



Connecting *Communities*

A Dudley Migrants' Voice Newsletter

Editorial



Thierry Barholere

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Hello and welcome everyone to this second edition of "**Connecting Communities: a Dudley Migrants' Voice**". This is one of the few publications that tries to bridge our diverse communities. I would like to acknowledge the invaluable input from migrant groups, the Tenants and Residents Associations and the Dudley MBC's Participation & Development Team for working closely with the 5 Estatesplus project steering group to produce this work.

We remain grateful to the Barrow Cadbury Trust and the Dudley MBC for supporting this work financially. Thanks to Sophie Mwanza, Tovi Ibandula, Yanick Zazi and Mandeep Kaur Arora for their contribution in collecting information for this edition. We understand that there are hard times awaiting ahead for migrants especially in these times when the most radical shift in immigration policy is taking place. However, just as Winston Churchill said: **"Continuous efforts, not strength or intelligence is the key to unlocking our potential."** We believe there is still hope for everyone.

This edition outlines very important features of our work within the community since the first edition. These include the hidden homeless migrants, "Look and See" and more interesting stories. I am hopeful that you will find this edition to be interesting and useful. Please feel free to like our Facebook page on [www.facebook.com/5 Estates plus Project](http://www.facebook.com/5EstatesplusProject).

Warm Regards
Thierry Barholere (Editor)

"Continuous effort - not strength or intelligence - is the key to unlocking our potential."

Sir Winston Churchill.

The Hidden Homeless Migrant

This year is probably the one with the most radical shift in immigration policy of this country. There is no doubt that many migrants, especially failed asylum seekers, will find themselves pushed to live on the margins of our society.

Failed asylum seekers are particularly vulnerable to homelessness because they are not entitled to benefits and services. Unfortunately most of these cases will always go unnoticed.

This is Peter J.'s story.....

"Life is very hard because in my circumstances I'm not allowed to work, I'm not allowed to do anything."



"It is just very hard, life is extremely hard. When you haven't got a leave to remain in this country you have to report regularly to the immigration office and they keep a track on you and if they find you working they deport you straight away".

"I have been in this situation for about 4 years now. I have engaged a solicitor who took on my case and it was rejected. I was denied my Section 4 support and I became homeless. I have been in and out in the cold for the last 4 years. It is very bad because you don't have a place where you can sleep, you are not secured and you do not know what will happen tomorrow. This is a terrible experience. We are not in this by choice and everyone has got a story to tell — Like me, I cannot return back home".

Facing the reality.....

If all the funding available in the community to support marginalised individuals are to be stopped then the only option for failed asylum seekers is to face the reality of the unfairness.

Here is Mohammed's story.....

"My experience as a migrant here is really hard



life. And the system is very hard.

I received help from the charities and see many people in similar situation like me.

Feel ashamed really to see many young man and women who are not working or studying, but struggling to find somewhere to sleep and something to eat. I hope things will move really.

I don't know for how long I will still year waiting for any decision about my case. May be I stay here, may be no. My life is at risk...

Right now we depend on charity to get food and even bus pass for our transportation. I have been in the country for 7 years and life is very hard."

The Supportive Zimbabwean woman

Mary Matambanadzo pictured below is a Zimbabwean living in Dudley and a member of the Zimbabwean Association where she served as the coordinator for West Midlands. Mary has been very helpful not only to Zimbabweans but also other



Africans who are seeking sanctuary. She is hands on whenever she is asked to help. Mary refers asylum seekers where they can get further assistance for example those

who are homeless she points them to right organisations that provide accommodation for the homeless. She also visits detained asylum seekers in detention.

Mary encourages asylum seekers to attend conferences held at Carrs Lane Methodist Church and CfED in Dudley. She also encourages them to volunteer in their communities.

Mary organises a sewing group where Zimbabwean women are trained in sewing clothes.



Beautiful baby dress

The sewing group is having great success with their Zimbabwean inspired clothes for children and adults.

By Sophie Mwanza

Ahmadiyya Muslim Association sweeps away snow in Halesowen.

With the last significant amount of snow fall, the support from local members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association (AMYA) in Halesowen was undeniable. Members of the Halesowen branch of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association, based out of Baitul Ghafoor (House of Forgiving God) Mosque on Long lane, Set off from their early morning prayers



on Sunday 24th March 2013 to clear in neighbouring Churches. Volunteers cleared snow from the pathways leading up to and surrounding area of St Pauls Church Long Lane and Hurst Green Family church Beaumont Rd Halesowen.



This is the initiative of the AMA 's yearlong campaign to help those in need and raise hundreds of thousands for a number of UK charities.

Toby Ephram, the Regional Outreach officer (pictured on right) said: *"This is one of the ways we can give back to the local Communities some of us we came in this Country as Asylum seekers"*.

Our motto is : *"Love for all, hatred for none"*.

The Community will be celebrating 100 years on 7th April from 4pm. Welcome everyone.

For further information about the community visit www.loveforallhatredfornone.org or email equiries@ahmadiyya.org.uk

Who do we think we are.....

British Future's Matthew Rhodes was one of the guest speakers at the International Migrant Day celebrated in Dudley at the Migrants Alive event. The event which was held on the 18th December 2012 at Dudley Town Hall and was organised by the 5 Estatesplus Project in conjunction with the Dudley MBC's Participation and Development Team.



Matthew Rhodes / British Future.

Remember also – the remarkable story of the footballer Fabrice Muamba – who was brought back to life after suffering a near fatal heart attack – how many knew (even those who shouted for him when he played for the England under 21s)? that he was a Congolese refugee until then? " **Matthew Rhodes**

In his remark he pointed out his satisfactions that during the summer 2012 Britain was able to deliver a major event without the transport and logistical disasters that many anticipated. He recognised the multicultural spirit that was showcased at the Olympic and a country that came together with confidence about its identity in the world...

Another interesting point mentioned in his address was in relation to public attitudes about immigration was linked with people's feelings about modern Britain in general. "...About a quarter of our society is quite deeply unhappy about modern Britain and up to one in ten still represent hardline views about repatriation etc. Amongst these groups are the hardcore members of parties like the BNP and supporters of the EDL but many others who may support other political parties or none".

A total of 112 people attended the Migrant Alive event which featured the launch of 'Our Story' a 30 mins film which tells the story of migrants living in the Borough in the presence of the Mayor and the Mayoress, Councillor Melvyn and Mrs Michelle Mottram. The film is now available online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INkE6m4EBeY>



Letter to the Editor

After reading the Welcome to Dudley Migrants' Voice Newsletter, I was really impressed that despite the impact of these economic crises; Connecting Communities has been fighting to show the contribution of migrants (asylum seekers and refugees) in their local communities.

I think that this association need our help and support as they are working to improve the life and contributing to a better integration of migrants in their local communities.

Showing what these migrants have been doing (work, education, social activities and more) for living, can help fighting prejudices against migrants.

I think that most of you will agree that Connecting has played an important role to help migrants, to fully integrate in the society and now most of them consider Dudley as their new home.

Well done Connecting Communities!

Nick Babunga,
Young philosopher and writer.



Participants at the Migrant Alive event welcome the launch of the first edition Of the connecting Communities Newsletter.

“ A Good and noble cause”

International migrant day is a good and a noble cause. However, we require a radical rethink about how asylum seekers and refugees are treated. We need a reassessment about what integration means and how it can be effectively implemented.

We need to consider how we can best make use of the relatively small numbers of migrants and asylum seekers that enter the country after persecution and conflict.

International migrant day is of course a great start and launching pad for relevant issues that face migrants. However, it is what happens after this day that is of most importance. It is the outcomes, impacts and long-term results that occur through the various activities held on this day that we should be concerned about.

It is about developing a collaborative approach to the real issues on the ground that effect refugee and asylum seekers. It is about continuing that dialogue, challenging misinformation, through generating and communicating the facts; bringing people together through true integration, which is the missing thread of multi-culturalism and diversity.

Migration never works without integration, that will only lead to fragmentation and disconnected communities. Thus initiatives like the **5 Estatesplus project** is not simply about empowering migrants, but it is also about creating connections and developing an environment of cultural learning.

We need to connect with those inspirational migrants who have come to Britain with a history of persecution, but with dreams and hopes of a life now filled with aspiration.

They come with the British dream, most want to work hard, and contribute to social, cultural and the economic development of the country. Let us not forget even in this time of uncertainty and in an era of austerity, to maintain the high standard of British human rights and civil liberties.

As those are the qualities that make Britain more marketable and more competitive, which will essentially help us towards an economic recovery.

By Matthew Johnson

Through it all

Sameer M. pictured in the middle was handed his Best achiever award certificate by the Mayor of Dudley at the Migrant Alive event held on 18th December 2012. Originally from Pakistan, Sameer started his involvement in the community as a volunteer, attending meetings of his local TRA and the 5 Estates Steering group.

He worked hard despite the language barriers



and now he is working as a Post office clerk. Sameer Said; “ *When I came to the UK , I had some difficult times because of the language.*”

There was no sense of Social life. From volunteering in the community I now have a job and I'm very pleased. I thank my family, CfED and the 5 Estatesplus Project for helping me all along the way”.

Another one who was praised for his community involvement, was Mr. Tshikala Ilunga, who has volunteered his time in the community. He attended and engaged in the planning of different activities within the community, big clean up and social events.



From right: Tshikala Ilunga,
Rev. Andrew Wickens & Martin Smith

“Look And See”

By Chipo Mudere

“My name is Mrs. Chipo Mudere. I am married to Rev. E. Mudere. We have been married for more than twenty years now. We are blessed with three beautiful children. Originally we are from Zimbabwe but are permanently residing in the United Kingdom.



Mrs Chipo Mudere/Author

The book is based on understanding your vision and how best you can live beyond

what you see. ***Life is about looking at things and seeing them. Life is not about giving up. It is about facing challenges objectively not subjectively***”.

Mrs Mudere has also other publications and her first book is called, ***‘A place for the woman.’*** The first edition was published in 1992 and then the second edition was published in August 2009.

Mrs Mudere said; *“Recognising that urbanisation and industrialisation was affecting the position of the woman in the home, I felt that a lot of women felt it was an opportunity for them to claim equality with men. The Beijing conference in the late 1980s seemed to purport this equality syndrome. **My argument has always been and will always be: men and women can never be equal; they can only be complimentary**”.*

Mrs Mudere will be launching her latest book on **Saturday 29th June 2013** at the Apollo hotel, Hagley Road Birmingham, from 1:00pm. Free admission.

For information on how to order a copy please contact Mrs Chipo Mudere by email: chipomudere@yahoo.com



Chinese New Year Day Celebration

The Mayor and the Mayoress, Councillor Melvyn and Mrs Michelle Mottram attended the Chinese New year celebration which organised by the Dudley Chinese association (DCCA) on Tuesday 19th February, 2013 at the Buffet 168 Bar & Restaurant, Brierley Hill. Among the guests was also the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United Kingdom Consul Zhang Guolong.

The “DCCA” aims to encourage the Chinese Community to get involved and participate in social, educational and most importantly, cultural activities. The Association also promote friendship and reduce the isolation of Chinese families in the Borough by networking with the authority and different agencies.

The Chinese calendar is different from that used in the United Kingdom. It is made up of a cycle of twelve years, each of them being named after an animal. This is very like the signs of the zodiac. The twelve animals are: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Roaster, Dog and Pig. This year the New Year Day was on 10th February and is the Year of Snake.

There were a variety of performances on the night, Chinese Traditional songs and dancing, Ballroom Dancing, Martial art and Belly Dancing.



Winnie Lam said: ***“we would like to express our appreciation to everyone who is supporting us. And hope everyone have a prospectus new year!”***

DCCA holds an advice session on every Monday (except School Holiday), 11:30am to 2:30pm at the Valley Road Youth & Community Centre, Providence Street, Lye DY9 8HQ.

For more information please contact Miss Winnie Lam on 01384 813408 or e-mail: dcca@hotmail.co.uk

The International Women's Day event held success in Dudley.

Residents of Dudley celebrated the International Women's Day organised by The Unique Women of Excellency (UWE).

"UWE is very grateful for the help we received from CfED through the 5 Estates Project"

Mrs Sarita Chitapa, UWE's chair thanked everyone who braved the rain to attend the event. She said *"We feel very privileged to host this year's International Women's Day today and together celebrate this important day for us women. This truly a celebration – a celebration of achievements and contributions us women make in every day aspects of life: in our homes, in our jobs, in communities, as mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, students, workers, citizens and leaders."*

Our theme this year is Gender Agenda: "Gaining Momentum".

As women, we share a common future. And we are here to find common ground so that we may help bring new dignity and respect to women and girls in our communities as well as internationally - and in so doing, bring new

strength and stability to families as well.

This coming together of women was described by UWE as much the way women come together every day in every nation.

This confirms the saying that; **when you teach a woman, you have taught the whole world".**



The British Health Qigong performing at the Women's Event

"Being a women in Ellowes TRA"

By Christine Bate

Christine Bate from Ellowes TRA was a guest speaker at the International Women's day event on 8th March 2013. This is a brief of what she said: "When first asked to be involved in today my first reaction was of complete blankness and could not think of a thing to say, which that alone is very unusual for me. But then I started to think about my involvement and how I had become part of the Tenant's & Resident's Association.

Christine Bate



I became involved with our local TRA (Ellowes Hall & Area) 4 years ago this April and was volunteered into becoming the secretary for the group.

How do I feel about being involved, committed, hard work, passionate, determination about the community that I live in and working with a group of people who feel exactly the same as myself. **I have been given the opportunity to understand more of what goes on directly within our community rather than know what might be going on...**

May I say that I feel very privileged to be able to speak on behalf of women in TRA as I am only one of many women in the TRAs that are as passionate and devoted as myself and will continue to make any difference they can for the better to their community".

Vicky Ngamsha (pictured in the middle) addressed



Vicky Ngamsha (in the middle)

participants at the women day. Her remark focused on the role of African women in the community integration process. Her presentation very much welcomed by participants.

“The Welcome Group”

Anne West from the Welcome Group/Halesowen was invited to speak at the International Women Days event in Dudley on March 8th 2013.



Mrs. Chitapa and Anne West

She also received an award that recognized her support to new arrivals in Dudley especially refugees and asylum seekers. She congratulated women and accepted the award on behalf of all her team and dedicated it to her late mum.

The Welcome Group came into being about five years ago after a message came through to Anne from the Solihull Welcome Group, about a young Cameroonian woman who was living in Halesowen and who needed befriending.

Through this befriending, Anne started to pick up details of what happens to some of the most vulnerable people in our society and wondered if she could start a similar organisation in Halesowen.

She said: “Over the last five years we have met people from many countries including Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Burundi, The Congo, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Gambia, Angola, Eritrea, Malawi, Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Pakistan, Azerbaijan Afghanistan, Algeria and Libya.

Their needs are diverse and lives are unstable. Homelessness is a growing concern as asylum seekers who have lost their claim and struggle to re submit new evidence or appeal, are made homeless”.

Dudley Libraries

read

learn

discover

Cara Evans the Dudley's Service Development Librarian-Inclusion officer has been working alongside migrants to encourage them to use the services that are available in the library. From her presentation it was pointed out that individuals can visit their local library for free computer use, free Wi-Fi access, access to internet, borrow books in variety of languages, children dual-language books in English with Arabic, Chinese, Polish, Farsi and more. For further information please go to www.gov.uk/libraries



Cara Evans/ Dudley Libraries

“Our Story” which charts the life experience of migrants in Dudley is now available on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INkE6m4EBeY>
Alternatively you can request a copy by Email to Thierry Barholere
Email: Thierry.barholere@cfed.org.uk

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