. There was no formal access or reporting within the faculties, nor any academic partnering. Creating linkages of a substantive value could not be developed. Again this contrasted with what happened at the University of Brighton, where in organisational terms, community engagement projects and initiatives were approved and granted support by the lead academic reporting to the Vice-Chancellor. Furthermore, the tokenism in one sense in this interpretation becomes worse. This is not simply to do with the fact that redundancy and the hurt that this brought me but it can be chronicled in the way in which the university's own narrative to the external world changes. I argue that such changes are 'read' only too clearly by local communities, seen as sweeping such communities aside in the pursuit of new and more attractively fertile grounds for growth and prosperity. The new challenge is driven more by student numbers and 'bottom line' goals. So rather than a broadening of the imagination in

relation to civic responsibility of the university, we can argue that there is a narrowing of the imagination for a range of reasons. This thesis is about a fundamental challenge: the integration of civic responsibility into the core purpose of the university.

7.5 A story of hope in building community relations

I do not conceive that putting in place a process of community-university partnership programme is an easy journey. The University of Brighton in developing a community-university partnership programme over the last ten years identifies a lengthy learning period for the university and for its partners. Throughout this period the University of Brighton has developed greater clarity about how to implement such programmes, acknowledging the benefits are there to be had. Critical in developing this relationship, is the need to build collaborative partnerships through valuing the knowledge community's bring, alongside and equal to the knowledge of academics. Such an obligation requires profound thought not least of which how such an aspiration might impact across the institution, how it might evolve over time, and benefit the university over the longer term. This is so well described by the University of Brighton (Millican and Bourner, 2014), namely, that while community engagement is increasingly being recognised as relevant, the strategic direction, organisational and operation structures underpinning its execution need to be given considerable thought, as well as the integration of such aspiration into the operational aspects of faculty life across the university.

7.6 Opportunity for the modern university to build on notions of service

Swept along by large global forces, Barnett (2014) argues that higher education has been hollowed out by the stronger forces of marketization as an instrument of global cognitive capitalism and internet communication, and might by many be perceived as 'rudderless' in striking its own direction. Others identify positively that social and public goods flow from higher education as described in the literature review, such as wisdom, of socialist

knowledge, of the theoretical university, and of the idea of a world university within which the student is a global citizen.

Perhaps most significantly in these more optimistic notions that create community-university linkages are the thoughts by Marginson (2007), that knowledge does not lose its value in its free circulation or in being held by increasing numbers of people, arguing that in contradistinction to goods in the market place, knowledge is a 'non-rivalrous' good. The sharing and growth of knowledge valuable to communities is therefore a fundamental and lasting benefit. A university strikes at the heart of the brokering of different epistemologies; it stands uniquely as a global institution equipped to create new knowledge.

Thus, despite these swirling global currents and pressures, in which universities are caught up, there is opportunity to step aside from the neo-liberalism and cognitive capitalism that drives them to envisage other possibilities. In addition to universities striving to become entrepreneurial, corporate, digital or virtual, it is also possible for universities to build on the notion that more public conceptions of high education are being opened up in ways that widen education to embrace general education, wisdom, citizenship, 'lifewide' learning, citizenship and service. These values and identities for higher education are being 'heard and promoted and are being realised' (Watson *et al*, 2014:19). Within this view, Barnett gains confidence in promoting the idea of the 'ecological university' (Barnett, 2014), in which a university 'was not just aware of the many ecologies in which it has its being... and was intent on enhancing their wellbeing' Barnett, 2014:19).

7.7 Preserving ecologies of knowledge

The contribution this thesis makes to the debate grows out of an increasing awareness that through the lens of an ecological university, representation and preservation of different modes of knowledge has its place both on the local and global stage. The thinking developed

by Barnett includes how students might themselves be encouraged in their own 'lifewide' learning as a global citizen. Such an emergent concept is practical and relevant in the world of today, especially in supporting students to become themselves, as part of Heidegger's notion of 'being possible' (Heidegger, 1998:183-185). Within this thinking, the precondition I conceive is that unless a university is prepared to engage with other modes of knowing, including co-created knowledge involving the embracing of subjugated knowledge, how will it be possible to capitalise on the collective integration of such knowledge let alone engage support, assess and guide students on their quest? Uncovering subjugated knowledge especially in the light of dominant discourses provides opportunities for an enriched agenda for university-community partnership and engagement.

7.8 The benefit of embracing cognitive alignment

New insights into the much discussed notions of corporate social responsibility might also open up these links in more profound ways. Rather than create illusions through traditional corporate social responsibility approaches that contrive community relationships and outward credibility, cognitive alignment provides a deeper lens through which to explore relations. Explored in the literature review, the discovery that the cognitive alignment of an organisation with its stakeholders, including the communities it serves, leads also to increased understanding, to new approaches and benefits that could not have been envisaged through more placatory, traditional approaches. Evidence supports cognitive alignment in providing benefits for the organisation and staff. These factors contribute to what might be thought of as an investment in the knowledge ecology, which embraces subjugated knowledge carved out of the lives of different community experiences and harnessed for joint action within and between the university and disparate communities.

7.9 Participating within the complex demographic of Derby city

The complex demographic of Derby within which the University of Derby is situated, illustrates the rich opportunity for a university to embrace these ‘other’ epistemologies. I described in the literature review that in a city such as Derby, there is a need to stem the rise in racism and xenophobia during these neoliberal times. These are times in which society is increasingly becoming fractured and where the emphasis is on the survival of the fittest and most affluent. Within this context, the opportunity arises for greater humility in seeking ways of working together, to use the sociological imagination to embrace other ways of knowing, of incorporating ‘unconventional wisdom’ (Boyce-Tilmann, 2007). It provides through debate more representative ways of thinking. Ways that can be adopted by the wider population of the city. This is experiencing the lived reality by accepting that other epistemologies should be embraced with equal seriousness as those contrived within academia, to foster and grow the subjugated voices for greater collective richness, requisite variety, and ultimately for more representative participation and even representation within the demography of the university itself through its academic staff. The university offers a unique space within which public debate might regain the lost ground communities are experiencing. This might be summarised on the one hand as that of communities being given the power to manage their own affairs through concepts such as the Big Society, and yet on the other, of being deprived of funds in these neoliberal times of austerity. In this context, what is also lacking is the ability of communities to debate what matters within local lives.

Thinking about the university as a ‘knowledge ecology’, a resource that embraces many different kinds of knowledge and the skills, provides fertile ground, an example of which is the subjugated voices illuminated throughout this case study. The reservation here is that within the context of this case study, the approach has to be dialogical, rather than colonialist or imperialist. Striving to engage successfully with the other in this way, can make a

difference to all our lives offering a new kind of wisdom that builds cognitive alignment for the university staff, for the university itself, and embraces communities in genuinely purposeful ways. June Boyce-Tillman (2007) identifies very successfully that such integrated thinking addresses imbalances brought about by the failure of the Enlightenment project, and by the global dominance of the Eurocentric world view. The building of a 'knowledge ecology' might provide restorative support for a balance that recaptures a world in which all might have a say and all play a part.

Methodologically, ways of doing, that once we accept the position of the developer/researcher being central to a project, it is possible that we exaggerate our own role; it is possible that we too bring in to the situation, colonialist assumptions, or imperialist assumptions about how important we are compared to others. It is possible. Equally it is possible, because we are struggling; we are on our own that there was a tokenism in the university towards this, that maybe we are not actually seeing. Further, located within a marketing function of a university, prevents appropriate opportunity to connect with and have access to appropriate resources. Furthermore, as has been said, this also prevents the role supporting a university's aspirations strategically and locally within the faculties. In this position, I was isolated from academics, and it became difficult for me to evaluate the work, and anticipate in what ways I might support such aspirations.

7.10 Celebrating what was achieved

Despite the disadvantages of my position within the University of Derby, many good things did happen during this case study. This then might be the right moment to celebrate what was achieved. A moment to illuminate what might be obtained through engagement with a community trapped and abjectified within the asylum process: of their plight; their pain and humiliation. Of the disgust projected upon them by the wider community in the city and the national press. Remembering always that some people in the community were sleeping

rough, had been imprisoned, and some asylum seekers had been returned home. Asylum seekers cannot support themselves through work but exist on benefits. Failed asylum seekers have no recourse to any support – which in everyday language means they cannot access medical services, housing support or social services. These people are destitute. The achievements of this project then, shine through such misery: perhaps only as flashes of light in an otherwise dark ground; moments that helped to build a narrative of hope, within which there was a foundation of love. Things came alive during the case study in ways that they might not have done without such intervention. The programme itself is testimony to a burgeoning of activity that could not have been achieved by a single university employee. It rather signifies the collusion of a community in bringing this about. From such small beginnings, the case study can be seen to have blossomed to deliver over 35 different kinds of events between 2008 and 2012.

The philosophy of building dialogical relationships described earlier made it possible to engage in some measure as equals and thus support and bring to the fore the Africanist ethnography. This ethnography prefers narrative cognition to offer natural ways in which the community could promote its own voice. Through this narrativity, the community made meaning, named their world and took appropriate action. The running of a series of workshops fulfilled these Africanist traditions whereby the process became the focus of the community engagement rather than as is so much the case in western society the product. As Cheikh Hamdou Kane points out ‘they [the West] are so fascinated by the returns they get from the implement that they have lost sight of the infinite immensity of the workyard’ (Kane, 1963: 76). Kane renounces one for the other in his search for truth. This way of thinking opened up the benefits such a process-centred approach brought. The creation of this community space – both physical and temporal made many things possible. These included the drawing together of therapy and art that led to expressions of personal and collective

identity: sewing classes, fashion shows, celebration events, community member interviews, the running of a drop-in centre to address 40 of the community's needs. Annual reviews with community members, a focus group day (Plan for the Future), questionnaires and discussions seeking close relations and agreements on the developing nature of the case study through the action research approach. It was the community leaders who led these meetings and supported individuals in bringing their own views forward, as well as translating to help individuals overcome language difficulties. I became aware that even though I was a white, middle class male, I had important links not only through the University but also wider society. My status conferred benefits for the community and provided credibility for their work, as well as resources that might not otherwise have easily been obtained, such as through winning funding applications. This support developed by working closely with community members often on a daily basis, especially in relation to advocacy in the asylum process, in which I was experienced. I became known within the community as the 'White Congolese' (Regnier, 2010:2). Students from the University of Derby joined in on many of the projects within the case study: an art therapist, dance psychotherapists, graphic designers, film makers and photographers, and fashion designers. The wider ethnic communities gave committed support, especially the West Indian Association in Derby. Local authority provision included Derby Libraries, Derby Homes, Public Health organisations and like-minded organisations such as the British Red Cross, the British Refugee Council and Refugee Action. This way of working created an opportunity to form a representative body for minority community groups across the city, broadening out to embrace other 'knowledge ecologies' such as wildlife and the environment, subjects close to wider community interests.

Aspects of Black Feminist Thought can be evidenced throughout the case study. The community became excited by the notion of the project right from the start. Members immersed themselves in the dialogic nature of the engagement through the Steering Group

meetings but also within the Voice of Congolese Women. The oratory of the Africanist tradition made meaning forged within the crucible of their real lives: the texts are musical, visual, oral and physical as well as written (Torkington, 1996). These new realities became the knowledge that was conferred upon the process that evolved. These roots manifested themselves in the actions taken through debates in the newly setup VOCW and CCA community groups, and especially in the extensive series of workshops run by VOCW. The actions represented a reality that the community was making, and resulted in wide ranging narrative: fashion shows, exhibitions, celebrations, appearances on television and on radio. Members of the community supported analysis of the interviews and in the making of an animation, and in helping capture their migration journey in 'Hearts of Hope'. Some members wished to dramatise these stories through their young people using music and dance. There are three YouTube videos that capture aspects of this case study: the first was made by the University of Derby – 'Video on isolated women' (Voice of Congolese Women, 2009a), and two others were commissioned by the British Refugee Council in 2011. These are available on their web site. The first film showcases the 'Exchange of Cultures' presented by Voice of Congolese Women as part of the Ashbourne Festival in Derbyshire (British Refugee Council, 2011a). The second film captures the perspective of The African Institute for Social Development (AISD) on its collaboration with Voice of Congolese Women (British Refugee Council, 2011b).

Recognition of the work was provided by Bernard Kambala, a founding member of the Congolese Community Association. Following the Congolese Exhibition and Awards Ceremony in November, 2009 Bernard wished to congratulate the project 'on the way the work had been done – the video is a summary of everything on the project – our community, the West Indian community and local society; the work has helped break down barriers with communities'. Bernard acknowledged that in being shortlisted for a Times Higher Education

(THE) award, this was a significant piece of work, in which the community had been significantly involved. He concluded that the project had been a ‘Significant project and worthwhile’ (*ibid.*: Field Note 305).

The work was presented internationally through a presentation at the African Regional Conference (Universite Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, 2011) at which community-university partnerships were agreed to benefit us all: universities, students and the communities (Walker, 2011(b)). The work won internal acclaim through the University of Derby Excellence Award in 2011 and was both runner up in 2009 and winner of the THE Awards, 2011 for Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community. This external evaluation gave reassurance in the value of the work. Shearer West, head of humanities division at the University of Oxford, and one of the awarding judges, said ‘This represents an outstanding example of knowledge exchange that has strengthened community links with the University of Derby’ (THE Awards, 2011).

Chapter Eight: Back to the future

Mokili esalama po totambola na yango, kasi to tiya na moto te. The world has been made to walk on and not to be carried on your head

Introduction

This thesis, as it developed into an auto/biographical narrative reflexive research case study, intertwines the narratives of the migrants with the researcher's own, around themes of dislocation, and in the struggles for voice and agency. This thesis has coalesced out of an immense struggle representing my own desire to re-establish my own identity expressed through a need to work with others who were marginalised by society, as I felt I had been but in a more superficial way. Their plight at this point in time was desperate, humiliating and prolonged. Their experience is part of the local enactment of a play erupting on the world stage today as forced-migrants strive to reach the West. In a very real sense the thesis captures the personal experiences of a forced-migrant community in Derby, one that is emblematic of an immense and growing global struggle of dislocated individuals escaping their homelands to find sanctuary and enjoy better lives.

The need to make a difference became important

The case study became a place where in retrospect I perhaps unwittingly believed I could make a difference to the lives of those abnegated by society, at a time when I could not recover my own. This struggle became entwined within a university, when I was appointed Community Relations Officer at the University of Derby in 2008. At this time the University declared its commitment to become community engaged and regionally rooted in the communities it served. The location of this work as an auto/biographic narrative case study challenged me to interrogate my own presence within the research frame in ways my ontology and epistemology as a photographic scientist denied. In doing this I recognised I

was in some ways expressing my own narrative and struggles within the research and so, in a very real way, I too was seeking redemptive outcomes for myself. Within such a framing, I needed to acknowledge the complexity of such relations, and identified that I simply could not understand everything, especially as a lone researcher. Although I had espoused an epistemology of humility, I needed to identify my own motivations, and embrace honesty in my writing around the whole project, however painful that might be, as part of being reflexive. I was, within this research frame, part of this swirling milieu of emotions and activities; I recognised that my former positivist lens had little to assist me in this research, which was effectively narrowing my imagination.

In wishing to understand more, I acknowledge parts in the writing that are not as nuanced as I should have wished. For example the use of the words Community and University and how they are described in the thesis are not as rich in their descriptions as I should have liked them to be, and might thus create the impression of an oversimplified, binary relationship that existed between the community being studied and the University. In ‘community’ we gain glimpses of how the community is stratified, the living distinctions between members, with the dynamics of gender, status and maternal language appearing; and of some of the men who exclude themselves and are in opposition to aspects of what is being done and who controls the money. Parts of the ‘University’ are seen to engage, but the Centre is not really seeing, probably because they have their minds on survival or where money can be made.

The possibility of re-creation in people’s lives

The basic threads of the study are of a dislocating experience, and how resources of hope can be found in creative activity – whether a sewing class, telling stories, in a fashion show, or by engaging in auto/biographical narrative reflexivity. Central within this possibility is the provision of space. Initially a physical space had to be found for the forced-migrants with whom I worked: a place where they could meet regularly and call their own. Then to engage

dialogically based upon an epistemology of humility. Illustrated within the metaphor of the Tobungi tree developed within the thesis, illustrated below in Figure 2, is the deep-seated recognition of the need to embrace different epistemologies, acknowledging the dominant Eurocentric epistemology while embracing a subjugated, African epistemology, to create a dynamic space.

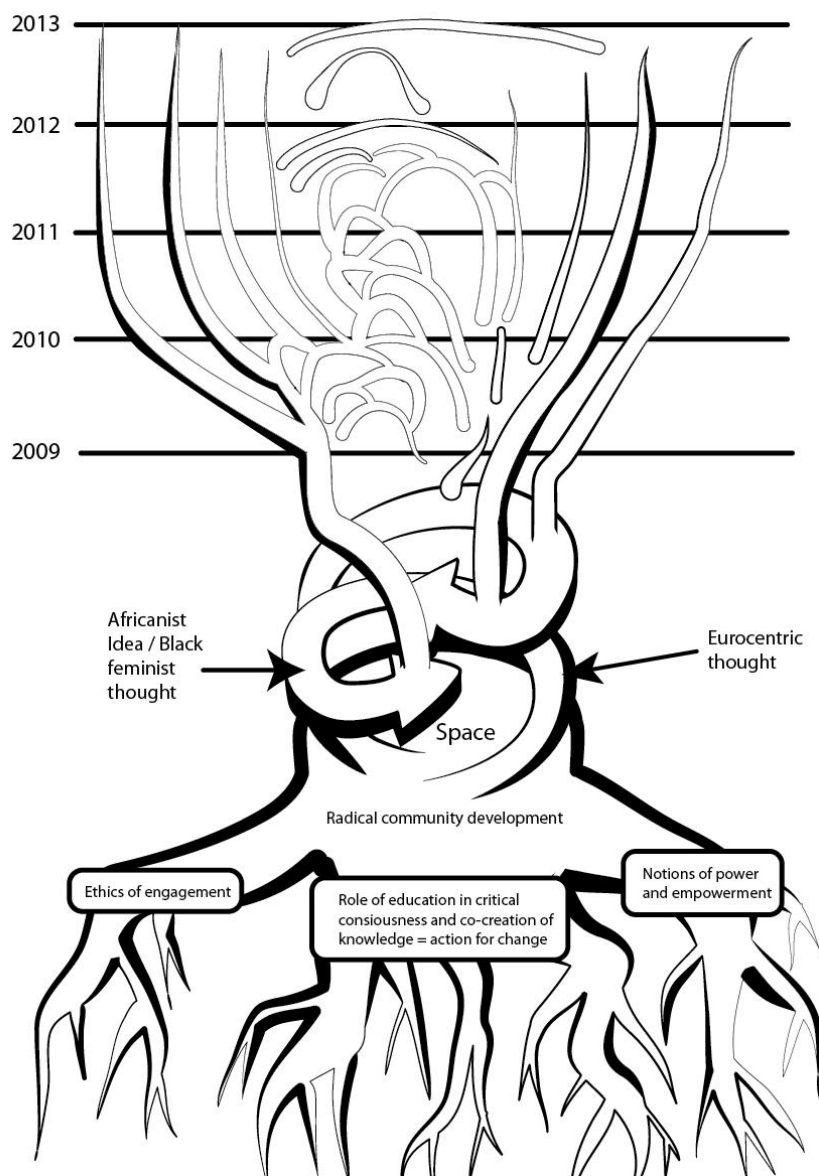


Figure 2: The spirit of the 'Tobungi tree'

Within this figure, building on the detail provided in Appendix B, the branches of the Tobungi tree captures the broad outcomes described in the thesis of the case study – identity and action; critical consciousness through education and engagement; and networking, health and wellbeing. Identity and action developed out of basic education (literacy, numeracy and ICT) and other educational opportunities (gaining NVQs), in helping run a community organisation, in winning funding and managing funded projects, and in promoting the organisation through running public celebrations, by talking on radio, writing in the press, and appearing on regional television. Critical consciousness arose through the process of enquiry into the nature of real life problems facing the community, and being supported in taking action. Networking, health and wellbeing developed through meeting people from other ethnic community organisations, in attending workshops on health and wellbeing and the networking this brought with public health related organisations, as well as in volunteering and training in ‘preparation for work’.

Such a fusion of these types of knowledge made it conceivable for transitional and then transactional spaces to occur for the Congolese community. This was driven most of all by narrative – telling, sharing stories, and of being really listened to non-judgementally. With the use of craft and sewing, activities central within Congolese traditional culture, provided for a space for imagining and for the re-creation of new narratives of lives caught up in a moment of time. From this flowed the possibilities to take action. In effect, the case study grew in ways the community imagined, drawing upon African oral traditions. Those leading the work from within the Congolese community took charge to encourage other members to engage in a process of finding new meaning, in effect actions of re-creation. Critical moments of such re-creation are identified and theorised within the case study – of always understanding the vulnerable circumstances within which these asylum seekers live, and in striving to maintain

a constant ethical awareness, taking care to avoid harm to any person in the case study, and acknowledging a need to grow the project together. Through such activities the Chair of VOCW wrote ‘We came together as a community. We made clothes. We made friends. We laughed together. We cried together. We planned for the future. Toujours Ensemble’ (Voice of Congolese Women, 2010). And in acknowledging also critical moments within the case study of resistance and failure – for example in the setting up of a community organisation, the Congolese Community Organisation. Rather than criminalising asylum seekers, this thesis presents the case for embracing the other: of the need to embrace the subjugated voice from which unconventional wisdom might bring new understanding. Through this auto/biographic narrative enquiry, it become evident that only by experiencing the other might we more fully understand ourselves. Through auto/biographical narrative research, the intertwining narratives of researcher and researched offers greater transparency, the opportunity for increased integrity and authority in imagining truth claims we make.

Moving to a global scale, and especially in relation to issues of forced-migration, I come back to points I made earlier in citing Bettelheim (1986), in his identifying the need to be caring of the other, and for a greater ‘humanization’ in human relations – of the vital need ‘to truly love’ for, in referring to the Holocaust, ‘if we do, we shall have dispersed the shadows which events of the recent past have shed over our lives’ (*ibid.*:xiv). Having an ‘informed heart’, Bettelheim calls for, through the auto/biographic imagination, an investigation of ourselves, raising the opportunity to ask questions through which the world might seek hope. The thesis highlights the need to embrace the other if new knowledge is to be created, and indeed if we are to better understand ourselves. Such findings inform how global issues might benefit through a greater caring for the other, in understanding our own deeper motivations, and how these might increase the possibility of hope, if only as part of a longer revolution.

Fragments of hope

This case study, although small, represents fragments of new hope within broader society. On-going cuts in council services and spending, all within the individualised spirit of neo-liberalism, has progressively reduced the means whereby British society might come together and engage in dialogue. Recognising within the personal, local story of a community there is also the possibility to address larger political debates, to raise our voice on these. One location for engaging in such debate has traditionally been the university – and other institutions it must be said, including councils, workers' education generally and their traditional links with universities, schools, churches, synagogues and mosques – in building such horizontal forms of dialogue. The inability to explore and learn through such debate, and to work with the other in our society, means that the potential for democratic decision-making is markedly reduced. The university in recognising its civic duty might recover some of this loss. A basic argument arises throughout this thesis to do with tokenism and the disrespect that can surround university civic engagement as well as how asylum seekers are treated callously more generally: but also how resources of hope I express can make a difference. There is also the troubling issue of voice in research and whose story really counts: of a white middle-class male engaging with distressed women migrants, and of what might have been a silencing of women concerned. But through values of commitment, and of learning to listen, the project became more dialogical, as evidenced in the women's (and men's) stories.

In requesting that universities 'pause for thought', David Watson (2014) finds neglected any sense of civic responsibility, admitting there might be all sorts of reasons for this such as world-classness. Ronald Barnett (2014) in his writing appeals for 'time out' for higher education, to consider 'other futures' than those circumscribed by cognitive capitalism. Whereas Juliet Millican (Millican and Bourner, 2014) skilfully describes the challenges,

structures and expectations required to build community-university partnering, concluding there are lessons always to be learned in this continuing journey and worthwhile benefits for all parties: the communities, the university and its students. This thesis evidences how the University of Derby rather chose to serve as a business university, looking to gain placatory benefit through its community engagement.

Building a knowledge ecology

The thesis argues that through engaging in ways that embrace a philosophy of humility, a university might construct new types of knowledge, and thereby embrace more fully the role of building knowledge ecologies. From the perspective of an ecological university – by which I mean the intention of a university to enhance those ecologies within which it operates – this also offers the scope to ‘enhance their wellbeing’ (Barnett, 2014:19). Research on cognitive alignment as a means of deeper engagement with the communities promotes the thinking about future possibilities for the university, unbounded by cognitive capitalism, returning the university to become once again grounded in its roots of knowledge creation and preservation, and of being community-engaged. Prosperity within community-university relations might be thought of as being at the visceral core of university life, especially in developing the concept of a knowledge ecology; of being linked with other community driven interests, such as wildlife and the environment, and of opening up other possibilities.

Building on the assumption Derby city has no infrastructural organisation supporting refugees, my recommendation is for the University of Derby to set up in partnership with other public bodies, for example, Derby City Council, such an organisation. This small step might put in place a process of dialogical support within an ethic of caring and human growth. In effect a place of sanctuary; one in which hope might be re-created from dislocated lives. This might be imagined as a step towards working to identify other issues that need to

be addressed across the wider communities – both local and international – that a university serves.

Dissemination

Auto/biographic narrative research methods can yield information not available through other means. Auto/biographic narrative research challenges the researcher to uncover credible truths about the work undertaken, supported by its call for a broadening of the imagination instrumental within its thinking. This thesis therefore provides opportunity for dissemination in this field of endeavour, through community development organisations, national and international bodies such as the British Refugee Council and the British Red Cross. It places reflexivity at the heart of the process, and brings the researcher into the research frame. This offers richer more authentic possibilities by getting to the heart of the questions being asked within society. This supports the creation of more honest and valuable partnerships in which hope, fraternity and an increased sense of community can be achieved.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A: Consultation feedback

Copy of content of letter sent to each of the participants of the consultation,
December 2008:

Dear colleague,

I am writing to thank you for the personal support you have given me – both now and in the past. It is very much appreciated.

The following summarises the progress made as we approach the end of this year, forming a letter I have sent to the communities to get them up-to-date with the work. 'This consultation comprised discussions with the following ethnic minority community leaders: Bosnian & Herzegovinian, Congolese, E-MAC, Indian, Pakistani, Persian Cultural Association, Polish, and West Indian, as well as the work being done at the St James Centre. Other organisations that have contributed to the consultation included DMN, CVS, Spirita, Derby City Council, and members of other community organisations, such as the Chinese and Afghani communities. Relationships are being established with other organisations such as the Derby City PCT, DCP, Government Office of the East Midlands (GOEM), and the Derby Learning and Development Consortium. Other organisations will naturally be included as the work grows.

Key points that emerged were:

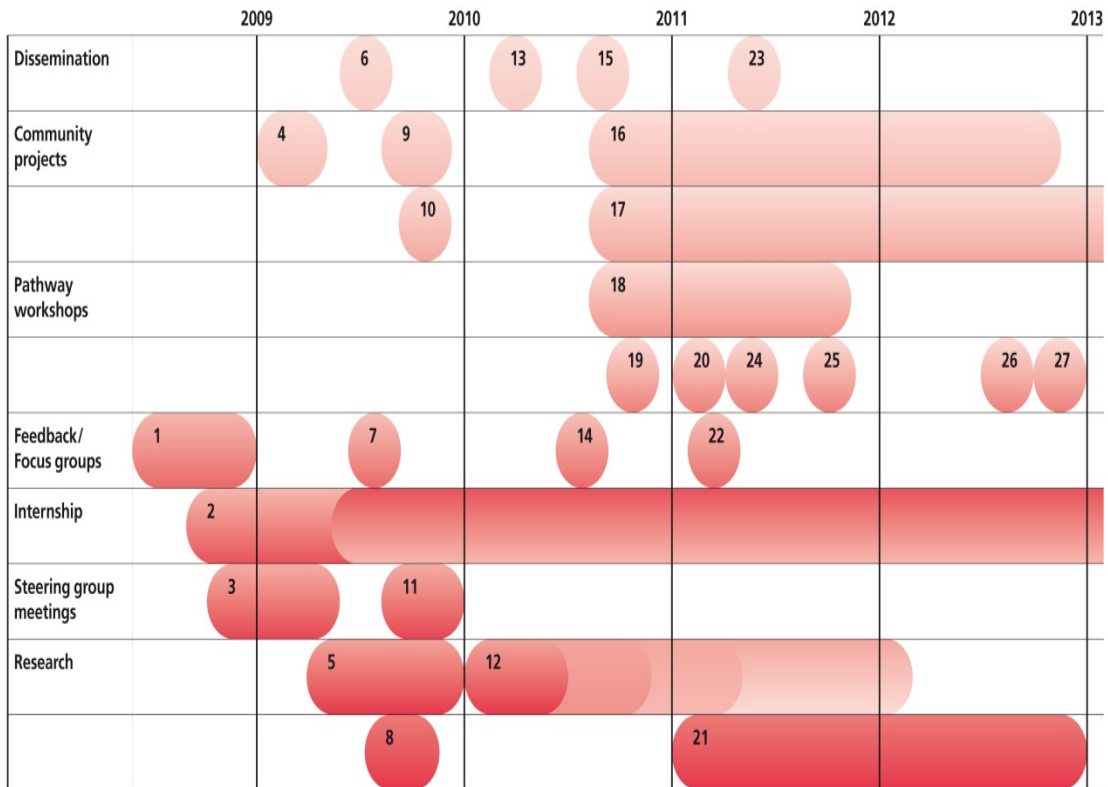
- genuine interest and support for the project;*
- healthy scepticism around creating lasting value for the community;*
- commitment to become involved, and help make a success of it;*
- support for the project starting with the Congolese Community;*
- an expressed commitment by the Congolese community to 'get involved', with two meetings having taken place before Christmas;*
- enthusiasm for creating a Steering Committee managed by the community, as a 'voice' for the communities involved;*
- keenness to see the university succeed in Derby and with this project;*
- proposal that the work starts through a pilot project with one community;*
- recognition of the need to carry out background research, and review;*
- realisation that the opportunity should be taken to share the work with other communities, and offer it up to them*

Thank you for your support. The project is progressing, and I look forward to working closely together next year to achieve something of lasting value for all concerned. I send you my very best wishes for Christmas and success in all your endeavours in the New Year

Yours sincerely

*Peter Walker
Community Relations Office
University of Derby*

Appendix B: Summary of key case study events



Media/Culture
art, craft, images
and stories



- 1 Consultation with communities to define programme of work
- 2 Internship, member of community
- 3 Steering Group meetings. Formation of Congolese Community Association
- 4 Sewing Project and Fashion show
- 5 One-to-one research
- 6 Shortlisted for Times Higher Award for Outstanding Work in the Community
- 7 Plan for the Future meeting
- 8 Video – Isolated Women
- 9 Sewing project and Congolese Exhibition and Awards Ceremony, 2009
- 10 Children's party
- 11 Preparation for New Hope project
- 12 New Hope drop-in centre
- 13 Case study on volunteering for Volunteering England
- 14 Community review
- 15 Winner: Times Higher Education Award – Outstanding contribution to the local community
- 16 Craft Action project
- 17 Community Space Derby
- 18 Pathway workshops
- 19 Children's party
- 20 Voice of Congolese Women present at Buxton Food and Drink festival, 2011
- 21 Writing up activities/auto/biographic research
- 22 Community review
- 23 Dissemination, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Sénégal, Africa
- 24 Voice of Congolese Women present at Ashbourne Arts Festival, 2011
- 25 Community Awards Evening, 2011
- 26 Presentation at Ladies Evening, Ashbourne Men's Forum, 2012
- 27 Our journeys: Young People's Fashion Show, 2012

This work was co-funded by Derbyshire Community Foundation through their Grassroots grant, Derwent Living, Derbyshire Learning & Development Consortium, Faiths in Action, administered by Community Development Foundation, CUPP International Conference Award 2009 and University of Derby Excellence Award 2010

Appendix C: Background and Steering Group Minutes

1 Description

2 Minutes of Third meeting with Congolese Community

3 Minutes of Seventh meeting with Congolese Community

1 Description

Examples of the minutes referred to in the thesis (some names have been removed):

Minutes of Third Meeting with Congolese Community, 12 January 2009

Minutes of Seventh Meeting with Congolese Community, 4 March 2009

Community meetings were held between November 2008 until March 2009, with occasional meetings taking place then until December 2009 to prepare and re-write a funding application. Examples of the minutes of the Third and Seventh Steering Group meetings are given as examples. Not all the meetings were minted as some took the direction of exploratory meetings to gain a deeper understanding, and for the community to discuss matters in their own African languages, or in French, and to explore some of the topics (such as the proposed attendance at the Congolese church).

2 Minutes of Third meeting with Congolese Community

Monday 12 January 2009 at Rosehill Lodge

Seven present; five gave their apologies

Discussion was based upon the minutes from the previous meeting.

1 Reaching the community through a community database

Aim: build a database listing all the Congolese people living in Derby.

Action 1: Progress is being made with attendance at church; further discussion required, and we hope the Pastor of the Church will be able to attend the next meeting. At this point in the discussion it seemed so important to invite the Pastor of the local Church. Peter asked to draft a letter outlining the purpose of this work for the Pastor, and for the community to invite the Pastor to the next meeting.

Action 2: Wider discussions with other leaders are taking place to seek support and to build the community database.

Action 3: Other community leaders have committed to provide their data.

Action 4: Peter Walker is looking into how this may be web enabled.

Action 5: Database administrator. A community member volunteered to take this role. Peter to provide training at an appropriate time, and start on the database.

2 Describing the community, its aspirations and its contribution to Derby

Peter put forward the idea that instead of trying to write a document or catalogue events to describe 'the community' that we consider using digital storytelling. This was received positively as a creative way forward.

Peter to follow up and report back on how support can be provided: this will also pick up the Action of bringing a personal item(s) that matter them, and can be used in the story telling process.

We agreed how to describe the Congolese community: History of the country where it its size etc; Why Congolese people have come to the UK; Language; Religions; Culture, Music and fashion. Personal profiles from people from the community, various ages speaking about

what being Congolese means to them.

From the meeting we agreed that we need to be

“Be confident about your culture and what you believe in, send out strong messages about who you are and your culture don’t be afraid to say who you are”

3 One-to-one research

Unfortunately the meeting arranged on Monday 19 January to share the approach of the research could not go ahead. The time was therefore given to supporting the preparation of promotional material for the sewing event.

Action 6: One-to-one research. Peter Walker to brief and start to interview members of this steering group and gather other names for one-to-one research, as a test to confirm the approach. At present 15 interviews have been proposed but this is subject to change. All agreed that a pre-meeting will be necessary to inform and prepare candidates for the research, which essentially should be semi-structured and relaxed.

4 Agreeing on a way of working together

4.1 Project aim: freeing up the community. The meeting agreed it should first identify a broad community aim, so that the research could have purpose, and be designed appropriately. It was suggested by the community that in general terms the community members may be feeling trapped, in a negative spiral, and that they do not know how to move forward to advance themselves.

Language may not now be the issue it once was: people are learning English and have been here for some time. New barriers exist that need to be understood and tackled, and this work should work to help individuals within the community by supporting them in some appropriate manner. This seemed a positive place to position our thinking.

4.2 Supporting community members

Further discussion at the next meeting based upon the idea proposed at this meeting of supporting the community through workshops/initial discussions.

Action 7: Peter Walker to draw up an ‘Initial Assessment’ form for discussion/review.

4.3 Focus group to learn more. This was thought to be helpful with particular groups, to uncover their thoughts about the community, about their futures and other matters relevant to them. This will also enrich community understanding.

5 Group name

I have obtained the domain name myvoice.org.uk as a web location for placing material. I propose we keep the idea of a name on the agenda.

6 DRC crises Two of the leaders proposed a piece of work to promote the crisis in DRC; meeting with Peter Walker is to take place. Peter suggested that we also contact Amnesty International.

7 Next meeting: Friday 30 January starting 3.30pm with light refreshments

We know you will all make every effort to arrive on time; other members of the community will always be encouraged to attend this meeting – please bring them along.

3 Minutes of Seventh meeting with Congolese Community

Wednesday 4 March at Rosehill Lodge

Seven people present; apologies received from two people

The two key topics discussed were:

1 Building of the Community database

1 Kelly Kitenge reported he has gathered details through his door-to-door visits, and is ready to add these to the database. Betty Phoba has been building a database based upon attendance at the Congolese Music, Dance and Experience for children and the Congolese Sewing Project.

Action 1: It was agreed to meet next Wednesday, 11 March 09 at Rosehill Lodge, to share the current database with Kelly and Jeannette, to train and start to add data, and hand over ownership of the database to Jeannette. (nb: I think it will be important to backup data regularly: one suggestion - perhaps by emailing it to me every other week as a 'remote' location, where it would be secure. Once the database becomes web based this would be done automatically)

2 Shaping up the work we have discussed over previous meetings

We discussed at some length the shape and nature of what the leadership wants to do, especially now in relation to it being a bid for funding. This is probably a very good time to be giving a focus to the work - to get it in to perspective, and for it to be manageable. I hope these notes capture all points made at this very active meeting:

2.1 Let us call it 'First phase'

Perhaps for clarity we could describe this work as First Phase Community Work; the group agreed that this would last until December 2009, having formally started in November 2008.

2.2 Steering Committee

The group acknowledged the need to embrace democracy into this process - through the creation of the Steering Committee, and to ensure full representation of the community by the Steering Committee. The need to work together, include all groups, act truly as an 'umbrella' body and recognise that certain things will have to be put in place: constitution and bank account. Jangir kindly offered the group help in doing this, which was welcomed.

2.3 Project Timescale

This period is a useful period to establish the credibility of the group from the viewpoint of the community, and be set out to a timescale that can be comfortably achieved with the resources available, for example First Phase to be completed by December 2009.

2.4 Roughly right

Peter suggested that we build a 'Roughly Right' project shape rather than a 'precisely-wrong' one (in other words lets think about the broad nature and shape of the work first), and that we list the activities and associate with them resources and costs.

3 Project activities – a summary

3.1 Setting up of a steering Committee

3.2 Establish an Office in good location - essential for sustainability

3.3 Build a Community Database

- 3.4 Research-one-to-one
- 3.5 Community Meeting(s) x2
- 3.6 Focus groups - with young people to help decide on the Young People's event
- 3.7 Learning Workshop - Initial assessment: offering the community the chance to explore 'where they are', seen as several workshops
- 3.8 Communications including translations as required
- 3.9 Other activities within the programme for the community:
Third Sector involvement for example CVS on Volunteering
- 3.10 Health related activity, linked with PCT
- 3.11 Workshop for young people (following focus group)
- 3.12 Final event: Evaluation, Christmas party for Children and consultation on next Steps
- 3.13 Digital storytelling - university supporting this activity. The hope is to assist the community tell other communities 'who we are'
- 3.14 Start to build a community website

4 Comments on rough plan

The group agreed to comment on the draft plan.

Action 2:

Initial responses by Wednesday 11 March 2009 from all present at the meeting

Action 3:

It was not agreed at the meeting, however, I proposed the leader of the community and I send a description of the project to the funders Monday 9 March with a covering note and telephone call, to get engagement.

5 Project description

Community leaders from within the Congolese Community have met seven times with Peter Walker, University of Derby, to discuss and agree on a way they can support their community to become active through a process that will provide the community with more knowledge about itself and its needs, as well to create a voice for the community, and engage productively with Third Sector organisations. This community is defined as 'Hard to reach' experiencing multiple disadvantages, and the approach is to help and empower and engage with the community.

This work is intended to identify community needs, and therefore to help individuals identify how they can take action to move forward in their lives, gain more confidence, and progress to through stages of 'work readiness' to take up employment, including initial assessments and opportunities to undertake voluntary work. This work will strengthen community cohesion.

The community leaders recognise the strength is setting up an appropriate governance and organisation structure, especially a Steering Committee, which fully represents the community.

This work includes first contact engagement activities (building a community database, community gatherings, and events encouraging all of their engagement). The work is designed to understand the community needs and is aimed to improve community confidence, motivation and social integration, both within the community and with other communities in the City. It will develop local networks and a leadership group to support community members progress towards becoming 'work ready' and when they are into getting

a job. The basis for this work starts with supporting co-operation within the community to improve understanding and social cohesion, the local environment and facilities, working also closely with the local Congolese church leadership and congregation. Built in to the project are all of the aspects summarised in the bid requirements: volunteering and work opportunities, non-accredited learning, tasters to take up learning, job search support and mentoring.

The project work is being supported by University of Derby, in a number of ways: research to gain knowledge about the community and its needs, helping to build but not to own a Community Database of the Congolese people living in Derby, carrying out Focus group research, and assisting the community in saying 'who we are' through digital storytelling.

The project activities are summarised above, and the timescale extends up to December 2009 for the work envisaged.

6 Next meeting

Wednesday 18 March 2009

Appendix D: Community interviews

1 Method

2 Interview schedule

3 Research approval letter

4 Confirmation of Contribution to research

5 Statement of informed consent

6 Universal Declaration of Human Rights

7 Community interviews (examples)

1 Method

The community interviews were semi-structured and scheduled to remain ‘sufficiently open-ended to enable the contents to be recorded, digressions and expansions made, new avenues to be included’ (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011:236). It offered a sensitive way of interviewing community members while exploring with them their life journeys. It was hoped that such an approach would not inflame emotion or trauma (Rothschild, 2000:87), nor give any false hope to individuals about their circumstances. The location for the interviews was agreed by the community, where privacy within the interview process could be provided but also offer lone-working protection, such as in a building where other people were present. The Steering Group helped identify the purpose of the research, and agreed to explain to community members the purpose of the research. The focus was on the issues faced by the community. Purposive sampling provided the opportunity for the leadership to catch the breadth and heterogeneity of the responses of the Congolese community (Maxwell, 2005), complemented through opportunistic sampling (LeCompte and Pressle, 1993) that allowed for community members to take part in the interviews. This approach, while not statistical allowed for a sample to achieve representativeness of the wider Congolese community (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011) and to help identify specific issues relevant to the community at that time. The leader’s shortlisted and approached potential interviewees. Community members that wished to take part were encouraged to come forward engage with the selection process.

The practical number of interviews was agreed to be fifteen, about ten percent of the registered Congolese population in Derby. The aim was to have an equal balance of men and women split between those in the community who had leave to remain, those who were waiting an outcome on their asylum application and those who had been unsuccessful. Fifteen community interviews were conducted with eight women and seven men (an ‘extra’ man expressed an interest and was included initially but who later did not attend interview). Five candidates had indefinite leave to remain in the United Kingdom, five were awaiting a decision on their application for asylum, and five were failed asylum seekers. This number of candidates appeared manageable within the research planning.

It was agreed that language must not be seen as a barrier and that language needs should be assessed at the first meeting. Meetings were to be held with all prospective interviewees to put them at ease and explain what was being attempted through the research. An interpreter was present at all briefings, of which there were several. Documentation on the interview

schedule and research approval was prepared with the community to help candidates understand the purpose of the research, and was provided by community leaders to prospective candidates during the early discussions. Individuals were also given a copy at the briefing meeting for prospective community members, prior to starting the research interviews. A pilot was not believed to have value rather it might have been misunderstood as gratuitous in view of the vulnerability of the community, which was fully involved, engaged and responsible also for the design of these semi-structured interviews. The Congolese community wished to progress the research as it would materially help them identify future actions during a difficult moment in time. It was agreed at every stage of the community research interviews that the volunteers had every right to withdraw from taking part at any time, without having to give a reason or to feel guilty in any way. No deadline was set on withdrawal from the research, which was explained could have been at any time during the process. Interviews would be recorded, and that hand written notes would also be taken to assist with the writing up of the report. I took care to ensure each interviewee was made to feel comfortable, understood the purpose of the research, and could elect to have an interpreter even at this stage if that would be helpful. I understood it was my role to lead in the interview:

in responding, prompting, probing, supporting, empathising, clarifying, crystallising, exemplifying, summarising, avoiding censure, accepting. (Cohen et al, 2011:236)

I sought always to put the interviewee at ease. I was conscious of the need to gain informed consent — that the individual was fully engaged in the process and was comfortable with the purpose of the research and their part in it.

Once the record of the interview had been transcribed, each candidate was required to read it to confirm its accuracy or alternatively suggest changes that needed to be made. All interviews would be confidential and held in private. Interviewees would be given pseudonyms, and their data anonymised. The material would be subject to assessment at the University of Derby and would not be released to the public, except in summarised and anonymised form. All material would be kept secure in a locked filing cabinet at the University of Derby; computer data would be password protected, accessible only to approved University staff. The above points were covered at the start of each interview, including that the material would not be used for any other purposes. Interviewees were advised that the interview could take about 45 minutes, although it was stressed that this could vary. The community had been informed that an amount of £15.00 would be paid upon

receipt of a signed approval letter confirming acceptance and agreement of the transcript following the interview. Other payments made by the University of Derby included travel costs upon the receipt of relevant travel tickets or reasonable explanation of costs.

Every effort was made to involve the interviewees in the process to help them understand how the research was being conducted and how information gathered would be fed back to the community so that action could be agreed. The interview was semi structured, to talk through with the interviewee their past education and work experiences, their present situation and their hopes for the future. It had not been anticipated that the research would be carried out by members of the community. Their involvement, however, in the design of the interviews made this possible. One member of the community carried out five of the planned interviews without my knowledge. This illuminated the perspective from an insider or 'emic' understanding of community issues that my own 'etic' or outsider world-view could not and did not capture. During the discussions about the interview process, the community members became attracted to the simplified version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights created by Amnesty International (2008), and they wished to comment on it during these semi-structured community interviews where examples of the transcripts of these interviews are given together with the summarised version of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Amnesty International, 2008). The full interviews are retained with other material in a safe location.

2 Interview schedule

2.1 Interview schedule and research approval

Documentation was prepared together with the community. This was to be used as the basis for working together and to providing a transparency and clarity about the way the work was to be done. The community wished to create their own database, and gather information about the community through what we described as an Initial Assessment. The interview schedule for the community interviews grew out of this.

2.2 Briefing notes

Community members from the Steering Group would approach community members, and brief them on the purpose of the work. The following were used as notes both in talking with the community members.

1. The work is ethical – it must do no harm.
2. This is of paramount importance; the intention is to protect those being interviewed.
3. It is expected these interviews will take about 45 minutes. Stress that the time can vary.
4. The material gathered during the one-to-one research will be considered as private between the researcher (Peter Walker) and the interviewee. All candidates will be given a pseudonym to protect their identity and provide confidentiality.
5. The findings from this work will be retained in a secure place within the university
6. Need for support with English will be provided
- 7 The opportunity was given to interviewees to take photographs before the interview as a vehicle for discussion life in the UK. If this is of interest to the interviewee, this can be discussed further, and a simple guide will be provided and talked through
- 8 Interviews may be taped as a basis for capturing accurate records of the conversation/interview; private use only.
- 9 All interviews to take place in the same place – comfortable and relaxed.
- 10 There is a requirement for interviewees to approve the statements they have made.
- 11 Make this process transparent and an opportunity for learning and sharing, as well as making the research as relevant as possible.

2.3 Community interview schedule

The opportunity for individuals to think about their lives under the following headings to be used as a guide.

1 Past

1 Education; 2 Work Experience; 3 Background; 4 Family details; 5 Other

2 Present

1 Language; 2 Status/Daily living; 3 Social exclusion: Human Rights/Citizenship; 4 Health; 5 Other

3 Future – everybody has the right to dream

1 Education; 2 Hopes & Aspirations for the future; 3 Things the community can do together
4 Next steps; 5 Other.

3 Research approval letter

Date

Dear... ,

Community research for Congolese Steering Group

Thank you for taking part in the research above project. This work arose from a series of meetings held with the Congolese Steering Group who requested that I carry out one-to-one research work with selected members of the community, as a way of informing the Steering Group about future action to benefit the community best.

The Steering Group also agreed to the process to be carried out to conduct the research, and approved a general document titled Data Gathering Processes, which covered not only the one-to-one research methodology but also gave details of how the community wished to 1. Build its own Member Database, 2. Carry out its own Initial Assessment, as part of a series of workshops for the community, and 3. One-to-one Research, including the approach, questions and support during the interview with for example interpretation and translation, subject to approval by the interviewee.

You attended a briefing session on this document, aware that at any point you can withdraw from the research at any time. During the briefing, you were also advised that the information gathered would be strictly confidential, and that a code or name would be used to ensure that the research is anonymous. I stated that I wanted to recognise the value of your contribution by offering you a book voucher for £15.00 upon the completion of this research. A summary of the findings in relation to helping the community move forward– eg hopes and aspirations as well as the concerns of the community – will then be presented to the Community for their review, consideration and feedback.

We then met to carry out the research together, and I produced a manuscript of the discussion which I now ask you to approve. I am pleased to provide you with a book token to the value for the value of £15.00 in recognition of your support.

May I ask you to sign the attached sheet confirming that you are satisfied that the report I have produced accurately records the interview we held, and any subsequent discussions following the interview.

May I thank you most sincerely for your help in carrying out this research, as I believe the overall findings will be extremely useful to guide the community forward.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Walker

University of Derby

4 Confirmation of Contribution to research

Community research for Congolese Steering Group

I confirm that I have received £15.00 in acknowledgement of my contribution to the above research project.

Travel costs

In additional I confirm I have received support with my travel costs.

The total amount I have received is _____

Name _____

Address _____

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Approval _____

5 Statement of informed consent

Community research for Congolese Steering Group

I understand that I have agreed to participate in a community research process, titled Community research for Congolese Steering group.

I have received a copy of the information sheet (Data Gathering processes) and have been given an opportunity to ask questions about my participation in the research.

I understand that my participation in the research is entirely voluntary, and that if I wish to withdraw from the research at any time I may do so at any point, and that I don't have to give any reasons or explanations for doing so.

I understand that the interview will be recorded and a written account of the interview will be produced.

I have read and understood this information and consent to take part in the research

Signed..... (Participant)

Date.....

Unique participation Code..... (to be completed by the researcher)

6 Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Simplified version by Amnesty International, 2008

- Article 1** We are all born free and equal. We all have our own thought and ideas.
We should all be treated in the same way.
- Article 2** These rights belong to everybody.
- Article 3** We all have the right to life, and to live in freedom and safety.
- Article 4** Nobody has any right to make us a slave. We cannot make anyone else our slave.
- Article 5** Nobody has any right to hurt us or to torture us.
- Article 6** Everyone has the right to be protected by the law.
- Article 7** The law is the same for everyone. It must treat us all fairly.
- Article 8** We can all ask for the law to help us when we are not treated fairly.
- Article 9** Nobody has the right to put us in prison without good reason, to keep us there or to send us away from our country.
- Article 10** If we are put on trial, this should be in public.
The people who try us should not let anyone tell them what to do.
- Article 11** Nobody should be blamed for doing something until it is proved.
When people say we did a bad thing we have the right to show it is not true
- Article 12** Nobody should be try to harm our good name. Nobody has the right to come into our home, open our letters, or bother us or our family without good reason.
- Article 13** We all have a right to go where we want in our own country and to travel abroad as we wish.
- Article 14** If we are frightened of being badly treated in our own country, we all have the right to run away to another country to be safe.
- Article 15** We all have the right to belong to a country.
- Article 16** Every grown up has the right to marry and have a family if they want to. Men and women have the same rights when they are married, and when they are separated.
- Article 17** Everyone has the right to own things or share them.
Nobody should take our things from us without good reason.
- Article 18** We all have the right to believe in whatever we like, to have a religion, and to change it if we wish.

- Article 19** We all have the right to make up our own minds, to think what we like, to say what we think and to share our ideas with other people.
- Article 20** We all have the right to meet our friends and to work together in peace to defend our rights.
Nobody can make us join a group if we don't want to.
- Article 21** We all have the right to take part in the government of our country.
Every grown up should be allowed to choose their own leaders.
- Article 22** We all have the right to a home, enough money to live on and medical help if we are ill. Music, art, craft, and sport are for everyone to enjoy.
- Article 23** Every grown up has the right to a job, to a fair wage for their work, and to join a trade union.
- Article 24** We all have the right to rest from work and relax.
- Article 25** We all have the right to a good life. Mothers and children and people who are old, unemployed or disabled have the right to be cared for.
- Article 26** We all have a right to education and to finish primary school which should be free. We should be able to learn a career or make use of all our skills. Our parents have the right to choose how and what we learn. We should learn about the United Nations and about how to get on with other people and to respect their rights.
- Article 27** We all have the right to our own way of life, and to enjoy the good things that science and learning bring.
- Article 28** There must be proper order so we can all enjoy rights and freedoms in our own country and all over the world.
- Article 29** We have a duty to other people, and we should protect their rights and freedoms
- Article 30** Nobody can take these rights and freedoms from us.

Note: The African States members of the Organisation of African Unity, including the DRC are parties to the present convention entitled 'African Charter on Human and People's Rights' (2006). Blackstone's International Human Rights Documents 5th Edition Gandhi P R Oxford university Press Fifth Edition (2006)

7 Community interviews

Two examples are included of the 15 carried out.

1. Interview with Annabel. I carried out this interview.
2. Interview with Charles. This interview was carried out by a member of the community.

Annabel

Preparation for the interview

The candidate met with me privately and agreed to the interview; she said she would like a translator to be present and suggested who that might be. When we started the interview, I explained the purpose of the work with the community, and that this interview would be anonymous but that the information gathered would help inform the thinking about work that needs doing to support the community. This was translated and I believe understood and accepted by the interviewee. This was by way of a reminder, as the briefing had been given before to the interviewee and others in a group meeting.

The past

Annabel: I had to escape my country – I came by myself. I have four children that I had to leave behind – two boys and two girls (Boy 24, Girl 22, Boy 18 and Girl 16). The first one, now 24, lives in Uganda – he is not happy – he also fled the War last year from the East. Yes, I keep in contact with them.

When I lived in Africa, I was married. When my husband was killed I was away working in Goma. My husband was Director of Customs (Director de Duoane). He was a member of the opposing political party (UDPS), and at this time was away at a meeting working with members – perhaps a secret meeting – they caught them. While there has never been any evidence, I knew at the time that my husband was dead. RCD was the political party that had caught my husband and killed him – because they were working with the government. They then started an investigation and came to see me ... I started by asking if they could help me find my husband ... then as things progressed I was arrested then they put me in detention ... in military detention. One of the soldiers who spoke my Mother tongue, helped me to flee the prison, and this was my first step in fleeing the country, and so I fled detention, although I didn't know I would be doing this at this moment.

At this point I didn't know that I was to leave the country but first made my way to a Catholic Church, and was there for three days with a Priest – then the trouble got a lot worse than it had been before.

The Belgium Priest said that he wanted to help me – he argued that the situation is getting worse and this is the time to make a decision to flee the country. I agreed because I could also see the trouble was getting worse. The Priest offering this help knew my family including my husband – and thus wanted to do me this favour. We fled together, me and the Priest, by taking a jeep to nearby Uganda. We spent three days completing formalities to leave Uganda. Finally, I and three Priests left Uganda and flew to the UK. I went to the Congolese Association in London to seek Asylum, on 23 July 2002 and sought Asylum in Croydon. I

then spent three weeks in a London hotel. I arrived in Derby August 16 2002.

When I arrived here I didn't know anybody; I had no English. My Housing Officer helped me to enrol on an ESOL course at Derby College, and was helpful in other ways, too by showing me where Lidl and Sainsbury's were in the town, and by showing me directions within the city. I started to make relationships with other Congolese people who were already more established here. I explored Derby.

I became very depressed because I missed my children... I spent my time shopping, attending the St James Centre (twice a week for ESOL classes). It was a very difficult time because I had also been working full time in the Congo – I had been a secretary /PA to the Mayor of Goma. I loved my job and was very good at it – I managed his agenda. I had come to England to nothing.

The present

It is now 7 years that I have been living in England, doing nothing without my status; it has been wasted time. The children are away – and I need medicine for my blood pressure every day. I speak to them sometimes. It is quite difficult because they are orphans. I sell my vouchers every 2 weeks, and send the money back to them when I can. There is no-one to look after them – my parents are dead. They have had to bring themselves up. Sometimes the church can help – difficult for people to help each other in such a poor country – and when so many children have lost their parents – very difficult.

My Section 4 application – it is still pending. The questionnaire sent out by the Home Office in May last year – 2008. There has been no response. I have legal representation in London.

I have to share my accommodation with other Asylum seekers, which brings its own difficulties. They may make a mess, have different standards, and may not be tidying up after themselves or respectful of other people's property. This is no-choice accommodation. How much longer do I have to live like this? I cannot do this for 10 years. Although people living in the house where I am placed may be from Africa, they have a different background, culture – they may be middle class – or not educated back home. I was taking charge of my family back home in Africa, too. Here I am reduced to a small 'exponent' – from x12 to x1. They may have a faith or not have a faith. There is a lack of privacy. While we share the house, I find myself talking on the phone to other people in the house with whom I seek contact because I cannot have direct contact because of others in the house who do not share my values and are different as I describe.

I have no liberty – no freedom of movement – I live in an open prison. I feel like a fish in an aquarium – only the person who put the fish out put it out in the wrong place – I want to be in the big river in the sea. When you are in the aquarium you cannot do anything – no movement – but in Africa I could 'fly' because earning money (and was in charge of my life). No work. No money. Like a little boy/girl – do everything for you but you are enough old to do things yourself.

PW: How do you overcome, see something good in life?

Annabel: My life is not normal – I long once more to meet my children / and to be living together in the same house; having a job somewhere ... having liberty. There is no freedom. It is like the 'Comtuporain period' in Africa – 100 years ago under colonisation.

The future

Annabel: To do anything you have to have stay (leave to remain in the UK). Everything turns on this: even having a bank account has its problems as a failed asylum seeker.

Life will be normal with stay: without stay you will not be normal.

Since we set up the group – I have been keen to play my part.

My life comes alive – helping running the workshops. I have responsibility as secretary within a community – a position in the group. I want to help others. I *can forget* when I feel I have a big responsibility to help others – once this is over I move back to being imprisoned again. There is no peace of mind. I do not like to be lonely – go to my group and play my part – makes her like doing something – spending time with others – to be more active with the community – when she does that I feel more like a human being – what I want to do.

Back in Africa, I enjoyed working with different people – across the province, country with ministers organising meetings, inviting them to events, and organising food.

For the major – I loved entertaining.

I am very happy to meet today to talk. Not a hazard – it is God's plan to come in this country and meet lovely people like Peter giving time for me. Thank you so much for the initiative you are taking for us to help us move on. God bless you. Let God bless you many times for what you are doing.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

During the design of this research, the community thought it would be helpful to understand the views of the community in relation to Human Rights, through the use of an illustrated publication on this subject: 'We are all Born Free' with all royalties donated to Amnesty International.

The focus was not to be on personal issues but perhaps on choosing two Human Rights that are particularly appreciated now living the in UK, and two that represented the most difficult barriers to living in Africa.

Things I least liked about living I the Congo:

1 **Article 14** If we are frightened of being badly treated in our own country we all have the right to run away to another country to be safe.

2 **Article 6** Everyone has the right to be protected by the law

The best things I like about living in the UK:

1 **Article 19** We all have the right to make up our own minds, to think what we like, to say what we think, and to share our ideas with other people.

2 **Article 18** We all have the right to believe in whatever we like, to have a religion, and to change it if we wish.

Charles

The past

A graduate. Male. Work experience – no experience of work. Has a background in science. He was fatherless and motherless at the age of 15. So this made it very difficult to become a

scientist – sacrifices through support given by his uncle – which was very good. Family is now abroad – not in the DRC; he is alone in the UK.

Background: Charles arrived in 2002: does not have status. He is an Asylum seeker – living with friends, receiving food parcels, and has a very difficult life. He is French speaking, and because of his status cannot work – the Home office doesn't give permission – it is illegal to work as an asylum seeker.

Family:

Charles has no family. Good friends – from the DRC and Cameroon friends.

Areas in life of concern to him – discrimination

Didn't expect to see violence in the UK – thought it was a paradise – but robbery/ too many cannabis fields – didn't expect any of that.

Still there is a fear being here as there is no determination – and if attacked, who/how does he address this – can he go to the police. He has never been refused medical help – and hopefully that will never happen.

His hope is to be granted leave to remain – and then carry on training.

Actions to consider: to be a volunteer and to be a leader in the community.

Future exploration

Present in Derby. Language: Charles is French speaking – still manages his English – to improve through his meetings. Spent the first three months when he arrived in England at college learning English.

His daily living – this is very difficult – having to survive off the weekly parcel he is given – cannot eat properly from the cans and food given. Refugee Forum is still looking after him. He has a solicitor, who is acting on his behalf. He recognises that the Home Office will not be forced: if they say be patient; be patient.

Human rights – to be sorely tested because of personal safety – if called police. He doesn't like to go out (to for example the pub) because too many things can happen to him – so he prefers to be at home.

Health: Charles is in poor health – goes to his GP. He considers himself to be an 'old person' at 45 years. Not satisfied with the NHS; but doesn't like to go to another country – Belgium, France where there is a far better service. Here he must stay and use the GP 'recommended'.

Future

He would prefer to finish his studies.

Hopes

Charles wishes to be granted Indefinite Leave to Remain – to have a 'nice' family and a job.

Fears – violence and at his age of 45, he worries about his age, and that discrimination will

disqualify him from ever getting a job. He wants to work.

Things that the community can do together:

1 To come together as a community – solve our own problems (in Normanton)

2 To seek solutions for the DRC

To develop the DRC

Other: to be *families of integrity*

Actions – to be a volunteer in any community

Areas – Derby, following on from Normanton – broaden for consideration his view of the area – start small.

He is very concerned about his limited possibilities – *everything is limited*.

He is happy living in a modern city – here everybody talks about democracy – conditions are very nice.

In comparison, he is seeing some families here granted leave to remain ... so one day he believes he can have a nice life ... this makes him optimistic. He has a good vision about his life in the UK.

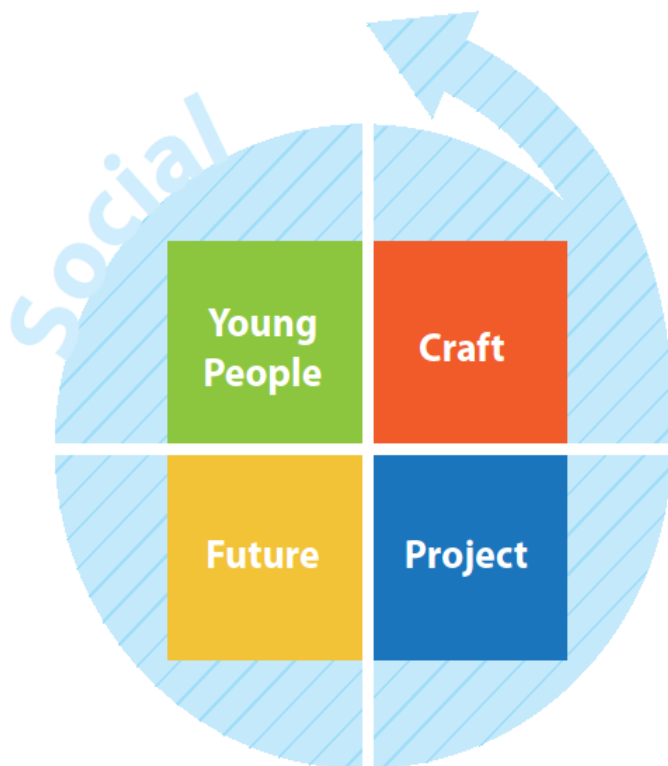
Appendix E: Plan for the Future meeting

1 Plan for the Future chart

2 Workshop findings

3 Letter following the Plan for the Future meeting

1 Plan for the Future chart, based on Ned Herrmann



2 Workshop findings

Feedback at the event:

Note: contributors' names have been removed throughout this feedback; these are kept on original files. The feedback is condensed into paragraphs to save space.

Future group

Where people can come together to discuss issues which are affecting people. Group of people, meeting talking about projects; discussing about their needs. Where people are coming together. Sharing skills, culture...spending some time to learn from each other. Sharing skills, where people are meeting regularly to discuss their problems and helping each other to do more. Group of people sharing skills, ideas together. Loving each other. Coming together. Speaking the same language. Remove isolation. Being Active. Being together. Running more activities – learning exchange. More sewing activities. Teaching people from other countries how to cook African food (Congolese). Days out. Identify the community.

Issues. Lack of information. Keep people in touch. Review meetings. Time. Transport for the community. Time management (workshop). Lack of access to information (one attendee said she was not aware of fashion show – and would have attended). Organise the training to meet the needs of the people. Teach people how to deal with family affairs, cooking, how to look after your husband and kids. Day out, collecting people's ideas not only in Derby but across the county. Form a group to look at social activities.

Define a community as: People with common culture living, working together, sharing experiences, knowledge and skills, ideas – working together to achieve a common goal. Each one teach one

Young people

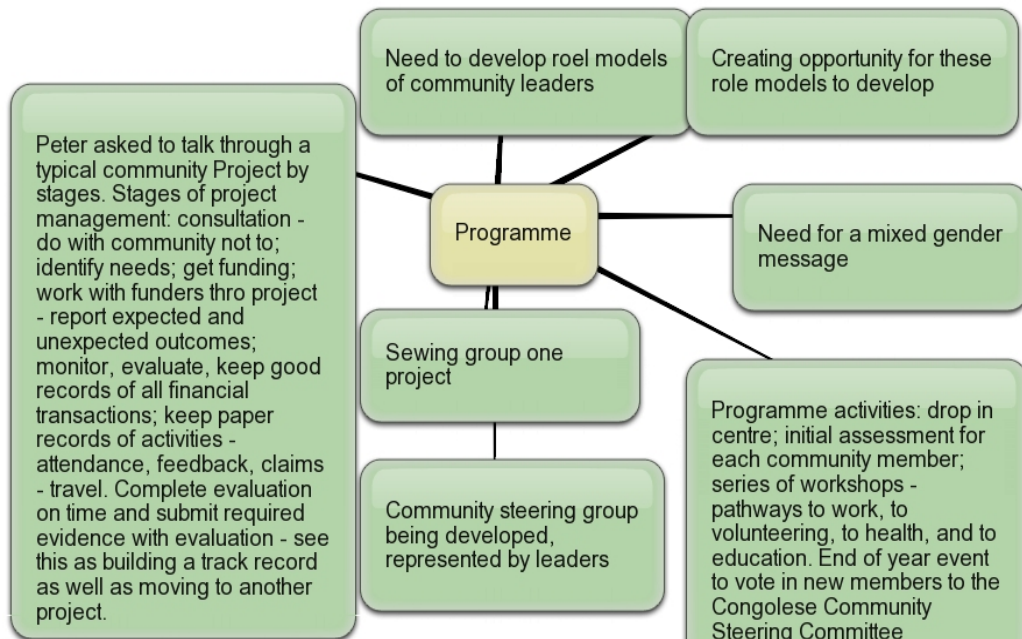
Free time; Play; Games. Sports – eg football, tennis, cricket, basketball, swimming. Dance. Music – listening, making it. Drama –acting. Telling stories. Taking walks. Friendship

In the future (what do they want to be)? Learning & goals. Entertainer – talent. Hairdresser. Shop – selling clothes. Modelling. Doctor. Vet. Animal welfare. Make-up artist. Volunteer (helping people). Decorator, Interior design. Lorry driver. DJ. Singer. Normal person. Businessman. Scientist. Qualities to take it forward. Trust yourself – believe. Be confident and brave. Think ahead. Work and study. Read books. Be yourself. Learn skills. Practise. Work hard and believe you can do it. Be flexible. Be reliable.

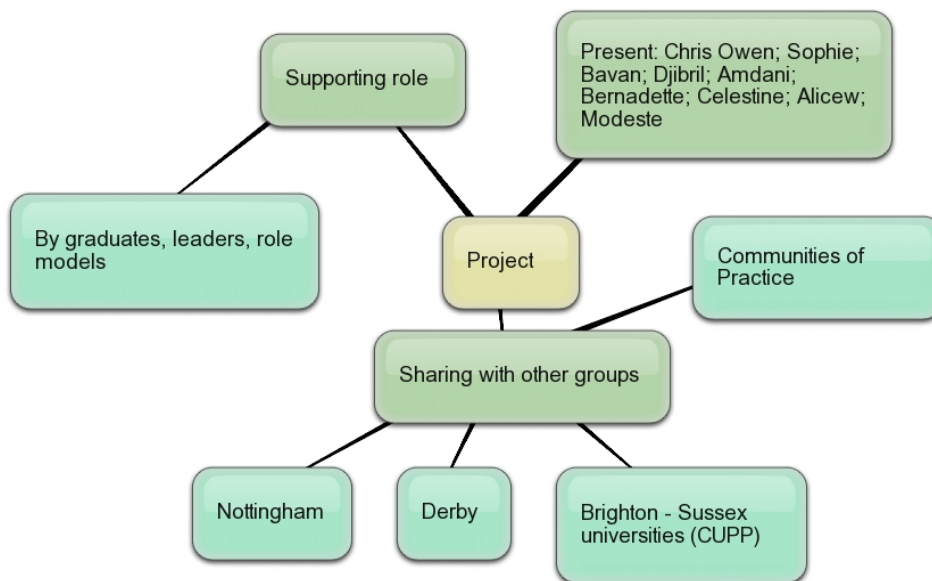
Health issues. Keep friendships. Eat well – fruit & veg (5 a day) – apples, bananas, pears, oranges, strawberries, avocados, mangoes, pineapples. Exercise! Pray. Cleanliness. Be happy (eat chocolate). Drink water. Gymnastics, dancing. Fitness.

Feedback is also summarised in the following charts:

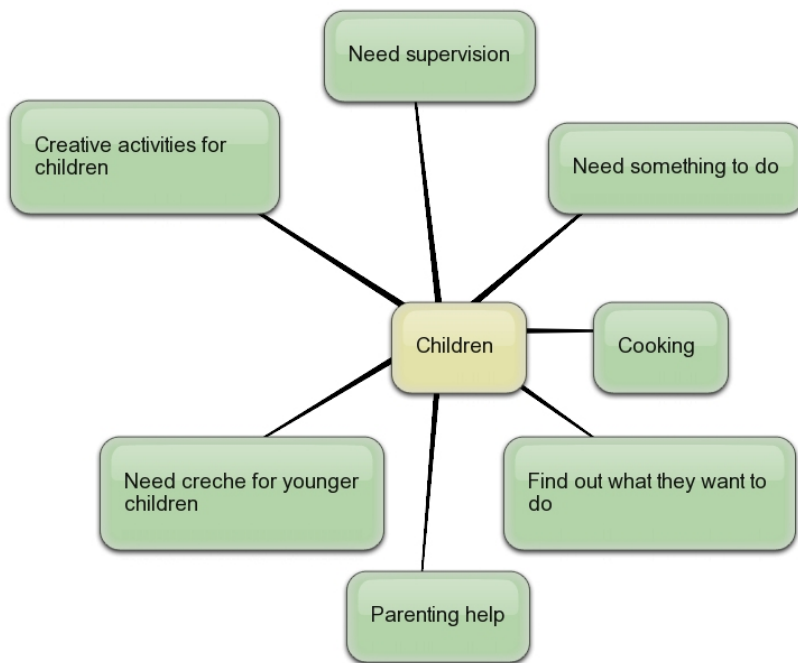
Project and Craft: Programme related feedback



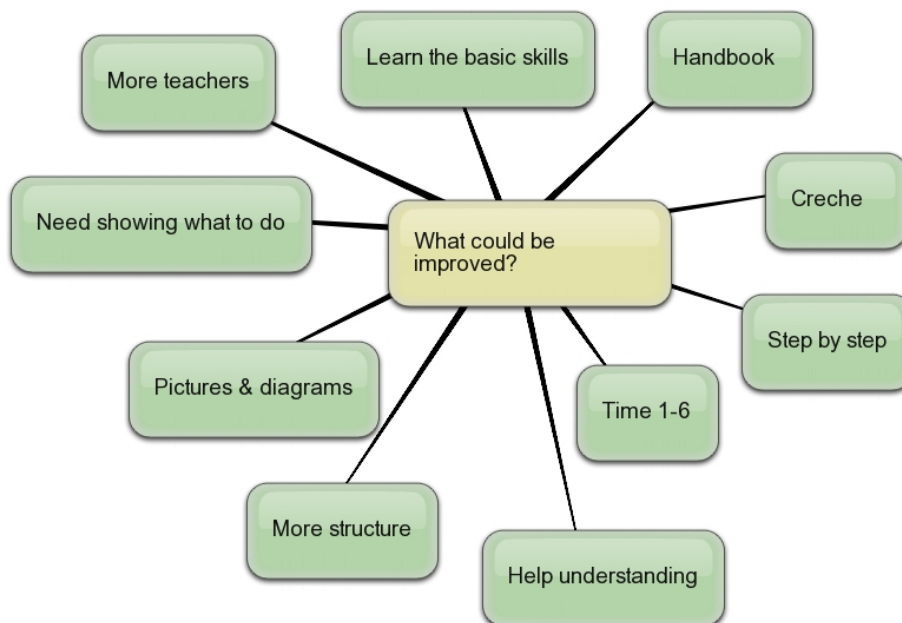
Project related feedback



Feedback from young person's group



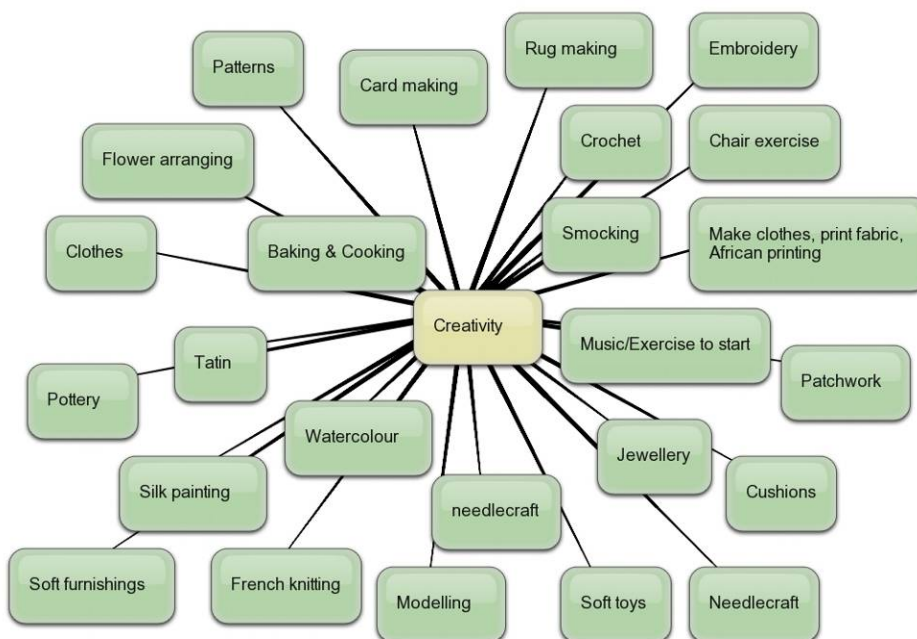
What could be improved?



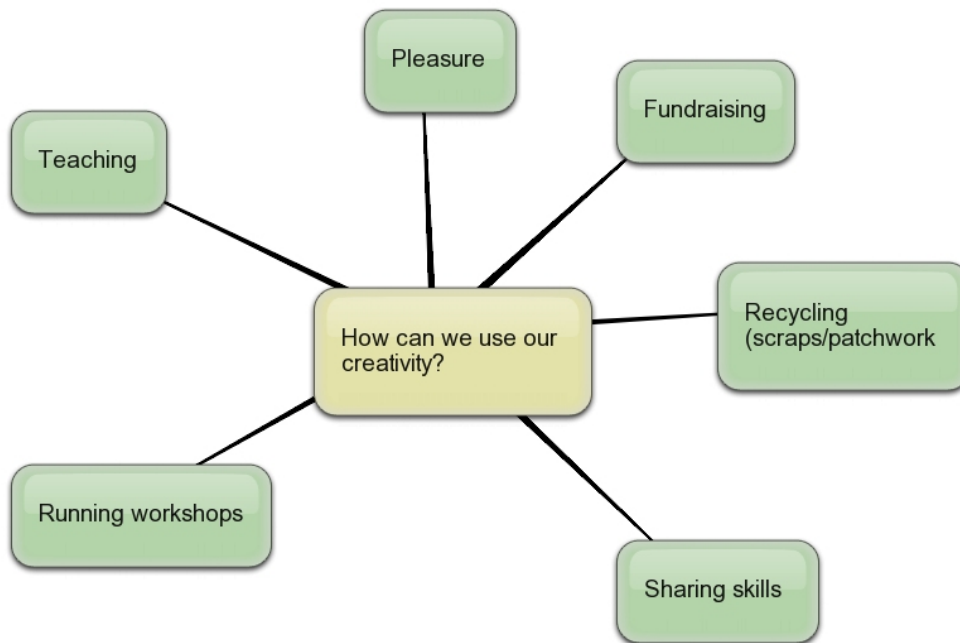
The next steps...



Creativity



How can we use our creativity?



3 Letter reporting on ‘Plan for the Future’

This was posted to all members of the community

Have the courage to do new things. Together

Feedback from Plan for the future, our workshop held on 9 May 2009

Thank you for coming to this event. Thanks to your commitment, we had lots of positive feedback and creative ideas, and we have been told that the day was a great success. The feedback sheets are available should you like to see them. We summarise below what you said you want.

The **Craft** workshop told us there was very strong support for continuing the sewing classes, and that they should be more structured and progressive. There were lots of other activity ideas, too.

The **Young People** workshop told us some things that can help the whole community: Be confident and brave; Think ahead; Work and study; Be flexible and reliable; Be yourself. The community knows just how important children and young people are. The children want to spend their free time doing things – making and performing music, dance, drama and acting, learning, friendship and healthy living. They want to develop themselves to have a future.

The **Project Management** workshop recognised the need to network widely and for the community to harvest the great talent it has: those who have gone to university; those in the community who can take opportunities to help the community become more active – and learn new skills themselves. You can make a difference – as our young people told us – *“have the courage to do new things, together”*.

The **Future** workshop identified the need for our own drop-in centre, particularly for children and young people, for mothers and for isolated women: to be together, to help each other, to support each other, to create a learning exchange, to share issues and overcome problems as well as organise events for the future.

We are planning the next programme of **Sewing Classes** so shall be writing to you soon. We are working on how to take these other ideas forward: a key issue is funding, and so we are looking at this now. Please let us know what you can do to take this valuable work forward.

Your help is so important. With love and hope

Yours sincerely,

Betty Phoba
Voice of Congolese Women


Peter Walker
Community Relations
University of Derby

Appendix F: Video on isolated women and Community Exhibition

The DVD for this comprises two videos and an exhibition of 50 photographs that are a record of the work up to the end of 2009. The first video, 'Voice of Congolese Women' on isolated women can be found on YouTube under 'Voice of Congolese Women' (Voice of Congolese Women, 2009a). The second video contained in the DVD describes the Congolese Exhibition and Awards Evening, 2009. The exhibition of photographs included in the DVD describes the project more generally to this point in time (Voice of Congolese Women, 2010). Hannah Davies made these two videos, a filmmaker from the University of Derby. The photographs were taken by Neal Morgan, then a photography student of the University of Derby, and by Matt Howcroft a professional photographer, from the University of Derby.

Two further videos on Voice of Congolese Women were commissioned later in the programme, by the British Refugee Council: firstly to showcase the 'Exchange of Cultures' presented by Voice of Congolese Women as part of the Ashbourne Festival in Derbyshire (British Refugee Council, 2011a). The second film commissioned by the British Refugee Council captures the perspective of The African Institute for Social Development (AISD) on its collaboration with Voice of Congolese Women (British Refugee Council, 2011c).


DVD sleeve and disc artwork




Throughout 2009, we worked with the University of Derby to win funding and tackle social exclusion and disadvantage.

We ran workshops, brought people together from many other communities, made a difference, increased our confidence and celebrated what we had done.

This DVD shows our work, why it is so important to address isolation in women and how we made our garments and celebrated our success.



VOICE
OF CONGOLESE WOMEN




For more information:

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Peter Walker
Community Relations Officer
University of Derby
p.walker@derby.ac.uk

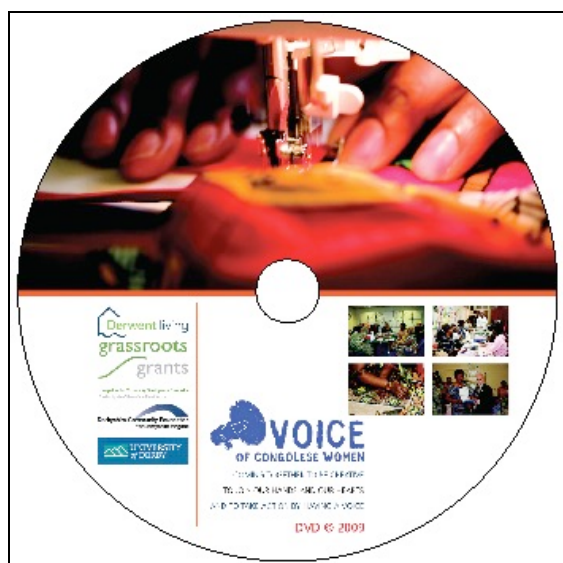
www.derby.ac.uk/congolese-women

Voice of Congolese Women



DVD © 2009

We came together as a community.
We made clothes. We made friends.
We laughed together. We cried together.
We planned for the future.
Toujours Ensemble!



Appendix G: ‘New Hope’ drop-in centre project evaluation and community reviews

1 Community review meetings

**2 New Hope project report by Voice of Congolese Women for Derbyshire Learning and
Development Consortium**

1 Community review meetings

The following provides two examples of the regular community meetings held during the case study

Community review meeting, July 2010

The lunchtime meeting had been booked in a private room with food provided, embracing a celebration and creating a relaxed environment for thought and discussion. In all 45 people attended the event, 28 adults and 17 children. Ownership for the project was demonstrated by Andrea, the Project Officer for New Hope Drop-in Centre, together with other members of the community, communicating in English, French and Lingala. We then explored how the work might be continued for the benefit of the community. In all, four of the community helped with translation and with the completion of a questionnaire, conducted in private and relaxed settings, in a room large enough for individuals to have privacy whilst completing their forms. This meeting gave approval for the work to continue. Community members got involved, asked relevant questions, and those who did fill out the forms were encouraged to take their and were not influenced in any way.

Community review meeting, March 2011

This second review meeting was held at the same venue where food was provided. It was a relaxed time to reflect and celebrate what had been achieved, and once more led by VOCW with student art and dance therapists and a fashion designer from the University of Derby. The group comprised Asian, West Indian, African and white local people, and guest Canon Geraldine Pond from the Derby Diocese to explore wider project partnerships. Lots of children and young people attended: in all over 70 people. The young people welcomed the group, told stories from their own culture, and a musician from the Congolese community skilfully demonstrated the importance of the drum. New initiatives were discussed and agreed – an invitation had been received to take part in the Ashbourne Arts Festival, as well as for VOCW to design and make new outfits for the West Indian Choir in recognition of the choir's contribution to this project.

2 New Hope project report by Voice of Congolese Women for Derbyshire Learning and Development Consortium (overleaf)



Funded by:



Leading learning and skills



1. Did you work with any other groups or organisations to deliver your project? If yes, please state who they were and what work they undertook.

University of Derby assisted in supporting this project through providing additional funding and support. Support included promotion of the project – Press Release and article in Derby Telegraph, a promotional leaflet, and large poster to promote the New Hope Evening and Celebration held on Saturday 27 March 2010. The project was also covered by Central News and featured on the evening news programmes Tuesday 30 March, and Betty Phoba, Project Officer for New Hope, appeared on Radio Derby on Friday 26 March on the Breakfast Show to talk about the work being done through this project to support the community (see attached or link through Google, Betty Phoba for all material). Peter Walker Community Relations officer, supported the underpinning research done for the community (engaging with 16 people from the community) to identify the need for this drop-in centre, and also in researching and helping write letters on behalf of community members to support them in a variety of ways including references, and clarification on where they are in the asylum process.

Grateful thanks are extended through this evaluation to the generous support given by Jangir Khan at Rosehill Lodge, and a leader of the Pakistani Community, both in allowing the community to use the centre and in the advice encouragement and support he gave throughout.

2. When did the project activity start and end?

Financial Start Date	01 December 2009
Activity Start Date	01 January 2010
Activity End Date	31 st August 2010

3. Provide a brief outline of your project – with reference to the “Activities” section of your Grant Agreement Letter. If you did not achieve exactly what you planned, please explain why.

The original application was revised and outcomes reduced, based upon a reduced offer of funding from £10,000 to £7,500.00. With the agreement of the funders, the project focused on the most important element of the work that is the setting up of a drop-in centre and the establishment a steering group. The former went ahead and the latter did not materialise, as the Secretary resigned in January at the start of the project and the Chair took no further part in the project. The work was left to Betty Phoba (Project Officer) with assistance from Matuala Mbaki, a person promoted by the Chair after the resignation of the Secretary, to replace the position but as a Support Worker, together with Peter Walker from university of Derby.

The purpose of the drop-in centre was to provide: support and guidance to the community especially in Housing and benefits and hospital appointments; immigration matters and translation; Suppliers (bills) and opening a bank account; Job Centre Plus and training opportunities; Job Search and writing a cv, and one-to-one sessions based on a format developed to encourage self-assessment. The drop-in centre was open every Tuesday and Thursday from 09.30am – 3.30pm from January until the end of June 2010.

Activity	Evidence provided with End of Grant Report
1 Rental of drop-in centre	1 Evidenced in Finance report
2 Promotion of the project	2 See above and attached documents
3 Purchase of computer, printer and phone	3 See Finance report for evidence
4 Employment of two people on the project	4 Project Officer and Support Worker – see Finance report
5 Project participants:	5 Participants
Males – 15	Male - 21
Females – 25	Female - 19
People with a disability or health condition – 5	People with a disability or health condition - 5
People over 50	People over 50 - 0
People from ethnic minority groups – 20	People from ethnic minority groups – 40

4. Your project's participants	
Male	21
Female	19
Total	40

5. Your project's target participants – include each participant in all relevant groups	
People with a disability or health condition	6
Lone parents	5
People aged 50 and over	None
People from ethnic minority groups	All

6. What will your participants do now your project has finished? How did you help them to progress?

This is how we helped clients progress in their lives - Of the **40** people support on the project, the following support was given. **One** client was released from prison following production of letter bringing evidence to the attention of the judge; we assisted **one** client become reunited with his daughter from Angola here in the UK; altogether we wrote on behalf of **15** clients in relation to their immigration matters, **seven** of whom have been given Indefinite Leave to Remain. **One** client was successful in that she got a Home Access Grant with our help, and got a free computer for her daughter to use. **Two** people were provided with references, **one** as part of an application for work and the **second** for work as a volunteer, and **three** supported for job search, totalling **5**. Other support: Housing benefit and other support eg claiming tax credits – **5** people; In training we supported **6** people (Citizenship x**2**; ESOL training x**2**, University – ADT/Access **2**). Help with health problems – **6**, and Advice on Youth Projects – **one** person. **One** client was also helped with his application for his spouse to settle in this country.

Research in the community – this continued with **10** of the **15** interviewees who enrolled on the project.

The community is still getting support in the above matters from Betty Phoba and Peter Walker. While the New Hope project has finished, these clients will continue to be supported by Betty Phoba and Peter Walker who are looking to continue this work with the Congolese and other communities.

Of the **40** clients supported, five were employed; **35** were unemployed.

No. of participants successfully completed their learning aim	All
No. of participants with increased confidence	Some of the cases were complicated and difficult for the clients, and increased confidence cannot be claimed (3); Overall, all the other clients experienced increased confidence through the delivery of the project.
No. of participants with increased job search skills	5

No. of participants progressing into further learning and development opportunities	Most of the clients progressed following the work we did together, as reported above.
No. of participants progressing into paid employment	4
No. of participants progressing into voluntary work	3

7. Project publicity - Describe how you publicised your project and European Social Fund support, to your participants and the wider community.

Press and promotion described earlier. A key event to promote the project work was held 27 March 2010 at Osmaston Park Community Centre, with over 70 people attending. This was an opportunity to talk about the work that had been started and to encourage others in the community to come along to the drop-in sessions.

While feedback was gathered throughout the New Hope Project, and this was very positive. A final evaluation event was held 14 July 2010, to which the whole community was invited. This was about the collective voice of the whole community around this and other work that had been done with the funding and support of University of Derby. This event was funded by the University as part of its commitment to the community work.

This feedback was extremely positive and supported all the work that had been done. One chart in particular was created to capture the passion of the community, its energy, its voice about what it needs to do. The event was attended by 45 people in the community. The leaders of the community spoke in French and Lingala about the project work, helped other members fill out the feedback forms and generally helped to answer the questions community members raised. These community members helped the community complete the forms without the organisers who ran the New Hope drop-in centre being

present, which we believed led to better and more honest feedback.

8. Environmental sustainability – Describe what steps you took to promote environmental sustainability.

The centre selected had to be a local available resource so people could attend on foot or by local transport. There was already in place connection to the internet at Rosehill Lodge, and so through the purchase of a router it was possible to access the Internet to carry out research with the clients as well as send and receive emails. Other services were in place such as heating and lighting, as well as shared facilities such as a kitchen, toilets and a larger meeting room that was offered to the community. The office space used by the project was already in existence and to the space was added filing cabinets, desks and chairs that had been donated by the University and so these were being useful re-cycled in the community.

If there is anything else we need to know about your project please include it here.

The reported costs above cover part of the total project costs. Significant support for the project must be acknowledged by the University of Derby: this covered a wide range of promotional activities as described above and the additional salary for the Project Officer provided to help the project after the funding ran out (60 hours), as well as provision of furniture for the drop-in centre (filing cabinets, table and chairs). It also provided a budget of £1,000.00 towards running costs, as well as paid for the final evaluation event with the community on 14 July 2010. An estimate of the value of this in kind support is therefore £3,000.00 if a notional allowance of £500.00 is also included for staff time.

Thus the total cost of the project is estimated to be in the order of £10,500.00. The community is still getting this support. We will be writing to them soon to offer members the chance to come to a new drop-in centre for help and support. This is such valuable work that has been so valued by the community members. We are planning to have Wednesday afternoon available to support clients at the Community Space, The Bindery, Pear Tree Library, Normanton,

Derby. It is hoped this work will broaden to include other forced migrant groups as the learning that has occurred has been so valuable and can be applied to help other community members. The Community Space is funded by University of Derby and is a partnership project between University of Derby and City Libraries and led by Voice of Congolese Women, as part of a joint aspiration to address social isolation in the community across Derby City.

Appendix H: Field Notes (extracts)

Through the case study, I made field notes to capture tasks, reflective thoughts and the views of others who travelled on this journey with me. The following Research Diary notes are provided as indicative of this approach.

Field Note 86 Meeting with Persian Cultural Association 13/10/08

I met with the leader of the Persian community who listened and reflected on the practical issues of the idea — saying that their real and ongoing issue was one of survival, and that really it was only their own efforts that had managed to place them where they were today, still without guarantees of sustainability, having to work merely to survive. He talked about wishing to move to a point of being self-sustaining, through the creation of a social enterprise. After the meeting I realised it was really important for me to understand and demonstrate that the approach I was taking was one that showed:

- 1 Invitation to become involved in an idea rather than this is what we want to do (to you)
- 2 Respect for and desire to work with as equals on a project
- 3 Working in a way that maintains trust and respect
- 4 Not setting expectations but looking to the challenge, recognising that it will only happen if we work together
- 5 Showing humility (and honesty in the relationship): sharing it as a challenge and capable of failure, or one the community may not wish to sign up to.

Field Note 113 Seeking confirmation from the Congolese leaders

I met three of the Congolese community leaders to check out whether they were properly committed to partnering with me in this work, and concluded from their enthusiasm that this project had potential. The University was challenged by the leaders through this work, to do something of significance for the community, implying that anything less may simply not be judged as relevant to the lives of those in the community (and just another project funded by others).

Field Note 158 First Sewing event Sat 31 Jan 09

This note reminds me that to do this work one has to be flexible and prepared to get stuck in to do what practical things are necessary to make the event a success. The vision is twofold: empower the group and support the learners run the event, and enable them to take part, and of course, experience something that will take them forward with an appetite and confidence to do more.

I left home at 12.15 and picked a leader up with food and additional sewing equipment. Arrived at Arboretum Park and started to layout the tables - realised that we did not have power points — went and bought two — this meant driving to a shop in the centre of the city on a Saturday afternoon, parking, queuing, forgetting to get a receipt and returning to the centre — then to go off and collect some learners — they needed a lift — brought five people to the centre for training. We arrived at about 2.25pm. The training was now underway. Having made the attendance sheets earlier, people were signing in to the event and the whole process of setting up teaching was beginning. I complete a form for a member of the community and spoke to others who wanted my advice. I got permission to take some pictures and realised there were two ladies in full burkes who did not want photographing! There were so many children at the event - who were full of fun be behaving well. Bob, one of the grounds men who manages the centre, said that this was the best event they had ever held, and he was impressed by the interest, fun and work being done.

My impression of the day is that while the two teachers started as though they had had little preparation, things got going and people started to get involved — the attendance was recorded at forty adults. There seemed to be as many children! The room was pretty full to capacity, although some had arrived early and left and others had arrived later in the afternoon. I realised a woman photographer may be more appropriate in future — I felt that my presence was a bit imposing especially when I was taking photographs (with permission).

Field Note 163 Friday 06/02/2009 Meeting with a leader of the community

In a meeting with a leader of the Congolese community, he expressed the thought that a university is absolutely the right organisation to be helping communities establish a vision / mission for themselves — completely in line with the principles of a university as a seat of learning. He liked it that the women are now becoming actively involved in the Sewing Projects and with the community project, which he said would give added momentum to the initiative — without women, he thought the project would take a lot longer to get started.

He commented that there is also probably every reason to keep the activity alive through the one-to-one research as well as the open research meeting with the women to uncover what it is they want to do next, for example to become more active/have more fun/move forward in their lives.

Field Note 198. My own thoughts following the Fashion Show 31/03/2009

I noted I must capture the transcript of the radio event Monday 30 March 7.15am. There remained an excitement after the Fashion Show held on the previous Saturday. Things were buzzing even at 6.30am when the clocks had 'sprung forward', as I collected ladies from around the city before 6am on

that morning, all dressed in traditional Congolese clothing and looking a million dollars. We celebrated after the radio interview interview by having a full English breakfast at a local hotel. They told me that they were drunk with food. They had spoken with such pride on the radio. It was unforgettable. These ladies, I knew, were just amazing.

I was overwhelmed by the Fashion Show — the work I had personally to do to make it happen was almost too much — physically moving tables and laying out the venue, making people welcome during the day was great, supporting the completion of other activities — thank goodness my wife, Lindsay was there to help to take a strong lead at Reception. The duality of 'having a plan' to follow but then of 'letting go' and being relaxed about how things actually happened, worked really well. One leader in particular reassured me as we went to get extra food — that people will be coming and the event will be well attended. He was right.

By the time we saw the last person out of the building — with the help of Paul the caretaker it must have been gone midnight, and more like 1.30am. I had been working from 1.30pm without a break, and I was now glad to get to bed, although the prospect of getting up at 5.00 on the Monday morning to do a radio programme was daunting. Lindsay said she didn't know how I did everything on Saturday - how I always have time for everyone - always so pleasant.

Field Note 250 Research briefing - 30 June 2009

This took place at Rosehill Lodge. This meeting had been organised with the help of the community leaders — who had promoted the idea of the research and had encouraged members to attend, ringing them to remind them to attend on the day. Nothing was said but it was clear that punctuality was very good for all but one of the seven attendees. It was vital that the operational side of the relationship was managed by the community. The research was led by one community leader — her energy, her vision, her own desire to make a difference in her community — these were emerging qualities of this person. The Congolese people were beginning to look to her person for leadership. She also demonstrated an armoury of skills and saw the vital importance of doing things properly so the Congolese community could be seen to be responsible. This was especially so in relation to the funders who were sponsoring events in the community.

I was very lucky to benefit from such good leadership and to have such a good audience present for the briefing. Seven people attended this briefing and dates for the interview were agreed for each and location.

My briefing covered the following details: background to the work — my new job, the consultation with ten ethnic communities in Normanton — why this was important, and confirmation that the Congolese had come forward to work with me. I summarised that we had about twelve meetings with

the Congolese community, leading to a bid proposal to carry out several activities – the setting up of a drop in centre, building a community database, providing initial assessment workshops, and training sessions for the community in relation to pathways — to volunteering as a route to work, to health, and to education — as well as an event we wanted to hold at the end of the year to celebrate progress and elect new members to the Steering Group. I described the Sewing Project that led to a Fashion Show and then a Plan for the Future meeting we had held together.

I highlighted that it was during the Steering Group meetings that the idea of one-to-one research came up and has always been supported as important — as a means of gathering information about things the community members want the leadership to give attention to.

The approach of the research is always to have permission emphasising that those involved could withdraw from the research at anytime if they are were comfortable, or for any reason. I described that the research did not wish to dwell on the asylum related issues. It was more about their lives in the now and in the future. I did not want to know about things that may interest the Home office, for anyone who may be concerned about their case if it was still being heard. It was more about their lives — their achievements, their education, their life in Africa, their qualifications, their work experience, and then to move on to their time now in England and the focus on what they want to become — this research was about their future aspirations.

I explained that this may well take up to an hour. There was some surprise at this but when I explain that by the time we cover the matter listed in the document they were provided, I did not want them to feel rushed and if it takes less time, then that is also fine. I talked through the document I had prepared with the community and made sure they understood this had been prepared with the help of the Steering Group — and took them through the idea of building the database — one that the community owned not the University, the Initial Assessment and what this is hoping to achieve, and the one-to-one research. I explained I did not want to be the 'researcher' doing things alone, in ways they do not understand, but to share the process and then be able to report our summarised findings back to the Steering Group for them to incorporate in to their planning, and at community reviews.

I let them know that they could withdraw from the research at any time, and that once they have signed the written document I shall create based on what they tell me, they will receive a £15.00 book voucher. This did not go down well — apart from one or two everyone preferred money, to which I agreed.

Field Note 305 Feedback on Congolese Exhibition 2009 25/11/09

One of the Congolese community leaders rang to congratulate me for the success of the event on Saturday: for the way the work had been done. The video we showed, he said, was a summary of

everything that had been done on the project — with our Congolese community, the West Indian community and local society. The work has helped break down barriers with communities. He said it was testimony [to the value of the work being done] because the University had been shortlisted for an award (THE For Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community), which the community understood to be of significance — and that the community had been significantly included.

I explained this partnership was important for the University, too. He continued to say it was wonderful in many ways, for example, in the time management of the event — everything had run smoothly. He was very impressed with the other communities [attending the event] — he said that they took it as their own business — they made the event 'theirs'.

I asked him how this had happened: 'It all started at the beginning, the conception, what we wanted to do — how, for whom? Not just about getting community involved but with other communities — widening the areas of space — the starting point to get involved. They came (to the classes, events) — they saw — and kept getting involved. All made from the starting point. All of the success starts with the orientation — what do you want to do 'how' — we have tried to answer those questions. How? Let's try with the West Indian community — by including the West Indian was really good.

He concluded that it had been a 'Significant project and worthwhile'. I reminded him that he had challenged me during the consultation when the Congolese agreed to join the pilot — that he wanted the outcome to be significant for the community: his answer now to this was 'yes - significant and worthwhile. Congratulations'.

Appendix I: Animation – a model for taking charge

1 Arrive

A forced migrant seeks refuge in the UK

"I am confused. I cannot believe what has happened; it is like a dream."

"People tell me 'don't claim asylum at the airport – otherwise they will send you back to death.'"



2 Stay

Asylum claim is likely to take many years

"I know about all the bad things that have happened in my country – why should I trust anyone here?"

"I cannot believe in justice, yet that is why I came."

"This is a new trauma I didn't expect."

"How do I get to Croydon?"



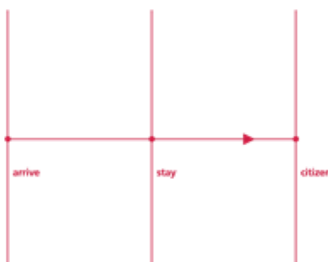
3 Become a citizen

This is the final step

"I told the Home Office my story."

"My case has been rejected and I have become homeless."

"Thinking about this is a step too far - even in my dreams."



4 The process

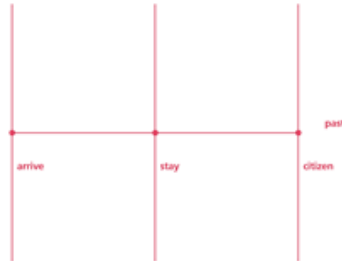
can take up to 10 years

"Everything about being an asylum seeker keeps you stuck in the past."

"We feel like we are in an 'aquarium': kept there until the owner decides we can be released, or left to die."

"We are under control and cannot move."

"I don't blame the UK government: they are doing a lot, but as a human being I see this as a comma in the narrative of my life."



5 The process

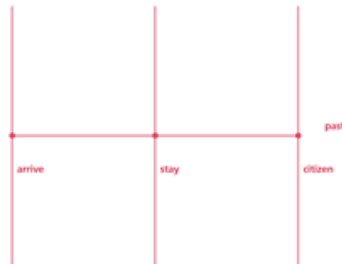
can take up to 10 years

"A full stop would be death."

"I don't know what the next word or sentence in my life will be – what will happen tomorrow."

"Eight years of standing back – they just stopped me in my tracks."

"There are many people in my situation."

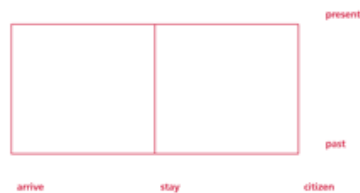


6 Asylum seekers have little chance to live their lives in the present, nor can they engage with the future. They are trapped in the present living in the past.

"It is humiliating."

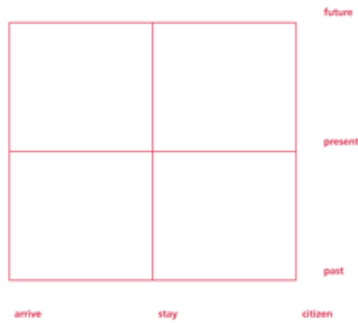
"I am used to surviving in my country from day-to-day."

"Here, I am not assessed on my ability so we can be helped individually."



7 Asylum seekers have little chance to live their lives in the present, nor can they engage with the future; trapped in the present living in the past

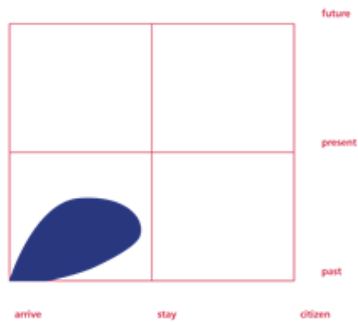
"I am also put to live and learn with other people I do not know, who I may not like, and who are very different to me in so many ways."



8 Without support, it is easy to become isolated, lonely and depressed.

"I think coming together was so important; it helped me reduce stress, share problems, feel less isolated, have fun and hope to do new things."

"It helped me to start to find the 'new' me."



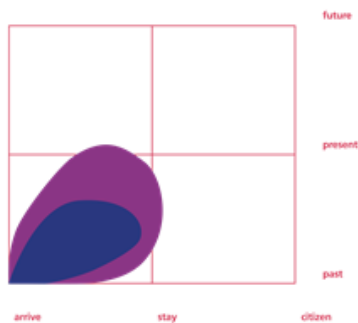
9 Meeting and working together; sharing ideas and food: this starts active lives

"Doing things together sounds so simple but it is so effective."

"It is about one human being meeting another human being."

"It is about creating a new future, a new identity, together."

"It is about not being alone in the world."



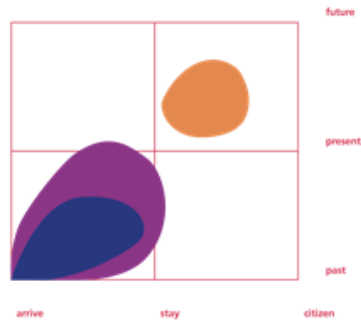
10 Once asylum is granted, individuals have to take charge, they have to live in the present and look to the future

"This was a shock."

"From being housed and living on vouchers, with not having to pay for gas or heating I now had to take charge."

"I was thrown into another world, but I had to get on with it."

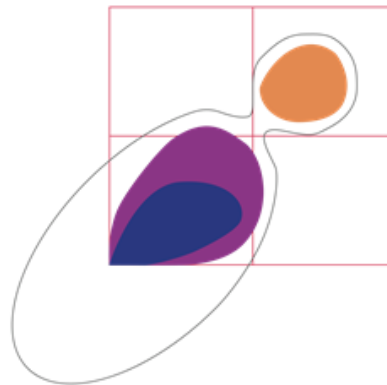
"I knew that depression can set in without having friends and good support."



11 Those in this forced-migrant community have in common their culture, their family circumstances, and the traumatic experiences that forced them to leave their homeland.

"I can share my worries about my family back home, my concerns here, and my cultural roots with my African community."

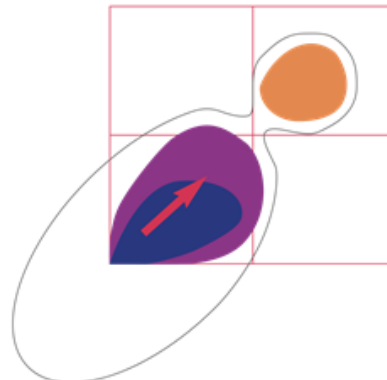
"This is a bond that unites us, and which we can celebrate."



12 The core work is about reducing isolation

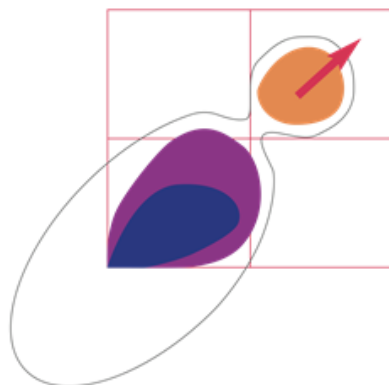
"I couldn't not come out to these events, even though I am suffering from depression."

"My kids, when they came home, told me what a good time they had there, too."



13 For those with leave to remain they tell us they need to know more

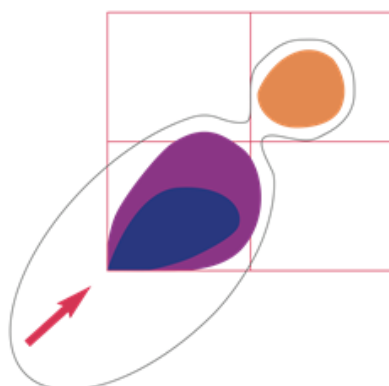
"We need to understand about healthy living, about supporting our children, about citizenship, about volunteering and about getting a job".



14 And it helps to do something 'back in Africa' and deal with trauma

"Knowing there is an organisation working in Africa here in my community makes me less guilty; working with an art therapist helps me feel better about my past."

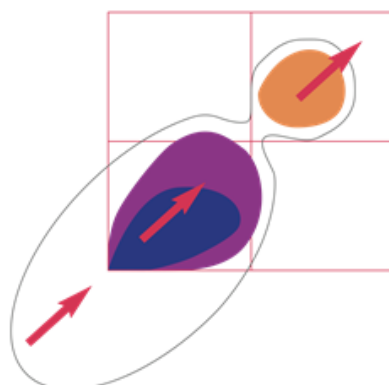
"These things help me move forward."



15 All these activities may help to make a difference

"The community feels supported, appreciated."

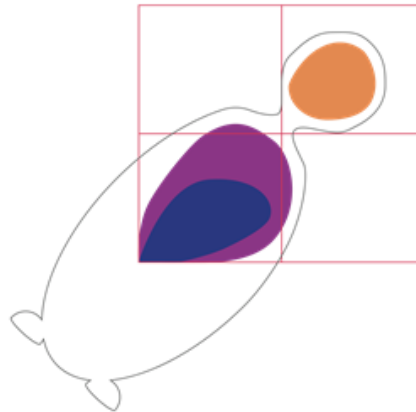
"I am taking charge more of my life."



16 It may help people in the community do new things, go to new places, and feel more able to take charge of their new lives

"I feel mobilised, more independent".

"I am able to stand on my own two feet"



17 While it's not possible to forget the past; it may be possible to face the future.

"I can stand up for myself."

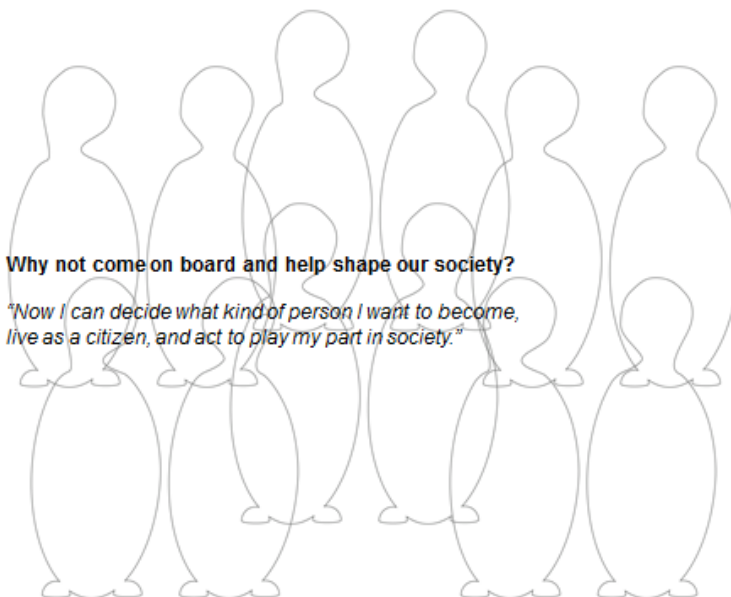
"Think for myself."

"Be myself."



Why not come on board and help shape our society?

"Now I can decide what kind of person I want to become, live as a citizen, and act to play my part in society."



Appendix J: Hearts of Hope

The early settlement of the Congolese, an asylum community in Derby

Poem 1, written for Voice of Congolese Women by Annie Wake, a local writer,
following the Fashion Show 2009

Sewing the fabric of our lives

To wrap around us
and console us

Our souls mesh
into two worlds

Threads intertwined

Forming patterns on patterns
overlapping our lives
criss-crossing cultures
past to present

Fashioning a future
from the roots we've left behind

Creating a cloth

Made from the material
of our experiences

And given to you
in mutual understanding

An article in the making:
our new identity

Annie Wake

Butu atako ewumeli suka se tongo eko tana

[No matter how long the night is, morning will always come]

This proverb is written in Lingala, one of the four national languages used in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central Africa, the others being Kicongo, Swahili and Chilupa. The 'official' language of the DRC is French.

We carried out research with Peter Walker at University of Derby to share our journey and identify our needs. We opened our hearts to him; we asked him to write a series of stories to tell others about our early settlement here in the UK as asylum seekers. These stories are based on fact; they represent what many of us have had to endure during this prolonged process, no doubt like other asylum seekers from other countries.

The UK offers us protection, support, and opportunity to make our way in life.

Telling our stories has been a way of relieving our pain, of sharing our burden of worries, so that at least one other person knows of the pain burning in us, inside. We acknowledge the truth of these stories: they have shaped us; they have brought us closer to our God during these times of trouble. We now want to craft a drama with music and dance, based on such stories, engaging our young people to tell the wider community about our identity – who we are, and 'so as not to forget', as one member put it, adding 'this has been a very hard time in our lives, that for some, continues still'. We thank Peter Walker and University of Derby for their huge support throughout this journey – of listening, acting, sharing; and celebrating our culture: together.

Betty Phoba, Chair
Voice of Congolese Women

Emmanuel Muanda
Congolese Community

Acknowledgement

This series of stories describe the journey of the Congolese community in Derby, an asylum seeking community escaping the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central Africa. The Home Office, between 2000– 2004, dispersed between 200 – 300 Congolese people to live in Derby. By 2005, many were still seeking permission to stay in this country. As I write this in 2012, I believe nearly all of those Congolese people now living in Derby have now received indefinite leave to remain; some left Derby before their decision was known.

This is truly collaborative work as can be seen in the stories, in which the community has 'opened their hearts' to the realities of their lives, to the struggles they faced as human beings during these early years of settlement. The stories show how the engagement of a university researcher can make a difference to people's lives - by helping the community define its needs through doing research together. How such steps enabled community members to take many positive steps together – to meet up regularly, get practical help through for example the creation of a drop-in centre to address individual needs, and take actions that might empower the community on its journey.

I hope these stories will inspire other community groups to tell their own stories, and that collectively the wider community might hear this voice of hope. Care has been taken to ensure the stories are anonymised: some are merged together; all in the hope that the stories may be seen as a journey of the people who comprise the Congolese community here in Derby at a point in time, rather than a collection of single stories experienced only by individuals.

I am humbled and indebted to the community for the trust and friendship they have displayed even during their darkest moments.

Peter Walker

Community Relations Officer, University of Derby

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1. You better leave, now!

Annabel explained “I had to escape my country – I came by myself. I have seven children that I had to leave behind – three boys and four girls. My husband was Director. He was a member of the opposing political party (UDPS), and at this time was away at a meeting working with other party members, and they caught them. While there has never been any evidence, I knew at the time that my husband was dead. They then started an investigation and came to see me ... I started by asking if they could help me find my husband ... then as things progressed I was arrested then they put me in detention ... in military detention. One of the soldiers who spoke my mother tongue, helped me to flee the prison, and this was my first step in fleeing the country, and so I fled detention, although I didn't know I would be doing this at this moment. At this point I didn't know that I was to leave the country but first made my way to a Catholic Church, and was there for three days with a Priest.

The Priest said that he wanted to help me – he argued that the situation is getting worse and this is the time to make a decision to flee the country. I agreed because I could also see the trouble was getting worse. The Priest offering this help knew my family including my husband – and thus wanted to do me this favour. We fled together, me and the Priest; by taking a jeep to nearby Uganda from there I fled to the United Kingdom. I went to the Congolese Association in London to seek Asylum, in July 2002 and sought Asylum in Croydon. I then spent three weeks in a London hotel. I was dispersed in Derby in August, 2002 by NASS.

When I arrived here I didn't know anybody; I had no English. My Housing Officer helped me to enrol on an ESOL course at Derby College, and was helpful in other ways, too by showing me where LIDL and Sainsbury's were in the town, and by showing me directions within the city. I started to make relationships with other Congolese people who were already more established here. I explored Derby. I became very depressed because I missed my children... I spent my time shopping, attending the St James Centre (twice a week for ESOL classes). It was a very difficult time because I had also been working full time in the Congo – I had been a secretary in public administration. I loved my job and was very good at it –I had come to England to nothing.

We talked about her decision to leave, the terror of living in a country experiencing such hostility, the trust she had in her priest and the moment she was bundled into the jeep to leave her homeland and her children far behind. She described it as one of those moments. She left her village behind, dazed, and fled. “In an instant, in fear of my life, trusting the urgency of my priest because I knew he was right and there wasn’t a moment to lose. Soon I had left my village far behind, everything that represented me: my home, my husband, oh God, my children. What would become of them? I had not expected this”.

2. Requiem: my husband is dead; I long for my children who are in Africa

It was eight years ago, in February 2004 when I was taken to a lady attending ESOL classes in the centre where I worked. She was in tears. Andrea had fled to the UK from the DRC in 2000 to seek asylum. While her English was poor, she struggled to tell me her story, which she did quietly, as I encouraged her to, bit by bit: “I miss my four children back in Kinshasa. One of them is very poorly and I have no money to send to pay for her treatment. My husband was murdered and I had no choice but to leave, as they may have seen me as his accomplice” She sobbed proudly, uncontrollably. We sat together as she continued.

There was a silence in the room, a respect: this may have been one woman’s story but the room seemed to soak up her pain: it was a small room with about 15 learners learning English through ELLIS, working on computers. Almost all were asylum seekers. Andrea was perhaps symbolising their stories, too.

We sat for some time together, as she wrestled with her grieving. I told her about the Kübler-Ross grieving cycle, which is all I could think of, and felt very inadequate, looking to find some way of responding, of engaging with her raw pain. I hurt for her and thought of myself as being completely impotent to help. Confronting the atrocities of this new heart of darkness, that appeared to be the Congo, and its gratuitous cruelty, complex beyond my comprehension as we sat together. We parted inconclusively – how could it have been otherwise? I needed to get some

fresh air and left the building. I couldn't get this grief out of my head and wandered into the town; I decided I'd get her a small bouquet of flowers - something symbolic to express my sorrow. This was an epiphanal moment in my life but just another day for Andrea to get through.

It is now three five years on, March 2009. Andrea failed her application for leave to remain, became destitute, was supported by a very special friend during this time, and then given NASS accommodation once again, weekly vouchers, and permission to make a fresh application. Andrea is telling me about letters from her children, translating for me from the French in which they are written. Her English while now faltering, and she apologises for this all the time, but in truth she has mastered the language well and speaks and writes for others in her community.

'Mama Andrea', written Thursday 9 October 2008, from the eldest daughter: 'Hello Mum, – it is with a great pleasure I touch my black pen to say hello and that I love you. Let God bless you, protect you and accord you his bounty during all your life in this world of men. Greet all your friends – I love you.'

Enclosed is a picture of a beautiful young lady of nearly 15.

Next, from my middle daughter, my best friend because she is making me in trouble all the time. 'Nobody understands me except my Mum. How are you? We are very good. And everything is going well here in Kinshasa. Let God in the highest accord you a long life and prosperity in all your activities. God bless you on behalf of Paris. I love you too much'. Another beautiful image of a young person of 14 years is presented with much pride.

And from my Son, who will be 13 in two weeks; he was born weighing 4kg 100g:

'Bonjour Mama – on behalf of your son Harry. I want just to ask you if you are well? I am good as well, Mama. Please could you send for me a Play Station II? Happy Christmas, Easter, New Year. I love you too much'. I see a picture of a beautiful young man, who looks just like his Dad. The next child 'Are you alright? I am well, as well. Mum it is true that you will not call us again? If it is true, this is my letter and I send you my picture just to see me in the picture. A big kiss. Say hello to all your friends who are supporting you in the process of your Asylum case to be settled in

the UK. And then we can see you once again. Nothing to add. A big kiss, Beauty'. We talk. 'How do you look back at this time – living so far away from your children?' I ask. 'This was the only way I could protect them. It is not helping me knowing my children. When I left the Congo, my eldest was 9 years old and the youngest 22 months. We are knowing each other through the phone, pictures...and yet they need this maternal affection. It is not the same with no Father and Mother. They want really to live with me together; as they know it will not ever be possible with their Dad. The past affects the present and the future'.

In July 2006 Andrea was supported through Refugee Action in making a Section Four Application on Humanitarian grounds, and was granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK in June 2009, after arriving registering her claim for asylum seven years earlier.

3. Where's here? It's a long way back there

One discussion that always presided over all others throughout this work is the desire of the community to want to help back in Africa. All the time I had known the community it had collected clothes and sent them in large containers back to their homeland; how they found the several hundred pounds for each cargo, I'll never know; but they did. It seemed to me to be a gossamer thin thread they spun from the very air we breathe, a thread that took them back home in some tangible way, as if to say 'We are here. We shall do what we can' and perhaps, lament in the doing 'don't forget us'.

When we met for those early meetings to explore what we may do together, three of the activists in the community immediately wanted to spend their energies on a campaign to raise money in and across the city so that 'something could be done' for the DRC. In talking with other Congolese community members from Nottingham and Swansea, at the 'Plan for the Future' workshop, the wisdom received was that it was more important to become established in the UK, and then look to see what could be done. There really didn't seem any logical alternative and while I knew the Sikh and Pakistani communities when they came to Derby in the 50s and 60s looked to make their way first by establishing themselves through work, getting housing, and forming

a community group before they could bring over their wives and children, this was a completely different and more difficult set of circumstances: the Congolese were asylum seekers with no rights, engaging in a process that could take many years for their cases to be resolved.

And so it was, this tension had to be held by the community. The not knowing how their families were except through occasional, expensive telephone calls, and through sending fragments of money and clothing back. While here they were 'free' but imprisoned, locked in time.

4. Living with poverty is one thing – living in our minds another

Surviving in poverty is perhaps more easily grasped in our society than some of the other deprivations endured by asylum seekers. People in the community talk about feeling humiliated not having the power to do what they want. Although some acknowledge the support they are offered here through NASS is generous, compared with what they have back home. NASS accommodation provides a safe place to live; free electricity, gas and heating, a safe and a secure place to be in most cases, is what I found overall in my visits to such properties. Asylum seekers do not get to choose who they share their accommodation with, however, and so living alongside others in the house can add to the tensions; living together in this temporary state, with people of different nationalities, all with their own languages, customs and cultures, religious beliefs; educated and non-educated all together. This is a 'no choice' accommodation, as one member of the community put it.

Living with someone you knew in the Congo doesn't necessarily mean you are able to relax here in the UK either: individuals may have been active in different political parties, or on different sides of the conflicts, which meant knowledge about each other could be a dangerous thing. I saw this caution; intelligence was a serious matter, to be considered with some caution, as its misuse could make individuals vulnerable; it may be important to be creative in presenting your identity, and perhaps critical to hide your feelings. The Congo had fingers reaching even into the UK; you had to protect yourself. It took me time to realise my open and easy way of

talking was not something the community was used to, nor perhaps considered wise in view of these considerations, especially in view of the fact that the Congo was still experiencing daily atrocities the like of which we have never experienced here.

“I find it hard now to explain what I am doing here, and why I left the country, and why I cannot go back home, and why they cannot come here”, says Mandy, “but I know that it is too big a risk for immigrants to travel illegally – some children have died during the journey, others have ended up living in another country – ‘in transit’ but stuck where they are for a long time, in other African countries, still en-route to Europe and hopefully England. I would harm myself if they become harmed”.

Life is made humiliating for asylum seekers through their regular requirement to attend a Reporting Centre. Regine tells me “I have been reporting at Loughborough for over two years; before it was here in Derby. In December 2008, the Home Office changed my reporting requirements to fortnightly, and I was then required to report to the Loughborough Reporting Centre as the one in Derby had closed.” Across the community, reporting requirements vary in ways that are seen by the community as inconsistent; who think it is more an opportunity to humiliate them and make them feel like criminals. This experience is compounded, as they are required to hand over their identity papers and other personal possessions upon arrival. Such treatment creates fear, especially if an asylum seeker has failed to report for a number of reasons – perhaps through illness, rejection by the courts of their application, or if they don’t have the funds to travel. Such individuals may now feel they are ‘back in the DRC’ in a regime where they where they may be interrogated or returned home without notification. ‘When they have you there, they can do with you what they like.’ So getting individuals who have lapsed in their reporting is not easy, and I have written explaining individuals circumstances to help this process, in advance of their journey, and would provide travel costs to start the process off. The Reporting Office will normally provide travel tickets once an asylum seeker has reported, but this needs to be requested.

“I am going because it is the law – I do not want to break the law – as a law student myself in Africa – I know how important it is, also working with my husband in the area of human rights. ‘Dura lex sed lex’: no-one is above the law; the law is hard but

it is the law. I know the law says all are equal in the eyes of the law but the way the Home Office is working, it breaks the law. For example, nobody trusts me – everything has to be proved – if I do not attend I am asked to provide evidence at the next visit – but by then they have forgotten – so it is not really at all important. I am already a dead person in their hands: I don't have any travel documents with me – it is really like being in an open prison – they can do what they want at anytime. They control me – I don't have to escape. I am a dead person. And I don't want people to deprive me of my freedom. It makes me feel in my mind I am a slave of the system. I am not a criminal seeking Asylum. It is a human right. Being imprisoned for 7 years, it is not evident to have a nice future. My children's time is being taken from me. I am a strong person – seeing things positively. I am not worried about the future because God is everything for me. Life was difficult for Jesus; my faith is helping me to understand things. An Asylum seeker is a human being, and must be treated without any restrictions”.

5. Dropping into an abyss

Living in accommodation provided by NASS with vouchers provides the minimum level of support in the UK during the application process. Once the court determines that an application has failed, accommodation and vouchers are swiftly withdrawn, leaving individuals destitute: they become homeless and have no means by which they can support themselves; neither can they work, nor may they expect healthcare. It is hard for them to feel loved, or wanted. Very quickly they lose their identity, and they have no choice but to live in the shadows of our society. They become voiceless, nobodies, in their terms, they become ‘nothing’: all their humanity has been stripped away.

I was there at the court hearing, to support Jon, in his application to be granted leave to remain. Jon had been waiting for his case to be heard for three years. Jon agreed to use the services of an interpreter provided, who was fluent in Lingala and French. Jon was able to speak a small amount of English. The judge could only base his decision on the evidence provided at the time the applicant arrived in the UK when they completed the two forms issued by the Home office. The gathering in a large-

courtroom seemed so imperialist, so colonial, so overpowering, so unnecessary; and yet this was our legal system at work; a sledgehammer to crack a nut, a court hearing built upon insufficient initial investigation upon arrival in the country, and at the time of claiming asylum. It was well known that interviews of new arrivals were conducted by insufficiently trained officers. I knew this had independently been established locally through the efforts of Derby Refugee Forum, who had established and gained agreement through our local MP that interviewing was not fit for purpose, and as such failed significantly to provide appropriate questioning of, and responses from applicants upon their arrival in the UK that could materially support their case at such a hearing or 'determination'. Arrivals invariably didn't have a command of the English language, didn't understand the significance of their statements. Women making their applications were encouraged, according to one community member, to exaggerate in their statements that they had been multiply raped, for example, and I have reason to know of several examples of this occurring within the community.

Of course, Asylum seekers fleeing their home do not have time to prepare a defence they can take with them. They may be lucky if they can kiss their children goodbye, let alone pack. Conflict in the DRC is complex and dynamic, washing through parts of the country in waves, so it not easy to monitor its ebb and flow either, locally let alone through the Home Office, nor to understand its winners and losers – its causalities. Hard evidence is therefore difficult to obtain and bring with you during this exile. Jon knew he would be wanted as an outspoken journalist, that the military were looking for him, and that he had to leave the country without delay.

The judge went through the case that had been prepared seeking compelling evidence he needed to support the application, challenging the credibility of some of the statements. The case lasted about an hour. Several weeks later Jon received the decision that case could not be supported, and the determination had failed; Jon would have to leave his NASS accommodation and find a new home within a few days. Formal notification quickly arrived from NASS to confirm this, and that benefits in the form of vouchers would be removed within a week; Jon had no right to health care unless he was already receiving it, and was to become destitute. Jon then went off my radar. He disappeared.

It was a year later that Jon came to the Drop-in centre. I didn't recognise him immediately. Where people go when placed in this position is troublesome. Some just disappear – perhaps they have friends in other cities where they can seek refuge for a while. If they died it is hard to imagine anyone would know, and what could they do if they did? I know these communities do a huge amount for each other, and so retain good networks.

There is for them the possibility to make attempts to return home – through projects like 'Long Journey Home'. In my experience, those I have supported fear home more than they fear destitution here, and will not consider this option. When someone doesn't have an address it is hard to find them; it is hard for them too, of course, because without an address you cannot get a bank account, or keep in touch with your solicitor, or the Home Office. Jon not only didn't have a home, he had almost nothing.

So when he arrived on a grey, cold morning in March, he arrived with a plastic bag. His clothes looked oddly trendy, but I noticed they didn't fit him – he had lost weight. He came into the centre, sent by a friend. He looked empty – a walking ghost. He told me his name "It is Jon!" half expectantly, half fearful. I swelled up, stood up and walked towards him. I took his limp hand, we hugged, and hugged. He hung on – he was smaller than I remembered, and he smelled; he couldn't have washed for days.

"Jon, where have you been?" leading him to a chair near the gas fire that was on burning brightly. He slumped into the chair. We got him a warm drink and some food. We always had nourishment for the community, it went without saying. He didn't speak for some time; I thought in this warmth he was going to go to sleep, which would have been fine. But Jon rallied. A few words were exchanged in Lingala between Jon and my colleagues, and slowly it emerged he was now sleeping at a friend's house, back in Derby, and had been sent to the centre.

The brutality of being made destitute rammed home: what could we do to help this man. Start again, get his details, write to the local MP, seek a right to a Fresh Claim, get evidence, somehow. It would take time. In the meanwhile, provide some love, show him we cared. The Congolese community in the city, I knew, were astonishing

in supporting each other and this man, somehow would be helped. And so we started to rebuild his case but it isn't good enough that we should see destitute souls in our country, in the dawn of this new century.

6. Surviving death

"Peter" she exclaimed, "Norbert is dead". "When did he die?" I ask. I can hear people crying, no wailing, in those full African tones we cannot find the liberty to deploy at times of grief or happiness, but would love to, an unremitting, an arresting cacophony.

"Come now – we need your help". I put the phone down and left the University not knowing what to expect. Arriving in some distress myself by now, thinking I know who they are referring too, I expect to see a body, but of course it's our Drop-in centre and so this is unlikely. There is a sense of relief on the faces of the several people gathered there, as they tell me they have heard he is unconscious. They are still huddled together, anxious about what to do – "He was found in Leicester, in a friend's flat, and we were told he was dead. It was so cold in the house, and he wasn't covered up. He'd been there all week-end, and was found by the flat mate this morning."

"Let's call an ambulance – do you have the address?" "No we couldn't do that – he is afraid of hospitals – and about what they may do to him. He is not well". "No, he is not well", I retort, seeing the irony, "It's really important, I insist, we must get help straight away – who is there now? They give me a name I didn't know. "Tell him to wait until the ambulance comes". One of us needs to get to the hospital to be with him. There is a long discussion within the group, who seem to be coming out of shock, realising all may not be lost. "I'll go" says Serge, "I know where the hospital is, and will stay with him". We take some money out of petty cash, ensuring enough for transport and some food for Norbert, whom they all love deeply, and off goes our disciple, in a hurry but in truth it will be some time before he gets there.

We settle down, and learn after a while that the ambulance has arrived and is preparing to take Norbert to hospital – he is now conscious and responding, and it sounds as if he has diabetes, and had lapsed into unconsciousness. I learn that NASS had decided to move Norbert to Leicester away from his community here in Derby, and there had been some difficulties in his accommodation where the inhabitants were noisy and Norbert couldn't sleep. We talked about him for a while, and it was clear that everyone in the community loved this man: he was gentle and helped everyone where he could. The community decided they would support him in their own homes here back in Derby, whatever the outcome; I agreed to write to NASS to make a case for Norbert to be returned 'home'. I got back to the University rung out, and headed to the chaplaincy for some support, which I got.

Things don't happen that quickly in this asylum world. We were successful though in a matter of weeks to have him returned to Derby, where he could be cared for. Life settled down again for Norbert.

7. Released from jail

“Do you remember the man we released from jail, Régine remarked one day?” I looked at her. “Well I saw him the other day” she continued – “he has a job and looked so happy!” Three years on, and life had transformed for Andrew.

When we were running the Drop-in centre, Jenny his partner came to see us, distressed that Andrew had been arrested. It turned out, for driving illegally – no licence, no insurance, not his car (and probably not following the Highway Code either I mused, but who does in Normanton, I thought). They were both failed asylum seekers at the time, and so Andrew was not allowed to work, and could not have had a driving licence, nor insurance. They received no support in the form of accommodation or benefits, so life presented impossible challenges around their very survival.

Andrew was being held in jail and his case would soon be heard in court. He had to earn some money to provide for his family, and this had been his chance to earn

some cash; he had no legitimate means of earning money for his family. Why wouldn't you? It happened all the time, even the House of Lords is moving in its deliberations to agreeing this on humanitarian grounds, as well as national refugee organisations making the case for asylum seekers to be given the right to work. We decided to write to explain the context within which his actions had been taken, and posted it off. We didn't expect any response and got on with our lives for the time being.

And then I heard that we had received a call from the family to say that the judge taking the case had read the letter during the hearing, and was moved to release Andrew immediately from prison, saying that if he had the right he would also grant him leave to remain in this country. The community received this so well; there was a real buzz for a while. Justice had been served. It gladdened my heart that our law enforcers can show humanity.

8. Life on the edge

It is amazing how things suddenly come into focus. For those who know about trauma, the signs must be so obvious. I became aware of it gradually in my contact with asylum seekers. Initially, when I met the asylum seekers who flowed in and out of the Derby Refugee Forum, I was shocked at their distress and their impoverishment. The new arrivals at the centre often had a sense of urgency – they believed they could manage their way through the process, however difficult it may appear. For those who had been coming some months, or even years, they were less in control, and I got the impression they were now floating, like driftwood on a calm sea, not expecting anything, just following a pattern of behaviour out of habit – what else was there to do? With it seemed to come a numbness, an unconsciousness in their very existence, a never ending journey. During the winter the things we British take for granted such as the cold together with the unremitting rain; I don't know how they endured this, especially those from warmer countries.

We for our part, welcomed them back, perhaps we had news for them, filling out forms they may have brought with them, making enquiries on their behalf, starting to

make an application to apply for them to be given leave to remain having clarified their position. Many would leave with the food parcels they could live off for a few days; the centre always seemed to be able to produce these while it tottered along barely solvent.

Many looked lost, in shock, and it wasn't just the lack of language, nor the poor conditions within which they were living. It seemed to me part of their soul was missing.

Carrying out the one-to-one interviews and running the drop in centre made me aware of the suffering in much more acute detail. I shared my concerns with the Art Therapy back at the university, asking for some help in working with the community. My colleagues offered immediate support and suggested, in effect, I may also need some supervision or at least help working with this estranged community. A tutor and an art therapy student became involved in the sewing classes. An Art Therapy student attended the workshops regularly, getting to know the community, followed by two Dance Movement Psychotherapy students. The community quickly showed their love for these students.

We discussed how we could introduce the idea of therapy to the community, who I knew were resistant to such practices, believing, for example, it may conflict with their Christian beliefs. We agreed that the art therapist student should talk to the group. I and the leader of the workshop introduced the notion that art therapy is a useful way of helping people in trauma, to encourage them to listen to the students. The meeting went well and we went to some pains to point out that we did not want community members to volunteer at the meeting but to let the art therapist know confidentially, and that once the workshops were set up they would be announced and run at a different time to the regular classes, that they would be of a confidential nature, and run in a different location. Great care was given to producing a methodology that protected individuals who may have wanted to enrol for therapy, and to clear that confidentially within the therapy would not be broken by the therapists.

It was during this period that I was invited to see Angella, a lady living in a Congolese family; she was more-or-less house bound, I was told, and would not go out, but needed help. I was welcomed at the house and ushered into a room, together with the head of the household, Jack. We went in and sat down. I had met Angella some years before and she remembered me. I don't think I had ever met or seen someone so withdrawn; it was a smallish room and it seemed to me she was sitting outside the room, a long way away, almost unreachable. I sat quietly acknowledging her and asking her how she was. Jack spoke, saying, she wants you to help her, Peter. Angella nodded. It seemed a long time passed before we said anything, and then I quietly suggested that we are running a women's group, would she consider coming to it? This had been a helpful group, I added, for many women – to come together with their children, to share food, to be together, to make garments, to have fun? Perhaps Jack would bring you to one of the events – you wouldn't have to stay and if you liked it you could come along anytime. I encouraged her to think about the idea. Would she like to see me again, I ask? Another nod; and I left, saying my goodbyes.

Well to my surprise, Angella came to the workshops, and then we sat and talked again, back in Jack's house. I had been making some enquiries through a colleague at Derby Refugee Forum who advised me her case was coming up and that it looked promising, and there was nothing I could do further. By this time Refugee Action were also involved in supporting the lady.

I had also been approached by the therapist to see if I could help locate a doctor for Angella, a prerequisite for all who attend therapy. Angella had no papers, nor was she registered with a doctor here in the city. We did have a NASS number to go on and the local practice was able to ascertain that Angella had been registered with a doctor elsewhere. Weeks passed but eventually Angella started the therapy classes and continued to attend some of the women's workshops.

It must have been several months later on in that year that I met Angella at our children's Christmas Party we held in the local Chinese restaurant. I didn't need training in therapy to see a different woman: she sat at a table looking so happy and well; she beamed a smile at me, and said "Hello, Peter, how are you?" "I am fine; it is

so lovely to see you!" We gave each other a big hug. What outstanding work our therapy student and her supervisor had done: Brilliant work. Now we could party.

9. The silence of rape

Rape in addition to ravages endured by being a failed asylum seeker is another poignant reminder of the desperate circumstances these migrants find themselves having to cope with as they grapple their way agonisingly slowly through a jungle for which they have no map, nor for which there seem to be any clear directions.

At work on a Monday early in 2008, I picked up the phone to answer a call: "Hello Peter ... How are you?" her voice was distant. I hardly recognised her. She was faint and far away, she could have been back in the Congo, perhaps she was. "Hello Layla, I'm fine, how are you? She was distressed. We had been working together on her case over the last few months; Layla was normally quite extrovert and upbeat despite her difficult circumstances.

There followed a long pause before she uttered "I've been raped" There was no exclamation mark in her tone, more resignation, relief she was now telling someone, perhaps. A hole opened up and I was dropping down in it. What do I say? I've not been trained to do this - how stupid is that, to think that training will necessarily overcome being human, you know, your mind is racing, this is someone who will be at least distressed, and humiliated. "Are you alright?" I said calmly, while I thought how stupid is that, of course she isn't! "I am so sorry."

There followed a silence, she didn't say anything more for while. "When did it happen?" "Saturday night; it was on the London Road". She gave me a little more information about the circumstances - she was returning home, it was late.

I felt compassion and anger. It was outrageous that this should happen in our society at all, but to such a vulnerable woman. She was destitute awaiting a decision from the courts on her appeal for permission to remain in the UK. I had obtained details of the court ruling, which was positive, but the Home Office had relocated her files to

another city and they couldn't be sure where they were in the country, probably Leeds, is what I'd found out. "This is very serious crime" adding "here in the UK" and then, I think I said "Do you want to press charges?" "I think you should go and see your doctor". "No, I don't think so. My doctor is in Birmingham". I didn't feel it was right to talk further over the phone; it seemed indelicate. But she had rung me, what right had I to direct the conversation? We agreed to meet, and I said I would do everything I could to support her. We never did; she resisted and remained silent. On the bigger stage, this crime almost went un-noticed, except that I knew. This was but a fragment of the hell of living in the continued heart of darkness, here in the UK. I pressed her to see the police, get help, and reassured her that such crimes must not go unchallenged; and that the perpetrator must go to prison. How could I imagine life for a woman here escaping the Congo, where over there, life is cheap, rape is used as a weapon of war or as a part of the senseless, gratuitous violence metered out by all in conflict. How could she imagine for a moment our justice system would take her word, a failed asylum seeker, when in her country the courts could be bribed?" She knew how her community was disliked here in the UK, and that brought its own pressures.

I concluded that she had decided silence would help her case, after all, others had told me it was better to sit on your hands while your case was being heard, rather than make any trouble. Rather than the Home Office knocking on your door at 2am in the morning and taking you away. Perhaps sharing her ordeal with someone who cared was of some comfort. I'd like to think so. I just believed I'd let her down.

Life moved on for Layla. We helped the Home Office locate her file and provide acknowledgement to us of the courts ruling she would be re-instated as an asylum seeker to pursue a fresh application. Shortly after this, she returned to Birmingham where she had originally been dispersed, and I hear news about her occasionally through the community.

10. A bridge to give us voice: while we find our own

Not all went smoothly, by any means in this work; we had several disappointments and not everything the community wanted got done. For example, we had wanted to tell a story about the community through digital storytelling, and I had believed I had funding to do this, which it turned out there wasn't. I apologised to the Steering Group and to the leader of the community, and said this work would have to be put on hold. For me, this was an important matter, of promising and then failing to deliver.

The leader turned things round and said not to worry; he then apologised for not making the Fashion Show, as he had been elsewhere, but talked about the community being very excited about this event and complimented me on the way that this is motivating people within the community to want to come to University, and that I was acting as a bridge. It seemed that sharing was at the heart of this work – the disappointments were just a fact of life, which needed to be got on with. I received an email from Chair of Voice of Congolese Women following the event, too: 'Hi Peter, Thank you so much for everything you do! It is my pleasure to do all the hard work with you. I'm not sure that you'll find your phone somewhere! May my God in the heaven bless you and look after you for all the good things and your support for all voiceless people in Derby. You are like a bridge for them...Be blessed in the name of Jesus Christ, our saviour. Annabel'

So through the help of the community, my own perceived failure was an opportunity to get closer to the community, and couldn't have been seen more differently by this struggling and vulnerable community: their way of coping brought me closer into their community reality, and brought me down to earth.

11. On a journey – at last

I entered the courtroom at the Home Office in Croydon, West London – a room in which there were about 15 people squashed around a large table. The appeal was presided over by a judge who sat opposite me as I entered the room.

She welcomed me in, not wishing to lose any time. The air was heavy with emotion, my immediate impression was that everyone was tense, as if they were literally sitting on the edge of their seats; emotions had clearly run high, and the questioning must have been extensive and personal: I had waited for about an hour before being called. And it wasn't over yet. I looked towards Mada, and the last-minute pro-bono lawyer who had offered his services when we arrived. Mada looked desolate, standing, tear stained, and withered. The lawyer looked tense. It might not have gone well. "Mr Walker? Come in" ushered the judge. "I understand you are the witness in this appeal?" I think I took an oath and then answered a series of questions, with my concentration fixed on the judge. Before I knew it she declared: "I overturn the judgement of the Home Office in this case; Mada Brown is to be given accommodation and food vouchers with immediate effect".

The courtroom erupted. Mada slumped and dissolved in tears. He had lived as a failed asylum seeker in Derby for four years, at first homeless and destitute and then stateless and in poor health, as attempts to send him home back to the Sudan had failed. He had lived during these times in various derelict buildings, surviving on food scraps and clothing given by friends, supplemented by the weekly food parcels provided by Derby Refugee Forum, whom I represented making this Section Four application on humanitarian grounds. There was tumultuous, spontaneous applause. Mada got up and thanked his lawyer and came over to hug me. "Thank you, thank you".

As we walked out of the Home Office building together, it all began to sink in – for both of us. Mada extended his crumpled body and breathed in the air of a new man: I observed his excitement, his relief, his disbelief that he could now look at the world with pride: and if not freed, once again human. He was finally on the long journey to his new home, England. We travelled back to St Pancras railway station. He had an 'Open' travel ticket, provided by the Home Office; I had my own economy ticket and so had to wait on the station until I could return home later. Colleagues in Derby were delighted with the news and pressed for temporary accommodation. Within a week, Mada had been provided with a permanent home and vouchers - a small regular amount of money upon which to survive.

Looking back, this was an epiphany for me, too. I had to acknowledge I was a refugee, and needed to rediscover who I could be. Choosing to work with asylum seekers had transformational potential for my life, too.

12. Voice of Congolese Women

This organisation started by women meeting in each other's homes for company and support in 2006. Women in the asylum community identified with their isolation and wished for companionship. I was invited to help write funding applications, the constitution, other policies and procedures, and in supporting the creation of financial records. I attended their management meetings, as a witness.

In the early days we struggled to find a meeting room and on this occasion agreed to meet at Pear Tree library in the heart of Normanton. Meeting at the university was too far away. It was a cold, wet day in May, 2009, as I waited with the Chair for others to arrive. One of the committee arrived bringing apologies from two others. Eventually there were four of us but we had no privacy in the library and could not hold the meeting very effectively. The Chair had prepared some ground rules for future meetings and workshops, as well as proposed that we do a collection every month so we can save up to support Africa. I saw what effort was being made by the Chair and members of her committee; her dedication and determination to form and run a management committee; her determination to do it right, with a vision to support her community. It was incredibly poignant: the commitment of this little group of people wanting to step outside their circumstances and build something for the future. Other members who couldn't attend, genuinely because of the complexity of their lives but wanting to be there, to grow this community group and take things forward. This really mattered to them; and it mattered to me.

For a year we had focused on building up the community group, had run about 12 workshops, had an amazing Fashion Show in March 2009 with over 200 people from this and other communities attend, and had run a large community feedback workshop, Plan for the Future in April 2009. A lot had been achieved and the

community was seeing this. Things appeared to be on the turn, thanks to the guts and vision of a small group in the community, who sowed seeds of new life, and with them hope.

13. Congolese Community Association

While Voice of Congolese Women formed through community action; other Congolese groups have also become well known for their music and art, while other groups too have offered individual support to the community, although there had generally always been a struggle to win funding. The idea of working with a University to define their needs offered a novel approach, and attracted interest from most of the community activists.

The success of the meetings and their take up by the community was initially of great concern for me, as I hadn't done this before. I wanted the community to debate and decide on things that were important to them, and it increasingly became apparent that this is what intrigued them. After only a few meetings, the community agreed it needed to create a database – so it could understand more about 'who they are', 'where they live', and communicate better. It was soon seen that a database could provide the basis for pastoral support – supporting a new family arriving in the community, the birth of a child, or helping with the funeral arrangements around the death of a member of the community. The community leaders acknowledged they didn't know the needs of their community and so we talked about and designed research in the community to find out. A reflective meeting with one of the community members helped me understand that it was considered positive by the community that the women had been involved in the work and that the research would keep the community's interest for this project. It was accepted that working through the men would have taken a lot longer.

The meetings were not seen as talking shops, then, more an opportunity to see 'What could be done' to establish and grow a community group, based on the needs of the whole community, one that could have lasting value. To build an umbrella organisation, a Congolese Community Association, would be the first time since

arriving here in the UK. The community meetings quickly established a core pattern of attendance. The community members had made several attempts to obtain funding, and so came well equipped with ideas. The meetings became creative and searching: the need to know the membership, provide pastoral care, help communicate better with everyone in the community and help the community better understand its issues. The community entered into the spirit of the proposal. I believe there was a seriousness to produce something worthwhile, perhaps an excitement, and a belief that this could happen.

It was suggested that the community may be feeling trapped, in a negative spiral, and that they do not know how to move forward to advance their own lives. The community recorded in the minutes issued after the meetings that it wanted to 'Be confident about our culture and what we believe in; send out strong messages about who we are, about our culture, not being afraid of saying who we are'. And later in the month, it was agreed that these meetings are: 'a unique project in that the community leadership is being encouraged to identify what it wants to do to support its community individually and collectively', and that 'Other members of the community running projects are to be invited to the next on this basis'. We agreed it was time to take this work to have it blessed by the church, as well as communicate the intentions to the whole community.

By February 2009 it was becoming apparent that the community had moved to a point where it had clarity about what it wanted to do; this was captured in the minutes: 'The group acknowledged the need to embrace democracy into this process—through the creation of the Steering Committee, and to ensure full representation of the community by the Steering Committee. The need to work together, was acknowledged, to include all groups, and to act truly as an 'umbrella' body and recognise that certain things will have to be put in place: constitution and bank account'. A bid was written to capture what could be done during this 'first phase' under the title 'New Hope' and was submitted to the Derbyshire Learning and Development Consortium for an ESF Community Grant to meet their deadline, end of March 2009. While the application was unsuccessful, the community was invited to re-apply, which it did, and by November the application was accepted with reduced funding. It was at this time that I had hoped the community could take the

work forward to establish the Congolese Community Association. It was important to deliver the funded project, and through the Project Officer of the New Hope Project we set up and ran a Drop-in centre for six months, supporting 40 members' of the community. Some of the stories appear here in 'Hearts of Hope'. The association did not prosper; perhaps this was a step too far at this time.

14. Finding our own space: becoming active again

During the start-up of the sewing project in 2009 we had some difficulty finding a suitable location where we could regularly meet and establish the group. A local church where the community worshiped was suggested and we booked it and got started. We found storage space for sewing machines, cables and accessories, and for fabrics. We would put up the tables every Saturday and start the classes about lunch time. Up to about forty women would come to the classes, with their children who may number 20 or more, and for the major part of the afternoon the classes focused on making clothing.

One of the men in the community would look after the children and they would have fun and giggle, draw and chase about. At about five o'clock everything stopped and all the food came out – made by several women and brought by them. The mood changed and suddenly everyone was eating, talking and laughing. I realised how important this part of the afternoon was, and this can be seen in the video we made (You Tube: Voice of Congolese Women). In the early sessions, I remember cleaning up and finishing about 7pm with two of the volunteers, seeing for myself the value of such events. It wasn't long before I wasn't needed, as they could manage without my support.

The value of having this space it seemed couldn't be overstated, however, and when during some of the Saturdays the caretaker forgot to open up the centre, with women having to wait outside in the rain with their children, materials and food, it became apparent just how critical it was to have a space they could call their own and feel was their own. Within a year we had partnered with Pear Tree Library and opened the first floor of the library – used for book binding and now cleared, re-floored, and

available for the community. 'The Bindery' was a large beautiful room 20 x 30 metres, light with ten large windows, well heated, safe and private, central within in Normanton, and available to the group for classes. We made it available and free for other community groups to use, and this had a good take up. We have run over 200 workshops there over the last two years.

15. Seeking the blessing of the church

Church and God are central to the lives of many of the Congolese living here in Derby. It became central to our thinking as our ideas formed during the Steering group meetings, when one of the leaders suggested that we should share our work with the local pastor, to receive his support and blessing. I would be invited as a guest, and discussions were held with the pastor. Jenny Nyota would speak for the group, in French and English.

The church filled during preparations for the service – musical instruments, chairs and microphones placed quietly, and as the congregation arrived, and everyone remained silent, even the children for most of the time at least. Everyone was very smartly dressed, the children too, especially the little boys in their three piece suites. There ran through this congregation a feeling of great pride within the gathering. By the time the pastor arrived, there were about 65 people sitting, with three singers and a person playing bongos. More people came as the worship gathered momentum: singing, powerful praying interspersed with music and more singing. Prayers were led by the assistant pastor, repeated by the congregation in a loud whisper; it was very reverential and emotional, and by now there was swaying in the congregation.

By about 4.20pm the Pastor had delivered a long sermon based upon Timothy, Barnabus, and Mark, relating to how Barnabus stuck by Mark even though Paul was unhappy about Mark's behaviour, and how people need to be careful about others taking advantage when money is concerned. This was delivered in French and translated into English; the oration was powerful, loud and uncompromising.

Jenny spoke eloquently in French and the translation followed in English. She introduced me from the university and gave me the chance to say a few words - I

said how pleased I was to have been invited, and how at this time when we were looking for support, St Paul is also promoting personal growth. I asked the Pastor if he could pray for this project - and thanked him for his huge support.

He got up and we shook hands - he then went on to bless the project and pray for its success. I wrote and thanked Jeannette the next day, 'Dear Jenny, I was so moved by the way you talked on Sunday to the congregation: I thought it was wonderful, carrying conviction and sincerity'. And received her response: 'I think that all of us would see this project getting far and be benefit to our community. As a saying goes in Africa: "one finger cannot wash a face or lift a weight". What I said to community members was a feedback from ideas we've all put together during meetings. I forward congratulations to everyone involved in the project. Many thanks. Jenny.

16. Enter a white angel and a Caribbean choir: glue that binds us

Angels often appear from nowhere, and they don't have wings, at least that is my experience. This one arrived in February 2009, walked into the workshop, took a look around, sat down with some of the learners, and started to teach them. She was a white angel and her name was Francine.

We thought she was a spy, at first, because we found out she taught at the West Indian Community Centre, and poaching is known to go on between organisations, so there was some concern about her motives. These were unfounded: not only did Francine provide solid support as a teacher but she also seemed to be instrumental in encouraging the ladies from the West Indian Community Centre to come along and join in the workshops, which they did with all their joy of life and love. These events now attracted women from over ten nationalities, and so the eclectic nature of the group added spice; it brought greater social capital and a sense of belonging, as one lady, Nicole commented when speaking on Radio Derby following the Fashion Show, March 2009, "I am now able to greet people from other communities when I walk down through Normanton".

The fact the West Indian ladies sang in a mixed choir didn't go unnoticed, either, and during our first Fashion Show in March 2009, they introduced the evening through their gospel singing.

At the Congolese Exhibition and Awards Evening in November 2009, new garments had been made for the choir by the Sewing Group, led by a Congolese fashion designer, Julienne. They supported the Congolese presence at the Ashbourne Arts Festival 2011 and later in the Community Awards Evening 2011, held at the University of Derby, joined by the Chair and Committee of the West Indian Community Association, George Mighty, together with other community leaders. The evening was hosted by Pro-Vice Chancellor Philip Plowden. Presentations were made by Dean of Faculty, Professor Guy Daly with Pauline Latham, Member of Parliament for Mid Derbyshire.

17. Re-united: the impossible dream

I was at my desk when the phone rang. "Is that Mr Walker?" "Yes" I said. "This is the High Commission in Nairobi".

This could only be one thing; I was now racing. "Do you know Andrea Beaumont?" I answered yes several times, to a series of short questions, and there then followed an abrupt "thank you". "I wish this application..." but before I could finish "every success", the caller had put the phone down. This was not a social call. It was the finality of eight years dreaming. I knew it. This was a heart stopper; a life changer. I had spoken to a decision maker; a family maker or breaker?

Ten days later, Andrea rang me. "Hi Peter ... I've had a letter from Africa ... my children have been given permission to come here, they have got indefinite leave to remain". She could not contain her emotions. They were coming to England. They were going to be re-united; the family was to be together again. Inexpressible joy. We met the next day and after taking advice, decided we'd wait until the children had arrived safely on British soil, and were safe before we announced the news. Africa was Africa, and nothing there was ever certain, even here.

Two months later, due to an administrative slip-up in Kinshasa, the girls arrived first, then four weeks later, the boy. During the trip from Heathrow to Derby, the girls sat together with their mum in the back. I drove and my wife sat alongside me. The girls talked, and talked; they started to giggle. It was like champagne popping. Andrea giggled – for the first time ever that I could recall. Eight years of separation, pent-up tensions and anxiety, eight years of lost time, of desperation, of unquenchable desire to touch each other, to see each other in the flesh; to cuddle and to talk, and to laugh – uncontrollably. It didn't stop until we got dropped them off at their new home in Derby. But I imagined it continued well into and through that night, and into the morning of an entirely new world for all of them, one that was utterly unimaginable even six months earlier. How these lives turned once again on the decision of an official thousands of miles away in Africa.

18. An African gathering – laughter, linguistic knots, a family playing together

Voice of Congolese Women were approached recently by an anthropologist who was researching how proverbs were being used here in the UK – could they survive in these new lives? He would arrange for us to meet at our favourite restaurant in Derby – the May Sum Chinese restaurant. Seven of the community agreed to join him to discuss how they may help, and I tagged along. Not anything too unusual you may think.

We introduced ourselves to Cocoumbo our anthropologist, and sat down at our table having ordered soft drinks; we were alone in the conference room we always used for our gatherings, our parties and celebrations, and so we wouldn't disturb anyone. The meeting gathered pace: what languages do we all speak? They all chipped in: Arabic, Lingala, French, Swahili, Tshiluba, some Dutch, Russian and Hebrew – and English; this was an afterthought. They were already en-route back to Africa. Which proverbs shall we talk about?

There was now some excitement as they settled quickly on Lingala proverbs. We all knew we could help ourselves to food, and while one or two left the table to get started, the others just couldn't wait to start the party, is how it seemed. The men in

the community had come prepared with their own lists of proverbs – they were taking the matter very seriously – and brought their ideas; Cocoumbo had brought a Lingala dictionary, which was examined and pronounced to be adequate. There then began a discussion of which I became an observer – individuals started listening to the list of proverbs that had been prepared. They agreed to go through them one-by-one starting with the first, with increasing excitement. They then listened and were suddenly reciting proverbs, performing them, chanting and repeating the rhythms of the proverbs, re-rehearsing them to recover their exact enunciation, rediscovering, with love, with relish what they must have heard every day of their former lives. They were now, I was convinced, back in Africa; they all looked so enthralled, bigger together, and a family. I could now have been around their kitchen table in Africa or even better around a big fire, I imagined, in the evening, surrounded by the darkness and immensity of the African sky I had seen for myself in Dakar.

One said “we have to transliterate this proverb”, another, “it’s not a Lingala proverb, it’s from the North of the Congo” and another explained to me its meaning. We wrote down in Lingala and English. Another said to me “we use proverbs to convey our thoughts, to understand our world, and to make sense of our lives, and others lives, too!” It wasn’t long before we had 50 listed, and lunch was over. They returned from their brief encounter with their homeland, and looked around; they were now back in Derby. I had visited them, and they had embraced me as a friend; it was their world I had entered, their wonderful capacity to recite proverbs, and no doubt their songs, stories, and in any of several languages. They had laughed, loved each other’s company; there were undoubtedly other conversations flowing within the group at the time. Someone arrived late with their baby and was mildly reprimanded for having missed some of the fun; someone wanted their bus fare but these were the squabbles you get in a family, a close community. These got sorted out. I witnessed the vital importance of engaging through these rich cultural traditions.

Reconnecting hearts and minds

Even here in Derby, the Congo consumes me
With its stifling warmth; its corruption; the atrocities its people endure
There is something remarkable though about the Congolese people
They are talkers, extrovert, artistic, ingenious, talented
Lovers of life and mischief in equal measure

Some survive here only as bodies
Like sardines stuffed in tins
They survive 'elsewhere'
With their heads stuck in the Congo

They agonise over their family left behind
Sending what they can: other peoples' cast offs,
What they buy, their savings, all for the promise
Their family will be safe, fed, be alive

There's is a deep love, they respect their culture:
A strong faith - they pray, they hope
Sucked back through the portal
Their present - the past
The secret holocaust – the Congo

Everyone has the right to life
It is precious, and love overcomes all

Why not work together,
Join our hearts and minds?
To fashion a new future

Peter Walker
Summer 2009

Appendix K: Use of Grounded Theory and first attempt at conceptualising the research

1 Commentary on my approach to using Grounded Theory

1.1 Extracts from the analysis

2 First attempt at conceptualising the research

1 Commentary on my approach to using Ground Theory

In selecting an analysis tool, I set out wishing to find patterns in the data rather than impose a framework upon the data as in template analysis, a deductive process based upon an accepted premises and which was static and unchanging (Newby, 2010). Grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1999), offers an inductive analytical coding data generalisation process that is rooted in what the data is saying, is self-evaluating and anticipates that researchers will ‘constantly be thinking about their data, their codes and the interrelationships between them’ (Newby, 2010: 488). Newby notes that it is ‘the *process* that establishes its distinctive contribution’ (*ibid.*). Charmaz claims that such ‘systemic qualitative analysis has its own logic and could generate theory’ (Charmaz, 2006: 5). Charmaz (2006) credits Strauss in bringing notions of human agency, emergent processes, social and subjective meanings, problem-solving practices, and open-ended study of action to grounded theory (*ibid.*: 7). I selected two data sets for analysis, the individual community interviews and the Steering Group Meeting minutes. The analysis would follow the process highlighted by Newby (2010). This started by creating a substantive or open coding phase, an iterative process in which the researcher first reads through the data and notes down ideas and observations relating to the research aims and then prepares data units.

In carrying out this analysis, and in my first submission of the thesis (October 2013), it was noted by my examiners, Ledwith and Hart, that while I had introduced grounded theory, I had not developed it as a structure for my research.

Upon reflection and in receiving this feedback from my examiners, I started to realise the approach had made for me an abstraction of the reality of the work I had been doing and the relationships I had formed, and became unhelpful in my approach to analysis. It helped me realise that I had also restricted my analysis to too small a data set and that for a reflexive approach I needed to appraise all the data sets if I was to address each of the research questions posited. Perhaps it was an awakening, too, that I was starting to rebel by thinking that the analytic approach I had embarked upon within grounded theory was reductionist, determinist and synthetic in its over-intellectualising, and I needed to seek a form of analysis based upon all the sources I identify above.

I started with the interviews by numbering the lines of code numerically for each of the fifteen interviews, including only the comments made by the interviewee. I ignored the content generated through my own interventions. I found this gave the data greater clarity. It

helped me focus on the ‘real data’, and I imagined I became more detached from it. It took several readings of the interviews before I began to pick out phrases from the text. These I underlined in pencil. I wanted the data to speak to me and tried not to have any preconceptions but react to the data on its own terms (Newby, 2010: 488). The first stage of producing substantive data or open coding took a considerable amount of time to absorb and identify data, as well as using the notion of memoing or making notes of the individual interviews. This went through several iterative cycles of jotting down ideas and notes in relation to the research aims and questions. In this way, phrases became data units, and interviews were summarised into brief memos. I then transferred the data units on to A3 pieces of paper, to gather them all together in some order, each referenced to the source from whence it was derived (interview number or reference to Steering Group minutes). Like looking at a holographic image hidden in a pattern of colours, themes began to emerge, codes appeared to group together. It became evident that the substantive coding data was naturally grouping into several overarching themes. Gradually they linked to a core notion. This process was repeated for the Steering Group Minutes. Grounded theory predicts that by grouping coded data through such a *process*, an overarching theme will emerge, binding them to a core idea. This method also fitted with the description provided by Charmaz (2006) of having two stages, of ‘making a stab’ and then the more focused activity of ‘creating order’ (Charmaz, 2006). The final stage in this process was the development of the core idea that links all the codes together, whether a phrase or statement. Merrill and West acknowledge that in this area of research it is a commonly adopted approach, which in practice is subject to researcher modification (Merrill and West, 2009). I found placing all the data on a large sheet very helpful in identifying key themes, and in moving towards identifying a core notion within the research. It was during this iterative process that the data was linked with work done on conceptualising the research, to see how they may work together, in an attempt to reflect ‘what it is you really want to know about’ (Mason, 1996: 79). Examples of the gathering of open coding and compilation of the coding, together with memoing are given below in this appendix.

The analysis through taking this grounded theory approach led to conceiving the project data as fitting into three periods or spaces within which the journeys of the community may be described. The first of these spaces may be considered as the time migrants spent in their homeland, an oppressive space. The second space, one in which they are located upon arrival in the host country, is of the nature of a repressed space for this community in Derby. The

third space is that of the larger United Kingdom society within which such a forced-migrant community is located, and into which, if the journey continues successfully, the community may start to integrate. Onions, Little, Fowler and Coulson (1978) define *oppression* as the feeling of being weighed down, of bodily or mental uneasiness or distress or the exercise of power in a tyrannical manner, and of involving the cruel treatment of subjects, inferiors through the imposition of unjust burdens. The definition of *repression* centres on being kept in check, restrained or put down. To repress means to hold back and to reduce troublesome persons to subjection or quietness, to put down by force, to suppress. Both require subjugation of the population.

1.1 Extracts from the analysis

5 Charles

Graduate, male. Became scientist - paid for by his uncle; uncle died when 15. His family abroad from DRC he is alone w/ UK awaiting a decision, so asylum seeker living with friends [possibly failed] ∴ of food parcels
Good friends. Worries about discrimination - worries about high level of violence w/ UK - can't find fields
Fear living - as no determination - who does he go to for help - police. Has been given medical help.
Once IIR can continue with training Poor health like to volunteer. Daily living difficult - food parcels
Refugee Forum helps. Knows he has to be patient
Questions IIR - anxious about personal safety
Feels old at 45, disappointed with NIS but doesn't want to move or - must stay
Feels never get a job limited possibilities
Believes it can't come together can solve their own problems - and maybe DRC

13

- 30 James: My wife. My wife was a teacher – a junior school – younger people. And I
31 came here. Yes my wife dealt with younger people.
32 Since I came here in England in 2002, I did enrol myself in Derby College until today
33 I did study English. Yes.
34 Not very well – but I think 50%

PW: James – I think you speak very well - we are not having any problems!

- 35 James: But now I am learning computers. I am doing higher - ECDL. I am in the
36 second part of this and this year I think I will finish all programmes in computing.

PW: Really. This is a very good standard. Yes

- 37 James: But when I came here I hoped to do many things in England, going to
38 university doing many things. I become lazy,

PW: Really?

- 39 James: Yes, because I did stay long. I am a Dad now. You saw my baby ... just 4
40 months ... and I take care of the baby ... and normally I need also money.

PW: Yes

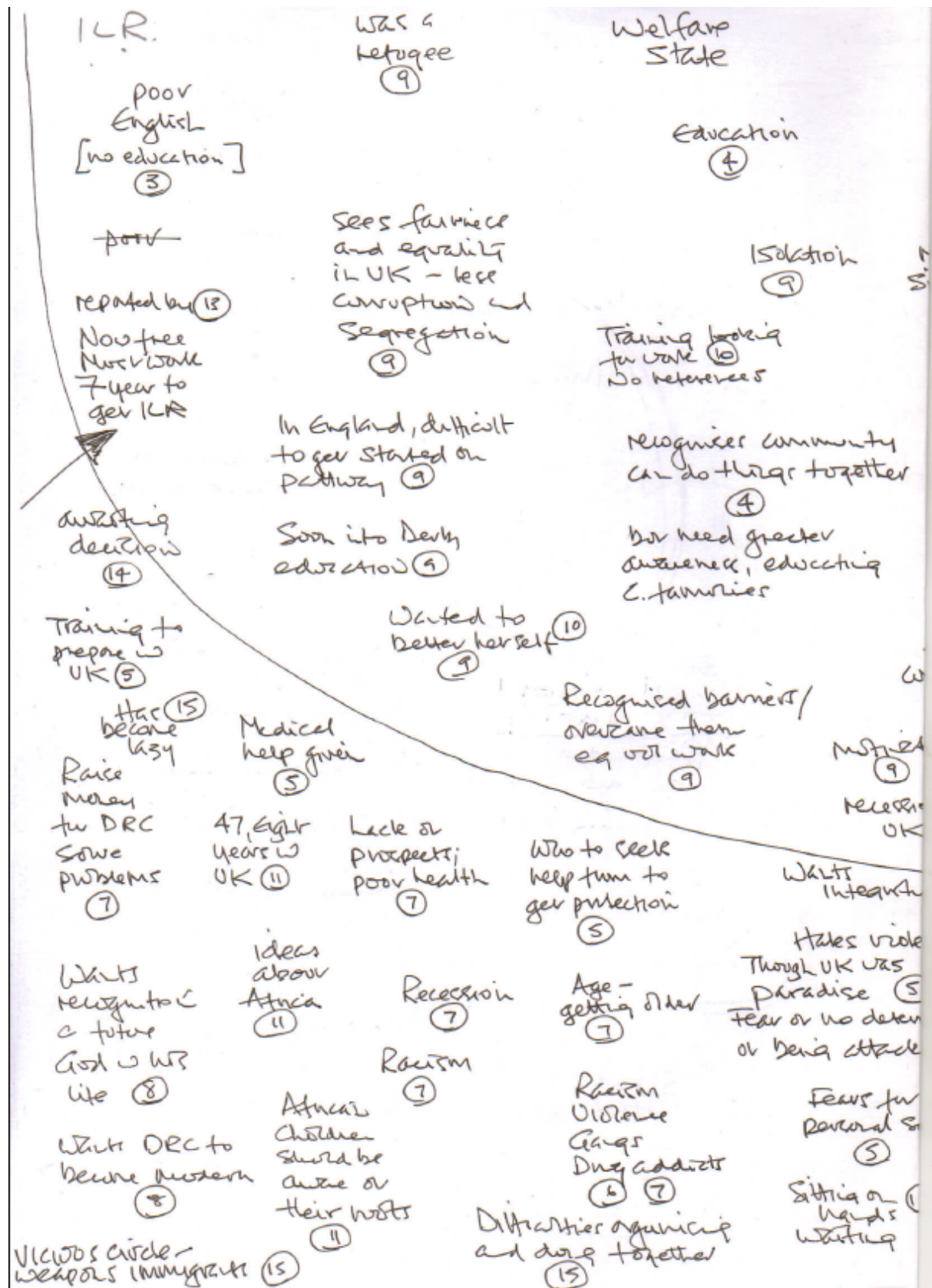
- 41 James: The problem is that now the Home office didn't answer about my case. I am
42 not allowed to work. I am not allowed to work. I am very sorry about this system, my
43 situation because since 2002 I am waiting

- 44 James: I didn't realise it would be like that, seven years waiting and I become lazy,
45 that the system is not good for me because the system is not good for me it would be
46 better if they could provide a work permit for contributing for paying tax. I am very
47 sorry about that

- 48 I hoped to go to university but I think I would not go even if the decision came today, I
49 think I will not go to University, because I see how old I am – now I am 45 – and
50 going to university I will spend roughly 4 years in University and I will be 50,

PW: Yes

- 51 James: so for me what I am doing is computer is good for me and in the future I think
52 I do my best to do any job – I will do my best to deal with my own business. That is
53 what I will do in the future. This is roughly what I can say.



Feel safe w UK
but cannot say
anything (13)

need to
check if
some of
these
comments
come
from asylum
seekers -
so no ILR
'bubble'
even smaller

Good
NHS (3)

Very
few
with
ILR
in
sample

relaxed
t in any
place
(9)

Doing manual
tasks (10)

lack of information
Needs advice guidance (10)

Care Worker -
older people
Reference from vol
work JCP helping
(13)

Benefits good
(3)

Seeing themselves
going through levels,
steps (10)
Still at beginning
set goals

Share food
(10)

Well prepared for
interview (13)

training/
nursery
requestion
(9)

7 years to ILR
then relaxed can speak
English (13)

in
in

(4)
Value of
family/
education/
integration
into the UK

Wants to be respected
comfortable, nice family
(3)

(7)

Too late to study, 45 (15)

In UK
HR and
democracy

ance

Fears violence
Riding, discrimination
Drug addiction: there
are multiple problems
(4)

Fear violence w UK
Drug addiction
Bullying (3)
Cannot let children out
(15)

In
Africa
the
strongest
(15)

minion
ed

city

Discrimination (6)

Schools
free in UK
but not Africa
(15)

(5)

Violence w UK
Bad Behaviour of children
lack of respect by children (5)
Children will target African women

Mum dead (14)
 Dad arrested
 Escaped, 17
 Husband murdered (1) (2)
 Orphaned at 15 (5)
 Failure to get medication in the Congo (7)
 Imprisoned interrogation escaped (2)
 Came to join husband (9)
 Escaped to protect them (7)
 They cannot travel safely alone (1) behind
 We have to live together
 speak to children (2)
 Family left behind (8)
 No work in DRC just managed No education (3)
 School unt. (15)
 Orphaned from large family (4)
 No family in Congo (12)
 Sell books to send money home (2)
 Wants to be reunited with wife, be a family, respected, integrated (6)
 Well educated paid for by uncle (5)
 Works in DRC (13)
 Secretarial love
 Educated engineering in DRC (8)
 Orphaned (6)
 Some education
 high level educated accountant (7) / medical
 Limited education No more (12)
 Difficult time in Congo - no time for school Monday - struggle to live - poverty
 Getting order; leave television (6)
 Feels old at 45 (5)
 No choice accommodation (7)
 Cannot talk about the past (15)
 (1) Asylum don't want wait to have a hair
 Very limited - my status (2)
 Humiliated
 Unfairness of money in the Congo
 (1) Not accept husband's reputation
 Imprisoned for 7 years God is everything to me (7)
 I am not a criminal
 Became homeless
 Army - corruption: divide or not had poor. No work (9)
 Segregation
 (5) Must stay
 Asylum seeker (7)
 quite hard to get - need money to pay in Africa (14)
 Seeks asylum but failed (14)
 Back in Congo, children orphans grandpa's dead (2)
 Section IV still pending (2)
 Imprisoned for 9 months in Congo (15)
 Don't feel I change myself, loss of liberty (2)
 Shared No choice privacy (2)

2 Conceptualising this research – my first attempt

How may a forced-migrant journey be conceptualised? Emerging themes from the literature present the importance of space, both physical and psychological. The notion that transitional space enables people to move from dependency and defensiveness towards greater openness (Winnicott, 1971), from relatively insecure to more confident forms of attachment, brings people together. Space can also be transactional, a quasi-political concept (Merrill and West, 2009), that describes how people can begin to shift in their thinking, in alliance with others, and learn new ways of thinking and of doing (Biesta, 2006). Symbolically, therefore, the idea of space is central. Narrative learning comes about through having the space to recount lives, to acknowledge the present and to explore future prospects. Space helps provide agency for action. The creative space for drama, dance, music and other manifestations of culture help rebuild identity ‘where knowledge production may be collaboratively made’ (O’Neill, 2008: 2). This space becomes real in this research through my location as an insider-researcher, bringing resources to the community, and winning community funding. I acted as a catalyst for these acts of social capacity-building at the level of individual lives and the community. I was a modest agent in the community to help them create new knowledge and re-express their identity.

In this first conceptual diagram I found it helpful to conceive of three periods or spaces within which the journeys of the community might be described. The first of these spaces might be considered as the time migrants spent in their homeland, an oppressive space. The second space, one in which they are located upon arrival in the host country, is of the nature of a repressed space for this community in Derby. The third space is that of the larger United Kingdom society within which such a forced-migrant community is located, and into which, if the journey continues successfully, the community may start to integrate. Onions, Little, Fowler and Coulson (1978) define *oppression* as the feeling of being weighed down, of bodily or mental uneasiness or distress or the exercise of power in a tyrannical manner, and of involving the cruel treatment of subjects, inferiors through the imposition of unjust burdens. The definition of *repression* centres on being kept in check, restrained or put down. To repress means to hold back and to reduce troublesome persons to subjection or quietness, to put down by force, to suppress. Both require subjugation of the population.

In relation to supporting groups enduring such subjugation, Yalom (1985) offers what he considers the most important characteristic in a therapeutic intervention, namely that of

instilling hope. Yalom expresses this view as a therapist, while acknowledging the massive amount of data documenting the efficacy of faith healing and placebo treatment, therapies mediated through hope and conviction. Acknowledging this, Yalom claims, is the most important and fundamental requirement within any group, together with the notion that all groups have universality, and that there is altruism (Yalom, 1985: 6). It would be my hope that I as a practitioner-researcher and insider-researcher might provide this hope, behaving altruistically, through the universality of us all being human.

Thus in Figure 1, if we take the forced-migrant community being studied, the Congolese community, they started their journey by leaving the DRC, Africa to escape oppression and persecution (the large circle on the left). Upon arriving in the United Kingdom (represented by the large circle on the right) they are then dispersed to one of its cities, in the case of the Congolese community I am researching, to Derby (represented by the smaller circle). This 'space' represents a place where the community must reside, repressed by society. The dotted circle represents the hope of integration into wider society.

The smallest circle represents not only a temporal space but one that is transitional and transactional. It is a creative space within which story telling, dance, drama, art, and craft and other manifestations of culture may take place.

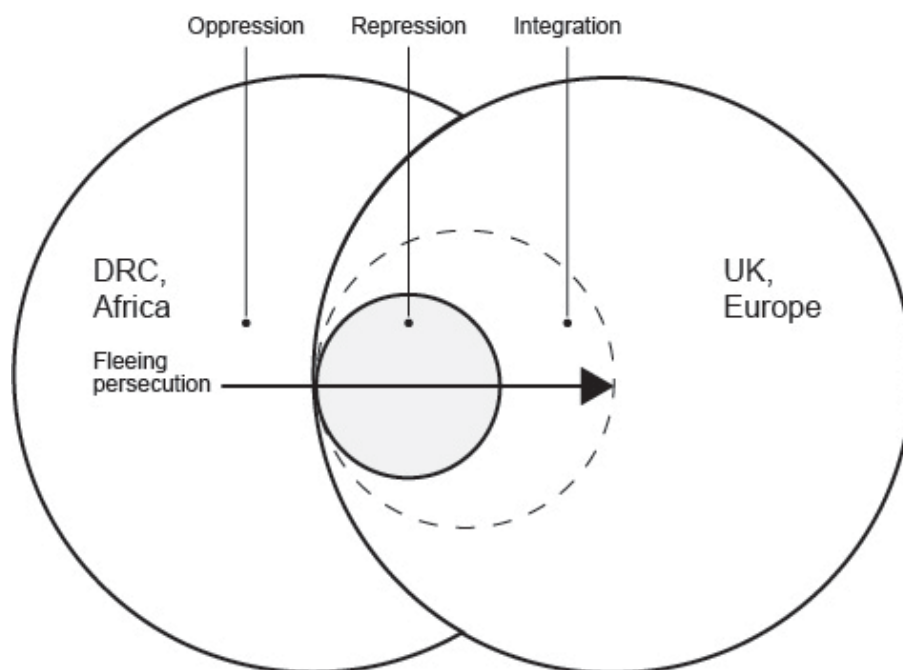


Figure 1: The migrant journey: Fleeing oppression, seeking asylum but being repressed, leading to eventual integration into the host society (after Yalom, 1985)

I argued that while social justice is required to address their continuing humiliation, this research is also concerned with understanding forced-migrants' journeys to make 'a difference in the quality of human life in our time' (Wright Mills, 2000: 225), and during the time frame of this research. Through employing what Ricoeur describes as the springboard of narration, a temporal moment when past, present and future are synthesised (Ricoeur, 1994), it was my aim in this research to document these spaces of oppression, repression and integration through the many discussions, meetings and activities that took place with the community. These are the journeys as told by the community members together with the joint experiences captured by auto/biographical means.

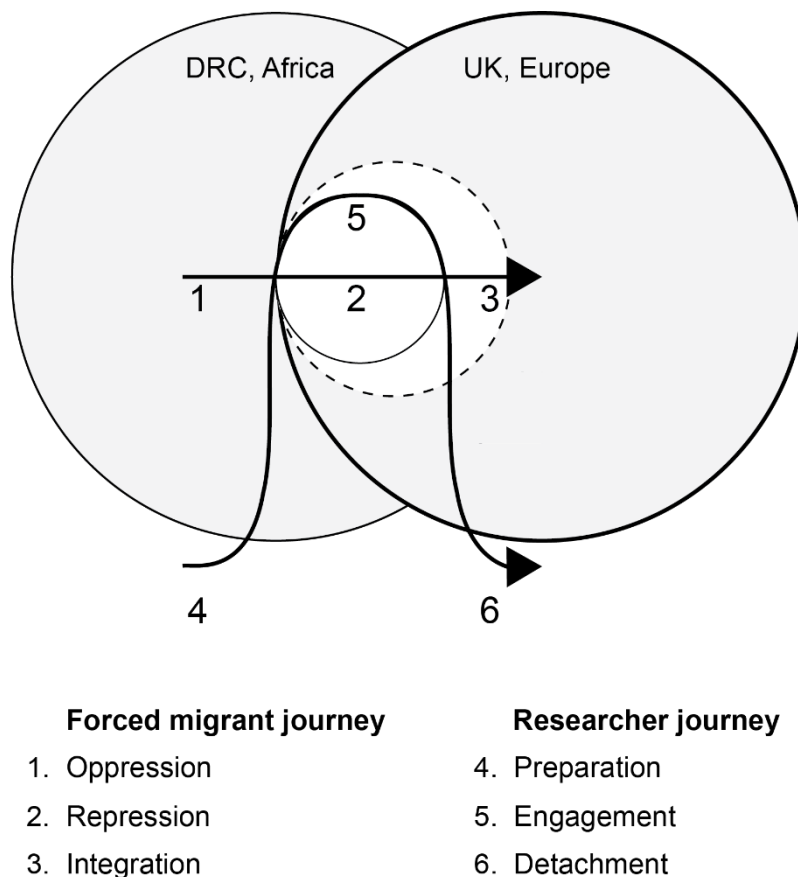


Figure 2: Migrant and researcher journeys

The two large circles in Figure 2 represent, on the left the DRC, Africa from which the exiled have fled, to within the large circle at the right, taking up a small circle representing their

community within the larger UK society. The dotted line represents the opportunity for the community to integrate into wider society. The single arrow running through the diagram at the centre, represents the journey of the community, firstly from the time of their lives in Africa, to secondly, their arrival in the UK as asylum seekers, and thirdly, this case study in assisting the community continue its journey towards integration into the wider community, essential for the wellbeing of any asylum or arriving community, illustrated schematically as a dotted line, representing a gradual progression in time. The thick line below the diagram represents my own research journey, of firstly preparing to carry out the research through consultation with the wider community, engaging with the community, and then thirdly of detaching myself from the community to reflect and write up the thesis.

Appendix L: Ethical approval

Doctor of Education Practice. Learning proposal for work based project. Evidence of ethical approval. This appendix includes the relevant section in relation to ethical approval for this research. A full copy is retained within the Research Office.

Section 5 – Ethics of project (refer to appropriate Guidelines for the professional field/community relevant to the project)

Ethical approval will be sought from the University of Derby and approved by Programme Leader for the Doctor of Education. Ongoing ethical issues will be scrutinized by the supervisor and policy agreed by the Programme Leader. Issues of informed consent will be sought from the participants in the study and permission to make public any photographs, quotes, press/media broadcasts and press releases will be obtained from participants at the time of release and with agreement from the DoS. It is envisaged the community will be part of e.g. press releases so that no element of covert data collection could be inferred by this research.

This case study, as it became was approved by my supervisor, John Dolan, dated 30 November 2007.

Appendix M: Case study material

1 Description of research database: documentation

2 Case study documentation

3 Photographic records

4 Craft Action sewing project statistics

1 Description of research database: documentation

- 1 Research Diary, comprising notes and reflections capturing the research journey.
- 2 Consultation with University and minority ethnic communities.
- 3 Steering Group meeting minutes and notes leading to funding application.
- 4 Community research interview transcripts.
- 5 Work at the Drop-in Centre. Community files were retained by the community – the project supported 40 members of the community in a wide variety of ways.

In addition to this, letters were also prepared to support members of the community on asylum matters including those to the UK Border Agency, British Embassy, local MP, in relation to Human Rights to the Home Office; providing references for volunteering and work; application for family reunion, and other letters of referral. Not recorded is support for numerous Citizenship applications. Records are retained of correspondence with partner agencies, for example Derby City Libraries, Housing Associations.

- 6 Spreadsheets covering financial records, event and funded project management details, funding applications, and the management of a hardship fund.
- 7 Documentation supporting policy and organisation such as the drafting of a constitution and policy notes (for example Child Protection, Environmental) for three community organisations, one in DRC Africa.
- 8 Several funding applications, with financial statements and project evaluation reports, with correspondence with funders.
- 9 Workshop attendance records, evaluation sheets, activity costings, and feedback. This includes a breakdown of attendance by ethnicity, faith and gender and role for the Faith Action sewing classes.
- 10 Review meetings with the community and Focus Group data
- 11 Details of events – practical arrangements covering the project management of events
- 12 Promotion: Press Releases, News articles, Awards, radio interviews, photographic library of images and video (for details see separate database).

2 Case study documentation

Ref.	Documentation	
1	Case study record of key events - see separate chart, Appendix C	
	General documentation / resources	
2	Sewing at Pear Tree 2010 & 20100 notes to management	31/08/2010
3	Notes on the first Sewing Classes Jan- March 2009	07/04/2009
4	Poem - Sewing the fabric of our lives	13/10/2009
5	Independent study - Simon Redfern	29/07/2009
6	Luke Foddy reflection on Fashion Show	25/11/2009
7	Draft discussion document on Art Therapy	03/10/2011
	Material on file	
8	Research material from Congo supporting asylum claims	22/07/2010
9	Morro motr a des condition	
10	Response to Determination	22/05/2007
	Letters in support	
11	UK Border Agency	29/09/2011
12	Rt. Hon Margaret Beckett (Derby South Constituency)	22/11/2005
13	British Embassy	
14	Reference for community member to get a job	09/07/2010
15	Reference for community member to volunteer	29/07/2010
16	Reference for community member to volunteer	29/07/2010
17	Letter to Student Finance England for Congolese student	14/12/2011
18	Reference for Application to study at University of Derby	05/09/2011
19	Support in production of cv	24/01/2011
20	Appeal in relation to breaching of Human Rights	17/11/2005
21	Letter in support of destitute person to Home Office	13/02/2006
22	Settlement Application plus passport details	25/05/2010
23	Tenancy issue	14/07/2010
24	Letter DLA Application	04/05/2011
25	Statement supporting DLA application	38/06/2011
26	Letter of support for employment	05/09/2011
27	Application - Family reunion	09/06/2010
28	Letter of appeal for asylum seeker	27/05/2008
29	Letter of support	10/12/2007
	Support for Citizenship	
30	No record was kept of this support but it was significant - circa 20 endorsed	
	Spread sheets	
31	Research attendance	
32	Hardship Fund (Record)	11/01/2011

33	Exhibition budget	09/07/2009
34	Database: Attendance records	26/01/2009
35	Database: Mailing	31/08/2010
36	Financial report	31/08/2010
37	Pear Tree Library costs	31/08/2020
38	Planning Sewing workshops – Finance	31/08/2010
39	Congolese Exhibition Planning Document	11/11/2009
40	Sewing classes - first Eight and Taster event, 2009	08/04/2009
41	Sewing classes Project 2	25/09/2009
42	Sewing classes Project 2	22/09/2009
43	Exhibition 09 budget costings	22/09/2009
44	Listings of certificates (available for all events)	12/11/2009
45	Database Sewing project	19/10/2009
	Correspondence	
46	Derby Libraries - agreeing arrangements at Pear Tree library	24/08/2010
47	Derby Libraries - Community Space project at Pear Tree library	24/08/2010
48	Therapeutic Arts - use of Pear Tree library	29/07/2010
49	Email from Janet Brown - member and presenter of community event	24/08/2010
50	Contacting Mimitah - contractual arrangements	20/11/2009
	Project Forms/ Administration	
51	Help us get more active: recruiting more members	25/05/2010
52	Risk Assessment form - Pear Tree Library	02/08/2010
53	Risk Assessment form - Pear Tree Library	31/08/2010
54	Letter to Pro-Vice Chancellor to attend Fashion Show event	13/03/2009
55	Consent forms, Sewing Project 2	20/10/2009
56	Expense form	05/08/2009
57	Invitation form	11/11/2009
58	Attendance sheets for events, from	
	Funding Applications and evaluation reports	
59	Faiths in action Round 2	08/02/2010
60	New Hope Project - Pre-Evaluation note	14/07/2010
61	Letter of Support for Funding Application: Derbyshire Community Foundation	13/12/2008
62	Application - ESF Community Learning and Skills Grants	18/07/2011
63	Addendum to Grass Roots Application	27/11/2008
64	Application for Neighbourhood Board Community Budget	31/08/2010
65	Grassroots Grants - Additional Questions	04/08/2009
66	Call to Comic Relief	02/07/2009
67	End of Grant Report	08/04/2009
68	Have the courage to do new things. Together. Feedback to community - Focus groups	17/06/2009
69	Grassroots Application Sewing 2	10/08/2009
70	Derwent Living funding	06/10/2009
71	Letter to Grassroots grants	27/04/2009

72	Forum of Faiths - Funding Application	15/02/2010
73	Sewing Together	30/05/2008
	Policy and organisation	
74	Founding of Association in the DRC	
75	Constitution for Craft Action DRC	23/04/2010
76	Constitution Voice of Congolese Women	25/07/2010
77	Nicola Dolby Grants Manager Lloyds TSB, Letter re meeting	07/04/2009
78	Questions - Grassroots funding	04/09/2009
79	Application for funding - Racial Equality Group	09/06/2009
80	Interim funder's report 06/01/2010	06/01/2010
81	Sarah Hand notes	11/08/2009
82	Application New Hope funding (final)	27/08/2009
83	Environmental policy	18/12/2007
84	Child protection policy	04/09/2007
	Events	
85	Notes for First Fashion Show	28/03/2009
86	Programme notes for Congolese Exhibition & Awards Ceremony	21/11/2009
87	Presentation by Betty Phoba - Global Poverty	15/04/2010
88	Final Review with the community	14/07/2010
89	A 'Derby Award' for Congolese student: Presentation	18/01/2011
90	African Women concerns forum - suggestions for panel discussion	04/03/2008
91	Play your part: celebrate your independence - 50th anniversary of DRC	12/05/2010
92	Coffee Morning	22/07/2010
93	Plan for the Future Programme - Voice of Congolese Women	09/05/2009
94	Plan for the Future Programme - Diagram	09/05/2009
95	Programme notes: Saturday evening. Congolese Exhibition and Awards Evening	21/11/2009
96	Operational notes: Congolese Exhibition and Awards Evening	21/11/2009
97	Welcome Speech at Guru Ravidas - Gwen Madden hosting	26/03/2009
98	New Craft Action Community Project Announcement	20/08/2010
99	Information and Enrolment Days - 27 & 28 August 2010 - Evaluation note	31/08/2010
100	Journee culturelle	17/11/2007
101	Art Therapy - introduction to sessions	01/02/2011
102	Congolese Women's Day	12/01/2008
	New Hope Drop-in Centre	
103	Records retained by Congolese Community Association / Learning and Skills Council	
	Promotional material and posters	
104	Poster: Congolese Exhibition 2009 and Awards Ceremony	21/11/2009
105	Poster: New Craft Action Project	27/08/2010
106	Congolese Exhibition 2009 - footage allocation	21/11/2009
107	Press article: Don't let me go home to die	01/09/2007
108	Press article: Congolese in Derby in fear of their lives	06/12/2008

109	Press announcement: Community Award for Drop-in Centre	12/11/2009
110	Cuba Mail from University	31/08/2010
111	Cuba mail Make your own blouse or shirt	15/07/2009
112	Copy for Cuba Mail	28/10/2009
113	Come to our Fashion show and celebration of learning	28/03/2009
114	Taking Voice of Congolese Women Forward: summary of achievements	21/12/2009
115	Names of those taking part in Video	31/08/2010
116	Press release: A Stich in Time Helps Build Fabric of a Community	27/03/2009
117	Briefing document - Congolese Exhibition 2009	07/10/2009
118	Coming together to be creative - Cuba mail	02/02/2009
119	Website material - winning funding	24/03/2009
120	Transcript of Radio Derby interview with Voice of Congolese Women	06/04/2009
121	Announcement of Sewing Classes August 2010 - December 2010	31/08/2010
122	Craft Action: Video Working together to remove isolation – storyboard	14/08/2009
	Minutes	
123	Voice of Congolese Women - November 2009	04/11/2009
124	Voice of Congolese Women Management Committee	23/04/2009
125	Congolese Community Association Meeting	26/01/2009
126	Rules	05/08/2009
	Evaluation of events	
127	1 Event evaluation 25 July 2009	17/08/2009
128	2 Event evaluation 01 August 2009	17/08/2009
129	3 Event evaluation 08 August 2009	07/09/2009
130	4 Event evaluation 15 August 2009	17/08/2009
131	5 Event evaluation 22 August 2009	22/09/2009
132	6 Event evaluation 05 September 2009	09/10/2009
133	7 Event evaluation 19 September 2009	09/10/2009
	Voice recordings and videos	
134	Radio Derby - difficulties of being an asylum seeker	26/03/2010
135	Research Interview transcripts	01/11/2009
136	Sewing group - progression to university	06/04/2009
137	Voice of Congolese Women – DVD	2010
138	Animation	2010
139	Voice of Congolese Women visit Ashbourne Arts Festival	2011
140	Refugee Council /Voice of Congolese Women - Ashbourne Arts Festival	2011

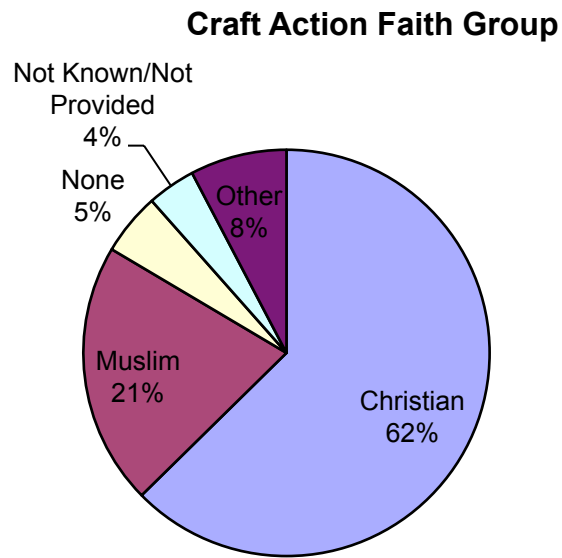
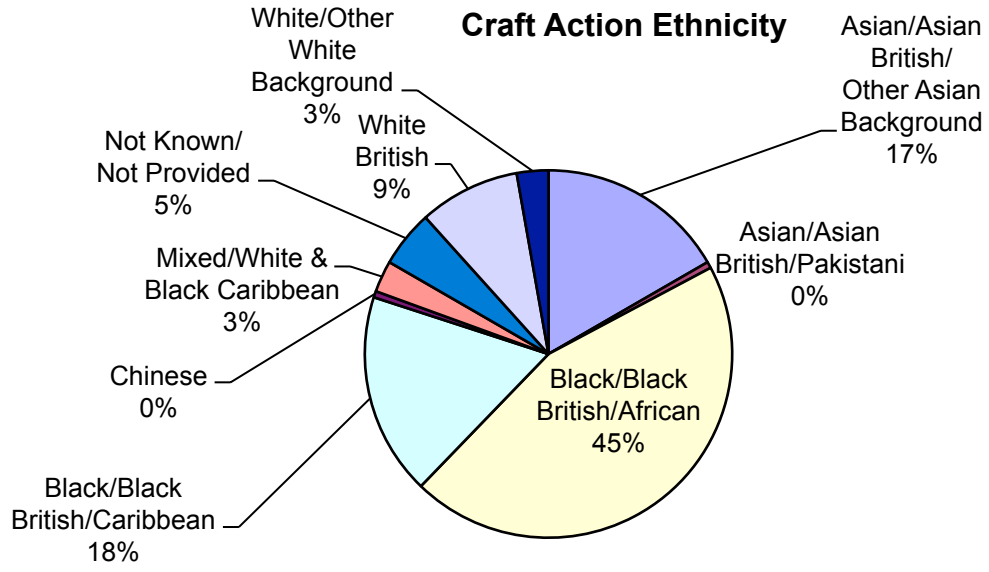
3 Photographic record

Sequence number	Title	Photographer	Date taken	No images	potential to be selected	Community generated images
3	Publicity photos ADT 15012009	PW	15/01/2009	33	0	
4	Radio Derby 16012009 / home	PW	16/01/2009	18	18	
5	Taster Sewing Class	PW	17/01/2009	81	81	
7	Sewing class 1	PW	31/01/2009	42	42	
9	Workshops and Fashion Show Neal Morgan	Student	07/03/2009	147	147	
10	Fashion Show 1 and 2	Professional	28/03/2009	104	0	
11	Fashion Show - Young People After the event	PW?	28/03/2009	39	0	
12	Arboretum Rosehill Lodge	PW	09/07/2009	1	1	
13	Craft Action	Community	08/08/2009	222	222	222
14	Sewing Class Series 2 13082009 analogue	PW	08/08/2009	53	53	
13	Wild Day Out Normanton Analogue	PW	10/08/2009	30	30	
16	Congolese images 2009 Analogue	PW	13/08/2009	36	36	
17	Emmanuel Men's day Out	PW / Community	21/09/2009	113	113	113
18	Craft Action 4092010 Press pictures	PW	15/11/2009	4	0	
19	THE evening	PW	15/11/2009	14	14	
14	Community Exhibition 2009	Community	21/11/2009	448	0	
15	Congolese Exhibition 2009 Edited	Professional	21/11/2009	110	0	
22	Rosehill Lodge	PW	19/01/2010	13	13	
23	Pear Tree Library	PW	15/02/2010	19	0	
24	Betty and Gisland, Rosehill Lodge	PW	10/03/2010	8	8	
25	Community members meet M Beckett	Community	19/03/2010	7	7	7
26	Exhibition pictures 10 x 15	Various	19/03/2010	20	0	
27	Exhibition draft images	Various	23/03/2010	64	0	
28	Volunteering England case study	PW	23/03/2010	6	6	
29	New Hope Celebration Event 28032010	Community	27/03/2010	202	202	202
30	Betty's 40 Birthday party	Community	22/05/2010	120	0	
31	Pear Tree Library	PW	27/08/2010	76	76	
32	Pear Tree Library	PW	27/08/2010	44	44	
33	Entry THE	PW / Community	28/08/2010	2	2	2
34	Children arrive from the DRC	PW	12/09/2010	27	27	
35	Staff pictures	Professional	01/10/2010	17	0	
36	Son arrives from DRC	PW / Community	12/10/2010	38	38	
37	Craft Action Fabrics	PW	16/10/2010	1	1	

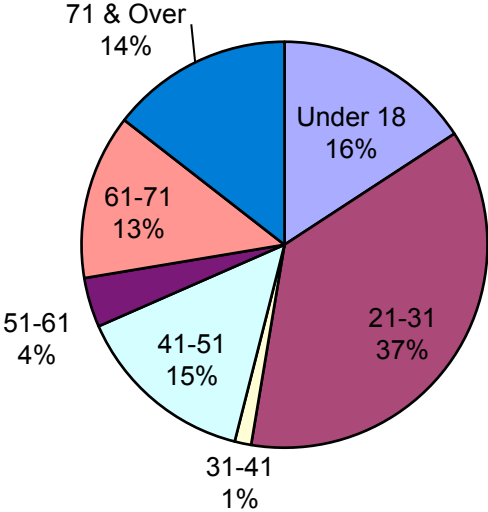
38	Andria and Maria	PW/Community	20/12/2010	28	28	28
39	Pictures for printing	PW	20/12/2010	68	0	
40	Pictures for printing 5x7	PW	21/12/2010	62	0	
41	African Conference	PW	23/03/2011	456	0	
42	Henry Mulamba	PW / Community	30/04/2011	59	0	
43	Proposed images for THE	PW / Professional	30/04/2011	12	0	
44	Citizenship Day	PW	07/02/2012	20	1	
45	Fairdene Court	PW	17/02/2012	17	0	
46	Pear Tree Library and family pictures	Community	17/02/2012	93	93	93
47	London Markets	PW	29/02/2012	9	9	9
48	Pear Tree Library 30032012 Fabrics Henry	PW	02/03/2012	18	0	
49	International Women's Day	PW	10/03/2012	3	3	3
50	Buxton Food Festival	PW	31/03/2012	55	55	55
51	Children's party 2010	PW / Community	17/12/2012	153	153	153
52	Our Journeys - Young People's Fashion Show	Professional	21/12/2012	174	174	
	Total images			3386	1697	887

4 Craft Action sewing project statistics

The following provides some of the detail captured, in this example to illustrate the series of workshops described as Craft Action, within the case study. In breaking down the roles, there were three people responsible for project management, with seven facilitators, 16 volunteers, and 88 learners. In total 46 children attended the events, and 32 'others' who did not fill in the attendance sheets. The graphs below illustrate the breakdown of these events by ethnicity, by faith and by age.



Craft Action Age Group



Appendix N: Shortlisted images

See also images 1 – 4 in the main body of the text on pages 94 and 95.



Image 5



Image 6.



Image 7



Image 8



Image 9



Image 10



Image 11



Image 12



Image 13



Image 14